Voter turnout in Lesotho Elections



Independent Electoral Commission Study

Published by the Independent Electoral Commission

IEC Head Office

2nd and 3rd Floor MGC Park

Corner Pope John Paul II & Mpilo Boulevard

Maseru 100, Lesotho

P.O. Box 12698 Maseru100, Lesotho

Tel: +266 22314991 Fax:+266 22310398

Website:www.iec.org.ls

© IEC LESOTHO 2021

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be re produced , stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher

Design and Layout: IEC

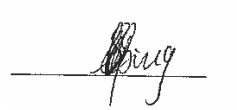
THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Preface

Lesotho held its 1st democratic elections in 1993 after a long period of the military rule. The 1993 elections were a highlight of the aridity the Basotho Nation had for a democratic rule, marked by the high turnout of the electors.

This was to follow in 1998 National Assembly Elections and the expectation and believe that Basotho would always go for elections and vote in large numbers but in the contrary, the numbers have been declining steadily in each election count. This has raised an alarm and called the Independent Electoral Commission to find the underlying cause.

The IEC then undertook the study on the cause for low and declining voter turnout. This report to the said study indicates the root causes to the ever declining voter turnout in Lesotho's elections. The study also sought to explore the willingness to vote in the next elections whereby a large number declared that they will vote but the perturbing number also indicated that they will not.



Adv. Lehlohonolo Suping
Acting Director of Elections

Foreword

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is an Election Management Body that is established by the constitution of Lesotho, bestowed with among other powers, to carry out the periodic election process of Parliamentary, Local Government Elections and Referenda. Ever since its establishment (1997), IEC has held three Local Government and six National Assembly Elections, out of which, two were snap. In 1998 and 2002 National Assembly Elections voters turned out in large numbers but after that, the numbers have been declining. The same goes for Local Government Elections. This has been a cause for concern for both the IEC and its stakeholders so much that the voters throughout the country had to be made to provide reasons for their loss of interest in voting

In this report, the election trends, pattern of voting and turnout in the country are stated. It also indicates how the study was conducted as well as the efforts taken to stimulate voter turnout. The key findings would also help the reader to have a clear picture of pattern of voter turnout. The Commission would like to thank Globe Management Consultant for its assistance in the compilation of this study and the report. Their work is highly commendably. The Commission also thank whole heartedly all the eligible electors who were contacted to give their comments and views regarding this study.

It is believed that the Commission and the stakeholders will take this report and its findings seriously and make use of it in all aspects of elections. Further, this report will pave way forward for promotion of voter turnout. The report will serve as a base for lessons learned on management of elections, gives us a clear picture and shed light on our achievements and weaknesses in the implementation of the electoral law and mobilising electors. It will inform planning, development and innovation in the educational aspects of the electoral democracy.



Mr. Mphasa Mokhochane
Charman
Independent Electoral Commission(IEC)

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 4

List of Abbreviations & Acronyms 5

Executive Summary 7

1. Introduction 12

1.1 Objectives of the research *13*
1.2 Importance of voter turnout *14*

2. Research design and methodology 17

2.1 Overall approach *17*
2.2 Defining and measuring voter turnout *17*
2.3 Data collection *19*
2.4 Data entry, processing, analysis and presentation *22*

3. Election trends, voting and turnout in Lesotho 23

3.1 Political dynamics and national elections, 1965 to 2017 *23*
3.2 Local Government elections *32*

4. **Voter turnout patterns and implications** 34

4.1 Patterns of turnout: constituency reflections *34*
4.2 Voters roll and how it affects patterns of turnout *37*

5. Characteristics of voters and non-voters 44

5.1 Summary of self-reported voter turnout *44*
5.2 Demographic and socio-economic profile *46*
5.3 Behavioural profiles of voters and non-voters *51*
5.4 Views and attitudinal profiles of voters and non-voters *60*
5.5. Who votes in Lesotho? *66*

6. Narratives of low and declining turnout 68

6.1 Reasons from the survey *68*
6.2 Attitudes towards political institutions *69*
6.3 Effects of electoral regulations *69*
6.4 Party institutionalisation, proliferation and coalition governments *70*
6.5 Electoral frequency and voter fatigue *71*
6.6 Quality of governance *72*
6.7 Unfulfilled promises and poor service delivery *72*
6.8 Limited access to information and weak/partisan media *73*
6.9 Electoral management and voting processes *74*
6.10 Reasons specific to Local Government elections *76*
6.11 Reasons for voting in national vs. government elections *79*
6.12 Special groups *81*

7. Efforts to stimulate voter turnout 90

7.1 The nature of civic and democracy education *90*
7.2 The impact of civic and voter education *91*
7.3 The cumulative effect of voter education *94*
7.4 Targeted interventions: Youth *96*
7.5 Challenges of civic and voter education *98*
7.6. Impact assessment mechanisms *99*

8. Discussions of key findings 101

8.1 Voter turnout factors *101*
8.2 Voter turnout measurement and its implications *103*
8.3 Trends and patterns of voter turnout *104*
8.4 Personal attributes *106*
8.5 Main socio-contextual factors and their effect *109*
8.6 Techno-contextual factors and their effects *111*
8.7 Vote-stimulation efforts *113*

9. Conclusion and recommendations 114

9.1 Framework for recommendations *116*
9.2 For IEC *116*
9.3 For the government *119*
9.4 For the electoral community (NGOs, political parties, CSOs, etc.) *120*

Bibliography 121

Appendices 131

Appendix 1: Voter Survey Sample Design 125

Appendix 2: Polling Station Areas Where Survey Data was Collected 128

Appendix 3: Study Questionnaire 131

Appendix 4: GPS Map of Survey Data Collection Coverage 156

Appendix 5: List of Interviewed Expert/Key Informants 157

Appendix 6: Key Informants/Experts Interview Guide 158

List of Tables

Table 1: National Voter Survey Coverage 20

Table 2: Focus-Group Discussions per Constituency and Category 22

Table 3: National Population Voters roll by age group and gender 40

Table 4: Trends in Voter Turnout across Selected SADC Countries 41

Table 5:Trends in Lesotho Voter turnout and approximations 42

Table 6: Trends in Lesotho Voter turnout and Voters roll defects 42

Table 7: VAP calculation of turnout (Lesotho) 43

Table 8 : Voting in the 2017 Local Government Elections by age-group 47

Table 9: Change in probability of voting for different contrasts of levels of education 49

Table 10: Voting in 2017 General election by party membership and rally attendance 57

Table 11: contact by a party representative by age group 59

Table 12: Willingness to vote by knowledge of the leader of the opposition 64

Table 13: Most reasons for low and declining voter turnout in national elections 68

Table 14: Reasons for Voting in Local GovernmentElections 79

Table 15: Pairwise Correlation: exposure to voter education (and not) by provider 96

List of Figures

Figure 1: Voter Turnout in Lesotho General Elections (1993-2007) 23

Figure 2: Ten Highest and lowest performing constituencies (2012 General Election) 35

Figure 3: Ten highest and lowest performing constituencies (2015 General Election) 36

Figure 4: 10 Highest and lowest performing constituencies (2017 General Election) 36

Figure 5:Voter turnout in 2017 National Assembly Election by Age Group 47

Figure 6: willingness to vote by level of education 48

Figure 7: Perception of election competitiveness (June 2017): serial voters and others 52

Figure 8: Satisfaction with number of parties (serial voters intending to vote and not) 54

Figure 9: "Politicians are selfish" (serial voters intending to vote and not) 54

Figure 10: S Serial voters' main reasons for voting in June 2017 by intention to vote 55

Figure 11: Voting in 2017 General election by age-group and rally attendance 56

Figure 12: Voting in 2017 General election by Contact by a Politician 58

Figure 13: Pitso attendance by age-group 60

Figure 14: Interest in politics by voting in 2017 General election 62

Figure 15: Reasons for not voting by interest in politics 63

Figure 16: Willingness to vote by knowledge of leader of opposition: respondents: Primary Education 64

Figure 17: Willingness to vote by knowledge of leader of opposition: College/University Diploma holders65

Figure 18: Intention to vote by satisfaction with the performance of MP 66

Figure 19: Reasons why youth do not vote 84

Figure 20: Distribution of people who received voter education during last elections 91

Figure 21: Female Reception of IEC voter education by voting (2017 General election) 92

Figure 22: Female Voting by institution delivering voter education: 2017 General election 93

Figure 23: turnout in June 2017 election by exposure to a combination of voter education platforms 95

Figure 24: Distribution of respondents who did not receive voter education by age group 97

Figure 25: Distribution of respondents who noticed an advert on voting by age group 97

List of Boxes:

Box 1: Reasons for Low Voter Turnout in PLWD 83

Box 2: Reasons for Low Voter Turnout in Rural and Urban Worse Performing Constituencies 89

Box 3: Field narratives: Civic Education and Impact on Civic Engagement for Voter Turnout 100

Box 4: Summary of Reasons by Importance of Act and Outcome of the voting 108

Box 5: "We don't belong here": the curious case of Tele 111

Acknowledgements

The Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho would like to acknowledge all those who contributed towards making this humongous research a success. The voter who have contributed patiently by positively answering the questions that led to the compilation of this report.

The commission also thank its staff throughout the sections, by taking part in this exercise. Their guidance and facilitation to this task is well noticed. These include among others the IEC managemt particularly the Director of Elections Dr. Letholetseng Ntsike, Civic and Voter Education Manager Ms Lydia Macheli who was also a leader of this project. The District Electoral Officers from all the districts. The Local Authorities in their different categories are also recognised for assisting IEC while conducting the study.

Skyfall IT is highly acknowledged for its assistance with technical support. Most of all, the Commission also extends its thoughtful gratitude to Globe Management Consultants for being the pillar of strength for carrying out this research. Their work is highly appreciated.

List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

ABC	All Basotho Convention
AD	Alliance of Democrats
AFVIS	Automated Fingerprint Verification System
AU	African Union
BCP	Basotho/Basutoland Congress Party
BNP	Basotho National Party
BoS	Bureau of Statistics
CCL	Christian Council of Lesotho
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWC	Commonwealth Countries Committee
DC	Democratic Congress
DCEO	Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences
DVEO	District Voter Education Officer
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa[1])
EMB	Election Management Body
FGD	Focus-Group Discussion
FPTP	First-Past-The- Post
FR	Field Researcher
GMC	Globe Management Consultants
GPS	Global Positioning System
ID	Identity Card
IDEA	Institute of Democracy Elections ……
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IET	Item Account Technique
KI	Key Informant
LCD	Lesotho Congress for Democracy
LCN	Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
LG	Local Government
LPC	Lesotho People's Congress
LVTO	Low Voter Turn Out
LWP	Lesotho Workers Party
MCC	Maseru City Council
MEC	Movement for Economic Change
MFP	Marematlou Freedom Party
MMP	Mixed-Member Proportional
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Independent Party
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PFD	Popular Frond for Democracy
PR	Proportional Representation
RCL	Reformed Congress of Lesotho
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-PF	Southern African Development Community parliamentary Forum
UDP	United Democratic Party
VAP	Voting Age Population
VEA	Voter Education Assistant

[1] Now renamed Electoral Institute of Southern Africa for Sustainable Democracy in Africa

VEP	Voting Eligible Population
VR	Voter Registration
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
EA	Enumeration Area
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit

Executive Summary

1. This report presents the findings of the study on voter turnout which was conducted by Globe Management Consultants (GMC) on behalf of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of Lesotho.

2. The Study sought to identify, describe and understand the factors of low and declining voter turnout in both Parliamentary and Local Government elections. These entailed, among others, profiling voters and non-voters, exploring the narratives of political participation from both experts and ordinary Basotho and scrutinising the integrity of the voters' roll.

3. The study draws its insights, conclusions and recommendations from an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, collected through a nationally representative survey, expert interviews, focus group discussions and integrative literature survey.

4. The empirical findings and analysis herein are meant to inform the IEC's strategic planning and design of interventions to stimulate higher turnout, including legal, policy and operational processes and content elements that should assist in targeting the problem. Following is a summary of key findings from the research.

Key Findings

Turnout Patterns

5. Turnout patterns in the past 25 years show a 25.9 percent decline from 72.3 percent in 1993 to 46.4 percent in 2017 in National Assembly elections.

6. Overall, however, in the last three national elections (2012, 2015 and 2017) the pattern is mixed between urban-rural, lowlands-highlands, and district distribution of constituencies in terms of either high or low performance, although the Southern and South-eastern districts of Quthing and Qacha's Nek as well as Maseru and Leribe districts feature more regularly in the low-performing category. Maputsoe (urban Leribe) has also featured prominently among the ten worst-performing constituencies.

Effect of Voters' roll on Turnout

7. Lesotho's registration-based turnout calculation appears to underestimate voter turnout rates, due largely to its reliance on a questionable voters' roll resultant from *inter alia:* double registrations, multiple marriages, non-removal of the deceased, and internal inefficiencies due to resource constraints and other in-house concerns. This method is found to lead to overestimates of the voters roll to over 100 percent (especially in the last three polls), thereby leading to a significant distortion of turnout figures. The effect of the distorted voters' roll is that it undermines all efforts of the IEC and its partners in boosting voter turnout. Yet in fact such efforts might have worked to a large extent; it taints the image and reputation of IEC as an Election Management Body and of the country in general, and projects a distorted image of the health of the political system

Who votes in Lesotho?

8. Seventy two percent (72%) and 57 percent of respondents reported having voted in the 2017 national and local elections respectively. These figures are markedly higher than the officially recorded rates for the two polls (46% and 25% respectively). Interestingly, the 72 percent self-reported rate of turnout for national election also tallies with other studies of turnout in Lesotho (e.g. Afrobarometer Survey of 2017), regional averages.

9. Generally, and in line with global trends, self-reported voter turnout is higher among older individuals. A Lesotho voter is older than 45 years old (with those above the age of 65 are five times more likely to vote than those aged 18-24), resides in rural areas, and has a relatively low level of formal education. Only a quarter of the most educated adult citizens are willing to exercise their right to choose a government.

10. In terms of the behavioural differences, the analysis indicates that voters regularly attend *lipitso* or community meetings and rallies organised by political parties. They have also been contacted by political parties and exposed to voter education campaigns, especially by the IEC and political parties. Respondents who declare themselves as non-active members of political parties are significantly more likely to vote when they attend political rallies. They have also voted in at least two recent elections and see voting as a civic duty.

11. The effect of civic engagement is stronger in terms of age. Most young people are not active in non-electoral forms of political participation, but those who do attend *pitsos* or gather together with others to discuss community issues are significantly more likely to vote

12. A combination of being an active member of a political party and having been contacted during the election campaign period has a strong effect on the likelihood of voting in the National Assembly but not Local Government elections.

13. Worryingly, only about a third of the respondents who have been voting consistently since 2007 are willing to do the same in the future.

14. In terms of the attitudinal profile, an increase in satisfaction with the performance of the government increases the intention vote. Similarly, respondents who are satisfied and very satisfied with the performance of their MPs are willing to vote in the future. Paradoxically, those who rate the performance of their MPs and the government poorly report a significantly increased interest in politics over the past 10 years. This would imply that individuals whose interest in politics is increasing grade political institutions and actors poorly compared to those whose interest either stayed the same or decreased over the past ten years.

15. A typical non-voter tends to be educated (university diploma and above), young (particularly the under-25s), and urban-based.

16. For identified special groups (youth, women, people living with disability and ethnic minorities), four major issues appear as common hurdles to voting. These are: limited general participation (the feeling that the political system is not accommodating of their group, especially at decision making and agenda-setting), effects of migration (internal and external, thereby marginalising them spatially and denying them opportunity at election time), dearth of electoral (and general political) messages that both target their issues or are presented in formats consumable by these groups, and general marginalisation from the socio-political and economic system.

17. Other group-specific hurdles that limit or obstruct voting by members of these groups, including, for *the youth*, a generalised disempowerment emanating from unemployment (which denies then both resources to engage and incentive to do so -for lack of visible benefits of voting). For *women*, entrenched traditional practices (public appearance, changes in names, etc), and security concerns feature among the prominent obstacles to turnout. For *people with disabilities and minorities*, the general issues revolve round perceived discrimination and lack of outreach and support (e.g. language of communication, mobility facilitation etc).

Efforts to Stimulate Turnout

18. The survey results show that 63.47 percent received voter education from the IEC, 54.1 percent from political parties and less 36.57 percent from NGOs/CBOs while 36.56 percent, 45.99 percent and 63.44 percent said they did not receive voter education respectively from IEC, political parties and NGOs/CBOs

19. IEC public outreach tends to weigh heavily in favour of time-limited, electoral education, against long-term civic education. While the study did not explore the differential effects of either emphasis, it is generally agreed that civic education has a more enduring political behaviour-changing effect.

20. The respondents' perceptions and attitudes on the effectiveness of civic and voter education is that content and coverage are limited; voter education coverage tends to exclude certain segments of society. Voter education delivery mode (mainly *lipitso*, workshops, and radio programs.) is still largely traditional and biased against the youth. There are notably no impact assessment mechanisms and there is poor monitoring of the interventions.

Summary of key recommendations

21. IEC must

    a. address its operational management and efficiency in elections by, among others: ensuring financial independence, building financial management capacity and strengthening internal controls and accountability measures (including for party funding)

    b. urgently review and clean the voters' roll to eliminate current defects which affect both the calculation of turnout and the credibility of the Commission

    c. develop a policy to curb the proliferation of political parties. In the meantime, enforce existing regulations on registration and de-registration of political parties

    d. pay special attention to and address the needs and challenges of special groups and other significant voting constituencies (e.g. migrants)

    e. develop a continuous comprehensive and systematic approach to civic and voter education

f. review its working relations CVE-implementing partners and institute a robust Monitoring and Evaluation system for all its programmes, with particular focus on the efficiency and efficacy of CVE approaches

22. Government must

a. Provide adequate funding to the IEC, especially for an integrated CVE programme, to enable the Commission to reach all potential voters consistently, continuously and effectively

b. Adopt a comprehensive national civic education policy

c. Consider expatriate (Diaspora) voting, mobile voting and other measures to accommodate Lesotho's significant defaulting voter population

d. Enhance the quality of governance, including measures to improve service delivery, inclusion and accountability at all levels (local and national).

23. Political Parties, NGOs, CSOs, and other partners must

a. Provide leadership and democracy education to MPs, Local Councillors and Traditional leaders, and strengthen their capacity to deliver civic education.

b. Develop appropriate and user-friendly, sector-targeted materials and approaches (to cover women, youth, linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, etc) should be part of an integrated national approach (IEC-parties-NGO collaboration).

c. lobby for the full integration/mainstreaming perspectives of special groups from onset of electoral process and lobby them to participate as members and decision makers in bodies involved in electoral processes.

1. Introduction

Lesotho's voter turnout has been declining steadily over the past 25 years despite efforts by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to halt or reverse the trend. Turnout has dropped from 72 percent in 1993 to 46 percent in the recent National Assembly election of 2017 (IEC, 2017). Lesotho's voter turnout is not only declining, it is also curiously lower than the figures obtained from parliamentary elections across the African continent. For instance, in 2014, turnout averaged 84 percent, 72 percent and 73 percent respectively in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, (International IDEA 2016).

Many of the technical and socio-contextual influences known to affect turnout may be argued to have been addressed successfully in the past three decades. For example, the number of polling stations has been increased, the electoral system has been refined to produce only one ballot while the electoral rules (model, qualification criteria, etc.) have been simplified, and massive voter education efforts undertaken to inform voters and stimulate interest among them. Yet voter participation has continued to be lower than the regional (Southern African Development Community) average as intimated.

While no systematic analysis has been done to establish the contextual and individual-level determinants of turnout in Lesotho, much of the media commentary puts the blame on voter fatigue. For instance, the 2017 election was the third within a period of five years (Monyake, 2017). But questions remain why fatigue has a differential effect on the voting population given that all constituencies have not experienced a significant decline. It is unclear why turnout is consistently low in some constituencies, relatively high in some, and why it fluctuates in others.

Furthermore, the profile of citizens most likely to vote and those likely to default are not known. Lack of such vital information makes it difficult to assess the effects of past efforts and to devise targeted interventions to address the problem.

Following the 2017 National Assembly election, which recorded the lowest turnout in the history of elections in Lesotho, the Commonwealth Observer Group reiterated its call to the IEC to conduct research on this problem (Commonwealth Observer Group 2017:23).

It is against this background that IEC commissioned Globe Management Consultants (Pty) Ltd to undertake a study to explore factors contributing to low and declining voter turnout in both National Assembly and Local Government elections. This report presents the findings of this study and

provides practical implications of these findings and makes some recommendations on how to reverse the observed trend.

1.1 Objectives of the research

The purpose of this study was

> To identify the causal factors of low voter turnout in Lesotho, including identification of profiles of voters and non-voters by residence (geographical distribution), sex, age, occupation, education and other [standard] socio-economic characteristics.

The study further sought to understand factors contributing to Lesotho's low and declining voter turnout in both national- (parliamentary) and local-level elections. This therefore led to the identification of the following core questions that guided this research:

i. What have been the patterns of voter turnout in Lesotho since 1993?
ii. What factors influence and determine the decisions of voters to participate in elections?
iii. Which constituencies reflect low voter turnout and why?

1.1.1 Expected outputs and outcome

The analysis presented here is intended to inform the IEC's strategic planning and design of interventions to improve turnout, including legal, process and content elements that should assist in targeting problem areas, including (but not limited to) the identification of

i. Trends in voter turnout over the past 25 years of electoral contests in Lesotho
ii. Voting and turnout dynamics in Lesotho, covering all national elections over this period
iii. Voters' views and attitudes towards political participation (and voting in particular)
iv. Individual and contextual factors influencing participation in elections
v. Reasons for low voter turnout by locality, geography, and socio-economic characteristics
vi. Strategies and approaches of Lesotho's electoral community to improve voter turnout
vii. Recommendations for improving interventions aimed at stimulating voter turnout (for IEC and other election actors).

In the long run, the **outcome** of the assignment is envisaged as the development and implementation of evidence-based, effective and efficient voter-engagement interventions to reverse low and declining voter turnout in Lesotho elections.

1.2 Importance of voter turnout

The rate of voter turnout is an important indicator of the health of democracy in a number of ways that merit studying, and that have an implication for the legitimacy of electoral processes, institutions and for the overall political life of a society.

Firstly, being a measure of how many of the qualifying voters actually take part in elections, voter turnout may be taken to reflect the openness and ease of access to society's political process. This is because voting is an opportunity and right that citizens are afforded in law to express their preference of candidates and parties that will be responsible for the running of their communal affairs for a defined period (the electoral term). Therefore, a lower turnout may reflect hurdles in the administrative processes for voting, or restrictive qualifications for voting, that all limit the free exercise of this right by citizens. This should be a point of concern for electoral managers and lawmakers, as it is a curb on the full exercise of citizens' rights to participate in the governance of their community.

Secondly, elections are intended to lend legitimacy to the state (or other structures within the political system). They are a modality for transferring the sovereignty of citizens to a designated body to exercise on their behalf for a defined period. In this manner therefore, a lower turnout may be understood to reflect the citizen's lack of support for state institutions. This could be symptomatic of, among others, lack of trust in the electoral processes, institutions and/or the political institutions which emerge from polls.

Thirdly, citizen participation in political processes is an important measure of the health of societal relations, including the levels of acceptance and tolerance of diversity in opinion. These are elements that are reflected in turnout rates, whether as causes or effects.

It is clear therefore that voter turnout is an important measure of the health of democratic politics in any society, and that when this measure continues to be low and/or declines, this it raises concern for all democracy-supporting institutions and actors: election management bodies (EMBs), policy and law makers, scholars, political parties, democracy advocates and the citizenry in general.

In short, as part of assessing elections in particular and democratic development in general, voter turnout is important because, according to Kotze, (2014:9), "…elections are not only about party-political contestation, but they are also a reflection the state of a country's [or society's] general political health and democratic maturity." Therefore, it is important to analyse and understand the causes of changes (especially negative changes) in the rates of voter turnout in Lesotho over the past 25 years since the reintroduction of electoral democracy in 1993, and to identify the gaps in the effectiveness of efforts to improve it.

1.2.1 Voter turnout factors

What explains variation in voter turnout? This is the core of the inquiry here, with specific reference to Lesotho. Three broad groups of factors may be identified which influence levels of and changes in voter participation in elections. The first may be labelled contextual-technical determinants of voter turnout: things beyond the control of the elector, including legal provisions for qualifying and exercising the vote (such as the exclusion of expatriate citizens, the difficulty or complexity of the ballot, logistical arrangements available on polling day, access for certain classes of citizens –e.g. those with disabilities, etc). These hurdles to voter participation vary from country to country and may depend on the socio-economic level of development –although that is not the full story.

Another set of influences on voter participation rates relates to the socio-political and cultural context obtaining in a community. Limited information, social attitudes, security considerations and similar conditions also influence the willingness and ability of citizens to exercise their voting rights. Thus, where there is widespread perception that political participation is antisocial or socially undesirable in some way (for example some religious communities teach strict separation of the religious and the political), this may go to explaining limited participation such as voting. The influence of these factors is surely diminishing around the world, as democracy is increasingly taken to be the preferred form governance (and elections as a central element therein).

A third group of influences on voter turnout is more interesting and less scrutable. These are the personal attributes (and attitudes) of voters. Analyses of political behaviour have been done and frameworks have been developed to explain the personal-level decision making of political actors. Here the interests, personal attributes (education, age, civic mindedness, etc.) have been used to create matrices aimed at explaining and predicting the political behaviour of individuals and groups (including voters). Among the issues that spark the interest of analysts in this direction has been the relative ease of access to attribute-aggregated data on voters. These datasets provide facile templates from which

analysts make inferences and draw conclusions. However, these variables and their interrelation in determining and explaining voter behaviour are complex; and each cluster/combination alone fails to provide full explanations of human behaviour.

This analysis seeks to identify from these frameworks the salient elements that are most apt in explaining the situation in Lesotho with regard to the choice of qualifying voters to vote or not. Chapter 5 discusses several hypotheses relating to each framework, while endeavouring to provide a composite profile of the voting and non-voting individuals in Lesotho –with a view to advising on interventions that might help address weaknesses and/or limit the influences that result in declining turnout. This is done with the understanding that:

> … individual reasoning does not take place in a social vacuum but depends in various ways on the actions and opinions of other people. When individual decisions are (even in part) conditional or interdependent, the structure of social ties has the power to shape social outcomes to a much larger degree than previously recognised. Therefore, to avoid bias, explanations of variations in political participation … must go beyond stories about isolated individuals to incorporate the potential impact of social interaction on social outcomes" (Rolfe, 2012:2).

2. Research design and methodology

2.1 Overall approach

As the first attempt to systematically investigate factors influencing voter turnout in Lesotho, this study employed a mixed-methods sequential design. This entailed integrating both quantitative and qualitative data methods in order to take advantage of the strengths of each approach while minimising the impact of their weaknesses. The design is *sequential* to the extent that quantitative data collection and analysis precedes and partly informs the qualitative data collection and subsequent analyses (Creswell 2003, 2005). The quantitative phase of the study was, itself, informed by extensive review of the literature on factors of voter turnout, especially in emerging democracies. The qualitative phase built on these literatures, the results of the quantitative analysis and feedback from the IEC as a Client and lastly, interesting issues and concerns raised in our interactions with the Key Informants.

This chapter presents an outline of the methodology adopted in this study and how it was implemented. It starts with a working definition of voter turnout and some of the ways of measuring the phenomenon.

2.2 Defining and measuring voter turnout

Generally defined, voter turnout refers to the proportion of eligible voters who cast their votes on polling day. This is normally presented as a percentage of the total voters who qualify to participate in an election.

The traditional measure used to calculate voter turnout has been to base it on registered voters. This entails the use of the official voter register to determine those who should participate in polls, and then calculating the fraction of this as the turnout. This estimate has, without always expressly stating, assumed that the official registration figures are valid, and therefore a reliable basis for turnout calculations. However, voter registration figures have been problematic in Africa. In Lesotho, the health of the voters' roll has been questioned by political parties, analysts, Civil Society Organisations, and independent institutions of the state. For example, based on the concerns of the Auditor General regarding the integrity of the voters' roll, the latest Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Report recommends "a complete overhaul of electors' register database. This process must be completed

within six (6) months … the Director of Elections must report progress to Parliament within 60 days" (Public Accounts Committee Report 2019:64).

An alternative (and increasingly popular) basis for determining and calculating voter turnout is known as the Voting Age Population (VAP) system. This is yet to be used or considered significantly in Lesotho. It relies on estimates based on national census totals (appropriately adjusted from time to time) to calculate voter turnout. This means that a nationally validated, organic and non-contingent template is used to estimate the number of qualifying voters. While there are some weaknesses with this method, the following advantages may be highlighted:

> ***First,*** national censi are undertaken on a regular basis and are accepted as reliable estimates of national populations. This means that hurdles to registration such as mistrust of EMBs or other bodies entrusted with electoral registration are eliminated or minimised. This is important because the practice of national census-taking is one of the more universally accepted methods of collecting national data.
>
> ***Second,*** there is the issue of capacity and duplication of effort. Where separate voter registration is necessary, the body entrusted for this needs a separate facility, set of templates and verification methods, to execute this mandate. On the other hand, most national statistical offices that are responsible for census data are relatively well-equipped and have the most comprehensive national reach of many state institutions.
>
> ***Third,*** Additionally, the practice of national population census has been in place in most countries around the world far longer than many EMBs or similar bodies. In countries like Lesotho, the national statistical office dates before or around independence, while the IEC is barely three decades old. Thus, the templates for collecting, analysing and adjusting population numbers (including VAP) are more tested and more reliable.

The foregoing is only a brief summary of how voter turnout is calculated, and some of the differences (and advantages) of adopting a VAP-based calculation. A more detailed exploration of the dynamics of turnout estimation in Lesotho is presented in Chapter 4 of this report. Suffice it to note that this exploration supports the contention that the way voter turnout has been calculated in Lesotho tends to exaggerate the problem, and that in comparative terms a VAP-basis appears to be more consistent with other documented analyses than what may be produced using the registration-based approach. Indeed, the trends in electoral analyses in the SADC area appears to be towards increased adoption

of this approach, as noted by Kotze, (ibid.): "…already with the 2009 general election [in South Africa] Robert Mattes and Collette-Schulz-Herzenberg and others started to insist that it would be more accurate to calculate [voter turnout] in proportion to Voting-Age population… based on regularly-adjusted or estimated census population figures." This approach is also adopted in this study, primarily to complement the VR-based assessment, and to provide the basis for verification of existing IEC data.

2.3 Data collection

The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis in this study comprised Desk Research, a National Voter Survey, In-depth Interviews with Key Informants, and Focus-Group Discussions. They are summarised in turn below.

2.3.1 desk research

The desk research covered material relating to the causes, characteristics and effects of low voter turnout in young democracies, as well as the strategies for tackling the phenomenon. This aimed at situating the inquiry within the proper theoretical, policy and practical context that illuminate the phenomenon and various aspects thereof. The reviewed documentation included IEC reports and databases, observer mission reports, NGO reports, academic analyses and media reports relating to voter turnout dynamics and elsewhere.

2.3.1 National voter survey

The Research team designed and administered a nationally representative survey of voters, the aim of which was to provide first-hand, quantitative information regarding knowledge, opinions and behaviour of voters in Lesotho.

The survey sample was determined using IEC data on polling stations as the primary sampling units and a formula was used to determine the size of the sample (See *Appendix 1*). It comprised 1,789 eligible voters drawn from all 80 constituencies and 178 polling stations as the primary sampling units (See *Appendix 2)*. The number of respondents per constituency was determined by the proportion of that constituency population to the total number of eligible voters (based on the IEC template). This sample was designed to accommodate a margin of error of +/-3 percent at 95 percent confidence level.

The survey was conducted using the Sesotho-translated and piloted electronic questionnaire (*See Appendix 3)*. The questionnaire was administered face-to-face to individuals in Sesotho, and in IsiXhosa and Sephuthi respectively where applicable. from 15 to 30 April 2019 by a team of 26 Field Researchers (FRs) immediately following training and pilot sessions. They were able to visit all 80 constituencies and sampled polling stations in the 10 districts of Lesotho. The FRs were equipped with the questionnaire uploaded on GPS-enabled electronic devices to enhance data integrity, ease supervision and provide safety for the data collected. The electronic questionnaire software was able to provide additional data on the duration and exact location of each interview. The GPS-enabled devices provided features such as tracking of locations of interviews and FRs' behaviour, and also enabled the team to generate 'live' maps during data collection (*Appendix4*).

Data Coverage

All the sampled polling stations were reached during data collection. The initially sampled 1,798 interviews was increased by 13 more which were added by the FRs in the process, yielding a final sample size of 1,811 respondents as reflected in **Table 1**. The reason for this variance is largely due to some FRs conducting additional interviews in the Mphosong Constituency

Table 1: National Voter Survey Coverage

District	No. of Constituencies	Target Sample Size	No. of Reached Respondents
Butha-Buthe	5	110	114
Leribe	11	305	311
Berea	13	238	246
Maseru	18	453	446
Mafeteng	8	174	174
Mohale's Hoek	9	156	158
Quthing	5	96	97
Qacha's Nek	3	64	65
Thaba-Tseka	6	117	116
Mokhotlong	4	86	84
TOTAL	***80***	***1800***	***1811***

2.3.2 In-depth expert and stakeholder interviews (Key Informants)

Data from Key Informants were collected from sources jointly identified and agreed on by IEC and the research team, from across different sectors with knowledge and expertise in various fields related to elections, politics and governance. They comprised former and current IEC officials, analysts, political actors, academics, representatives of the media, parliamentarians, representatives from

selected constituencies, traditional leaders, Development Partners and NGOs involved in civic and voter education.

Although the research team initially identified 40 Key Informants, in the end 46 were interviewed (see *Appendix 5*). This excess was due largely to, first, the snowballing nature of qualitative research whereby issues raised in interviews necessitate additional sources. Second, some experts requested to invite their colleagues to participate in the interviews in order to enrich the quality of the information. These spontaneous yet thoughtful interventions greatly enriched the data and the conclusions based on qualitative phase of the project. Researchers were able to interview individuals from all the pre-identified categories of informants— an essential consideration when assessing qualitative data.

2.3.3 Focus-Group Discussions

A total of 17 Focus-Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted by 14 facilitators over a three-week period in July 2019. The FDG participants were purposively identified based on five criteria to ensure inclusivity of collective rural and urban voice and face in terms of gender and civil society, youth, Local Government Councils, IEC district staff and NGOs involved Voter education activities. The group sizes ranged from five (5) to fifteen (15) participants (though this number was exceeded in Maseru (urban youth), Tele and Mekaling Constituencies. The discussions were interactive and guided by checklists of general questions with some focussing on the specific groups.

The six electoral constituencies in which FDGs were conducted were selected on the basis of the following criteria: all have consistently registered either low or declining voter turnout over the past three consecutive National Assembly elections namely, Maputsoe #15 in Leribe; Ketane # 62 and Tele # 64 in Quthing; Maseru # 32 and Thaba-Putsoa # 39 in Maseru; Mekaling # 59 in Mohales-Hoek; and Mantšonyane #72 in Thaba-Tseka**.** These selection criteria are summarised as shown in **Table 2.**

The other selection criteria for these constituencies included ensuring a balance between rural and urban geography, the North-South location and Lesotho's four ecological zones. In light of these methodological considerations, the research team also conducted one FGD of rural youth in Mokhotlong constituency number 79 to specifically target herders and domestic workers some of the most marginalised youth in Lesotho and the African continent as per our reviewed literature. It must be noted that the performance of the selected constituencies over the past three consecutive elections relative to the national average remains low by all measures.

Table 2: Focus-Group Discussions per Constituency and Category

Constituency	**Categories and No. of FGDs**				**Total No. of FDGs**
	Youth	Men & Women/Civil Society	Women	Coun cillors	
1. Maputsoe # 15	√	√	√	√	4
2. Maseru #32	√	√		√	3
3. Thaba-Putsoa 39	√	√		√	3
4. Mekaling #59[2]	√				1
5. Tele # 64[3]	√				1
6. Mantšonyane #72	√	√		√	3
7. Mokhotlong # 79	√				1
8. IEC Staff	√ √				2
9. NGOs	√				1
Total					**19**

The group sizes ranged from five (5) to fifteen (15) people (though this number was exceeded in a few cases like Maseru (urban youth), Tele and Mekaling constituencies.

2.4 Data entry, processing, analysis and presentation

The technology employed for quantitative data collection allowed the FRs to send questionnaires to the remote server upon completion of each interview. This eliminated the need for manual data entry. Nevertheless, the data still had to be converted from the original MS-Excel file into Stata and SPSS packages for cleaning, weighting and manipulation. In terms of data analysis and reporting, the research team deliberately focused on descriptive statistics. In this regard, the results have been presented in the form of simple frequency tables, selected crosstabs and graphs. The qualitative data analysis and presentation is in the form of meta-analysis, themes and brief narratives and comments by respondents.

Moreover, in the study process Globe consulted with IEC and provided progress reports on each stage of data collection for their input. The draft report was first presented in-house and later at a stakeholders' validation workshop. As much as possible their invaluable contributions have been incorporated in this document.

[2] Here, Civil Society was inclusive of men, women, youth and Local Government councillors.

[3] Ditto!

3. Election trends, voting and turnout in Lesotho

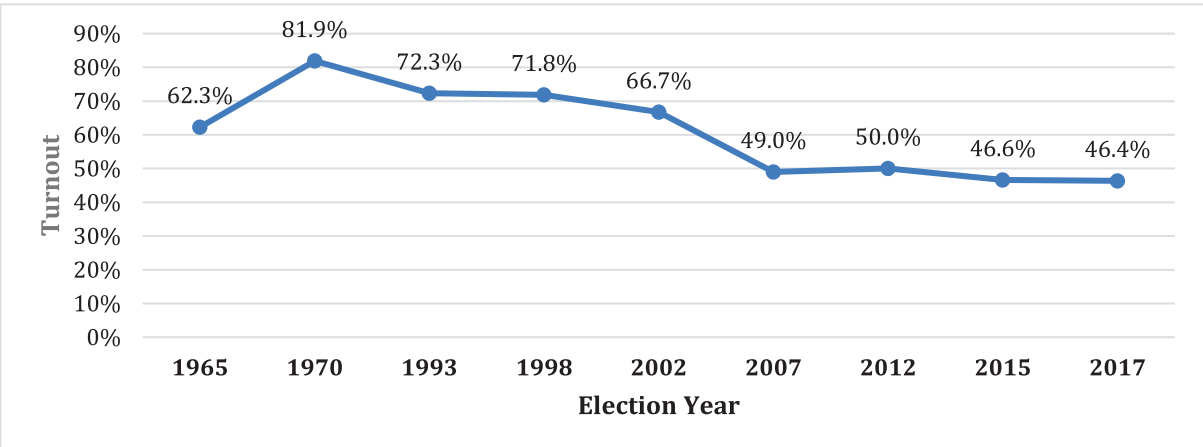
This chapter presents a brief history of electoral history of Lesotho, highlighting the political background of these polls as its affects on voter turnout. This is done in order to identify turnout patterns and begin to tease out, primarily from the literature, explanations of changes in the participation of electors. The factors identified in the literature will form part of the inquiry and guide the identification of salient aspects of the context that may or may not have influenced the generally observed decline in turnout since the advent of electoral politics. While the focus of the inquiry here covers the past 25 years, the background below starts with the first full suffrage poll of 1965.

3.1 Political dynamics and national elections, 1965 to 2017

Turnout patterns in past 25 years show a 25.9 percent decline from 72.3 percent in 1993 to 46.4 percent in 2017 in National Assembly elections which is below national average

Lesotho has held eight democratic national elections in the last 54 years of its independence, starting with the 1965 pre-independence poll. The 1970 election was declared null and void during counting, and therefore the figures are available. The country did not go to the polls again until 1993 when democracy was reintroduced. In addition, the country conducted three Local Government elections in 2005, 2011 and 2017. **Figure 1** presents trends in voter turnout in National Assembly elections since 1965.

Figure 1: Voter Turnout in Lesotho General Elections (1993-2007)



SOURCE: International IDEA (https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/174/40)

3.1.1 The 1965 and 1970 elections

Lesotho's first National Assembly election was held in April 1965 ahead of the country's independence from Britain in 1966. The election produced a turnout rate of 62.3 percent. The next general election, held in 1970, yielded a voter turnout rate of 81 percent. This election was, however, declared null and void by Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan of the Basotho National Party (BNP) when it became clear that the opposition Basotho Congress Party (BCP) was winning (McCartney 1973, Southall 1994, Letsie 2013). The BNP government subsequently declared the state of emergency, suspending the Constitution and political party activities, beginning a 16-year period of one-party dictatorship that ended with a military coup in 1986 (Mothibe, 1999).

Two factors explain the significantly improved voter turnout in 1970: the intense voter mobilisation that the BCP mounted (Matlosa, 1999) and the surprisingly professional way with which the election was conducted (McCartney, 1973). The BCP election campaign, focusing on the policy failures of the government, particularly its urban-focused development strategy, swayed support away from the governing BNP, especially in the mountainous and rural areas (Matlosa, 1999). Furthermore, as McCartney (1973) observes, the brutal tactics employed by the newly established Stock Theft Unit were being met with resistance and disdain by the farmers and fanned anti-government sentiments in the mountain region of Lesotho (McCartney. 1973). These factors conspired to encourage the majority of the disgruntled voters to turn out in their numbers in order to give the opposition a chance at the polls

3.1.2 The 1993 election

With the third wave of democratisation sweeping across Africa and several authoritarian regimes opening up the space for political participation, Lesotho re-introduced democratic elections in March 1993 (Southall, 1994, Southall and Petlane, 1995; Matlosa. 1997; Mahao 1997). This election, Coplan, (2001:96) reminds us, "…[was] judged shiningly free and fair by outside observers and Basotho monitors, and served as an example to South Africa for its own election a year later." The election registered a turnout rate of 72.3 percent, ostensibly because of a constellation of factors unique to this period. These included the euphoria and resulting media coverage, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the impending end of apartheid in South Africa, the wave of anti-state protests across Africa and, importantly, the elections itself as re-democratising exercise –scholarly analysis suggests that a majority of voters were excited to be able to exercise their right to freely choose a government for the first time since 1970 (See Ajulu 1995, Southall 1994 for example). Thousands of Basotho migrant workers

poured back over the border to vote, many for the first time (Coplan, 2001:96), and on polling day many "stood patiently for up to twelve hours in long queues" (Southall, 1994:114). For Southall and Petlane (1995:147), "the 1993 election was viewed overwhelmingly as an opportunity to right the historical wrong done to the country by the BNP…"

3.1.3 The 1998 election

The pre-election atmosphere of the 1998 National Assembly election was characterised, in the main, by a series of controversies triggered by the formation of a new political party, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party, by Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, and the subsequent defection to this party by the majority of parliamentarians. The LCD's subsequent takeover of the government was widely condemned, in particular, by opposition parties, the Senate and "a section of the civil society led by the Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organisations (LCN)" (Makoa, 1997:18). With the support of other opposition parties[4], the weakened BCP made several unsuccessful attempts to force Mokhehle to resign (Sekatle, 1997).

In this context, political analysts conjectured that the circumstances under which BCP lost power was likely to encourage voting (see Makoa 1997). In line with this prediction, 71.83 percent of registered voters turned up to vote nationwide. In addition to the effect of the highly charged political atmosphere, "the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years and the running of the elections by [the] Independent Electoral Commission" might have conspired to produce this reasonably high voter turnout (Makoa. 1997:21). To its credit, the newly established IEC mounted an impressive voter awareness campaign characterised in the main by the liberal use of posters, pamphlets, notices and public gatherings nation-wide. As Sekatle (1998:33) reports, these "posters, pamphlets and notices were distributed and displayed in villages, shopping centres, educational institutions, health centres, public gatherings and also published in newspapers."

The newly formed LCD won a landslide victory with 79 out 80 constituencies. These results inflamed the already febrile atmosphere, unleashing a violent mayhem that put the capital city into a standstill until military and diplomatic intervention by SADC restored normalcy. One of the reasons for opposition parties' rejection of the result was the concern that the IEC was unable to thoroughly clean the 1993 voters' roll in time for the poll. Indeed, they had, prior to these election, made fervent calls for a postponement, arguing that the lowering of the voting age, (which added an extra burden of

[4] These included the BNP, Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) and United Democratic Party (UDP).

voter registration), the arduous task of constituency delimitation, the need for voter education and the overall teething problems of the newly-established IEC would compromise the credibility of the poll (Southall 1999). According to Matlosa (1997:103), the IEC seemed to share these concerns in that it had also "proposed that the election be rescheduled for some time in August 1998". One of the major reasons for seeking postponement was that IEC did not have enough financial, technical and human resources "to organise the election as originally envisaged" (Matlosa, 1997:103).

In the aftermath of the election, some of the opposition parties surmised that the voters' roll had been deliberately manipulated by the IEC to assist the LCD to win. This claim was rejected by the Langa Commission which was set up to audit the poll. Although the Commission's report rejected claims of rigging, it admitted rather confusingly, that due in part to the limited technical and organisational capacity of the newly established the IEC, "there may have been some occasional attempts by local electoral officials to massage results" (Southall 1999:692).

The Langa Commission raised concerns with the quality of the voters' roll and overall electoral administration. It identified several incidents in which bags containing ballot papers were found unsealed by unauthorised persons (Molomo 1999). In some cases, attempts had been made to reseal the bags (Molomo 1999). Furthermore, according to Likoti (2007:252) "the Commission found discrepancies between the total number of people who had voted and the announced results, and considered the explanation given by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) … to be implausible". When added to the admittedly chaotic voters roll and allegations that unregistered people were permitted to vote, some more than once, these findings raise serious questions about the accuracy of the official turnout figure of 71.83 percent.

3.1.4 The 2002 election

In 2002, Lesotho adopted a Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP) electoral model for greater inclusivity, and increased seats in the National Assembly from 80 to 120. Eighty of these are filled via the First Past the Post (FPTP), while the Proportional Representation (PR) element contributes the remaining 40. The inaugural MMP model gave each voter two ballots: "one for a local constituency candidate and one for a political party" (Weisfelder, 2015:54). Although the model enabled split-ticket voting, most voters did not take advantage of this feature, as the election results closely mirrored the patterns observed 1998 (and the differential between FPTP and PR votes was negligible); LCD won 79 of the 80 FPTP seats. Nevertheless, contrary to what happened in 1998, the PR seat allocation ensured that other parties were represented in parliament.

According to most observers, the largely unchanged results, at least with respect to the FPTP component, vindicated the IEC and supported its claim that there were no deliberate attempts to rig the 1998 election (Kabemba, 2004). It also added credence to the 1998 turnout, as over two-thirds (66.69%) of voters turned up in this poll.

The improved quality of the 2002 election management indicates that the IEC took important lessons from its teething troubles in 1998, and also implemented some of the key recommendations of the Langa Commission, development partners and local CSOs. In this regard, it devoted time to establishing a new voters' roll using a new voter registration technology known as the Automated Fingerprint Verification System (AFVIS).[5] The voter registration was monitored by SADC in 2001, and the preliminary voters' roll was made available, without charge, to political parties and the general public between as part of verification. The final voters' roll indicated that the IEC had registered a total of 831,315 individuals (SADC-PF Election Observer Report 2002).

The IEC also mounted a voter education campaign for three months consisting of extensive use of many of the various methods and platforms employed during the 1998 election period, and which were mentioned in previous paragraphs. It also went further and engaged, for the first time in the electoral history of Lesotho, the services of a travelling Theatre Group. Although it is difficult to estimate the exact impact of this use of live drama on voter turnout, anecdotal evidence suggests that it was one of the popular voter education methods, especially among the youth, and first- time voters (SADC Election Observer Mission Report 2002). Overall, the legislative election of 2002 was highly regarded by both local and international observers, who "...invariably ratified the outcome as a free-and-fair expression of the will of the electorate" (Kabemba, 2004: 8).

3.1.5 The 2007 election

As **Figure 1** demonstrates, voter turnout took a dive in 2007. This coincided with two important developments in the politics of Lesotho. First, this election was preceded by a number of interesting episodes, the first of which was the controversial government decision to sell expensive government vehicles to statutory employees for far less than their market value. Second, the factional battles within the ruling LCD escalated and culminated in a split and subsequent formation of the All Basotho Convention (ABC) by Thabane and 18 parliamentarians in October 2006, four months before the poll. Third were electoral pacts between LCD and the National Independent Party (NIP) on the one

[5] The AFVIS technology entailed using fingerprint and image production software to enhance voter identification and reduce incidences of election fraud.

hand, and between ABC and the Lesotho Workers Party (LWP) on the other. These pacts were designed in such a way that the bigger parties could only field candidates on the FPTP ticket while the smaller parties only contested the PR ticket. Members of both parties were to vote for the bigger party's FPTP candidate and their PR ballots to vote for the allied smaller party. As a result, two historically smaller parties, NIP and LWP, suddenly found themselves with enough votes to secure ten or more PR seats. The NIP, for instance, was awarded 21 PR seats –a feat it could never have achieved on its own. As one would expect, a majority of the PR candidates in both alliances were well-known members of their bigger partners.

To the extent that this arrangement enabled members of the larger parties to appear on PR lists submitted by the smaller parties, the 2006/7 informal pre-election alliances undermined the spirit and intent of the MMP model: they ensured that both LCD and the new challenger, ABC, maintained the exact number of seats won via the FPTP while still having access to PR seats as these, technically, belonged to either NIP or LWP. Coupled with the controversies mentioned in previous paragraphs, these alliances contributed significantly to the political tension that pervaded both the pre-election and post-election atmosphere. It also potentially contributed to the nose-diving voter turnout.

3.1.6 The 2012 election

The 2012 National Assembly election was held in May, following two prominent developments. First, the National Assembly Electoral Act, 2011 was promulgated, replacing the National Assembly Elections Order, 1992. It jettisoned the two-ballot feature of MMP in favour of one ballot for both FPTP and PR components. Section 55 of the new Act reads as follows: "during general elections, constituency votes shall be counted both for the candidate and be converted into party votes." Section 47(7) compels political parties wishing to contest as an alliance or coalition to formalise that arrangement by submitting joint lists of constituency and PR candidates.

Other notable developments included another split in the ruling LCD, subsequent formation of the Democratic Congress (DC) by Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili and 44 LCD MPs. These episodes contributed to a highly charged political environment, characterised by inflammatory political statements, trading of insults over local media and sporadic violence at political rallies.

The controversies of 2012 led several media commentators to predict a high voter turnout, especially in the urban areas, where interest in politics appeared to be higher. However, the average turnout was registered at only 51.86 percent. The lowest-performing constituencies were in these very urban areas:

four of the ten lowest performers were in Maseru town: Motimposo (45.39%), Qoaling (45.30%), Stadium area (44.98%) and Lithabaneng (41%).

One of the propositions about the disjuncture between the apparent interest in electoral matters and the low turnout in 2012 is the extremely short period within which the IEC carried out voter registration. This impacted voter turnout in two ways: first, as the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) Observer Mission (2012) pointed out, there was very little time to transfer the names of people who had moved to new areas of residence, which potentially, disenfranchised them. Second, according to the Commonwealth Observer Mission Report (2012:4),

> [t]he sudden nature of the election affected the period and process of voter registration. The IEC did not have the usual three-month period required registering voters for the election. The registration period was therefore shortened, with the result that voters who were migrant workers and students based in South Africa, and some young people attaining the age of 18, could not register.

While the IEC might have failed to register a significant number of eligible voters as intimated, there were concerns that where registration did occur, some voters were registered more than once, and that IEC was not able to satisfactorily deal with these duplicates. As the Beale (2013) points out, efforts to identify and remove duplicate names were hampered by, among others, the poor quality of some of the fingerprints captured in previous registration systems.

Another important concern raised in various EOM reports was the failure to remove the names of deceased voters from the roll (see Commonwealth Observer Mission Report 2012). Lastly, there were concerns that underage persons might have been registered as eligible to vote (Ibid). The IEC's largely poor efforts to clean the voters roll raise serious concerns about the validity of the official turnout figure for the 2012 elections. If the voters roll was inflated, as some analysts and observers suggested ahead of this election, the turnout figure of 51.86 percent could be inaccurate; the number of people who voted as a percentage of those registered may have been under-estimated.

Democratic Congress emerged from the 2012 election as the political party with the largest vote share (47.5 %). It was followed by ABC (30.2 %) and LCD (26.3%). Despite its dominance, DC was unable to form government. Instead, ABC agreed to form a coalition government with LCD and BNP, and appointed ABC leader Thabane as Prime Minister and LCD leader Mothejoa Metsing as his deputy. This marked an epoch in the politics of Lesotho as it ended Mosisili's 14-year premiership and replaced a single party majority government with a multiparty coalition government.

This first coalition government proved very shaky from the beginning, hanging as it did, on one seat majority in parliament. This was threatened in February-March 2014, when two ABC parliamentarians quit the party, one to join DC and the other to found his own party. This started the irreversible slide towards collapse, starting with Thabane's prorogation of parliament in June. Next was an attempted *coup d'état* in August-September by the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF). This prompted SADC intervention, and an early election in February 2015.

3.1.7 The 2015 election

This snap election took place amid fears of possible post-election violence, given the highly charged pre-election environment, which made it necessary for three security chiefs — Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli and the Police Commissioner Khothatso Tšooana— to take a leave of absence out of the country.[6]

The election was closely contested, particularly by the ABC and DC. Despite the keen interest, the turnout was recorded at 50 percent of registered voters. The DC won 47 of the 120 parliamentary seats while ABC won 46, leading to another hung parliament and necessitating the formation of a coalition government, this time seven parties led by the DC party's Mosisili. It did not survive long and started to unravel in late 2016. The next poll came in June 2017.

3.1.8 The 2017 election

The 2017 election bore a striking resemblance to its 2015 and 2012 predecessors in three material respects. First, all were preceded by a loss of parliamentary majority by the main or ruling party as a result of parliamentary defections. Second, they were conducted within a general climate of insecurity. All three were "held when security issues had not been resolved and when some political leaders continued to allege that their personal safety was under threat" (EISA Observer Mission Report 2017:4). Third, 2015 and 2017 elections produced uncanny similarities in voter turnout figures (46.61% and 46.37 percent respectively).

[6] The first two were the cause of the attempted coup: Thabane had attempted to appoint Mahao as army chief in place of Kamoli, who resisted and reacted by virtually taking the state hostage, including shutting down all radio communication and forcing Thabane to flee to neighbouring South Africa. Tšooana became a casualty of the conflict as the police were deemed to support Thabane and were attacked and disarmed by elements of the army during the coup attempt.

In December 2016, the DC suffered its first split when its deputy leader, Monyane Moleleki, defected with 14 legislators to form the AD. Around the same period, the Secretary-General of LCD, Selibe Mochoborane, quit to form the Movement for Economic Change (MEC). Both these developments numerically weakened the ruling coalition. As a result, on 2 March 2017, a vote of no confidence was successfully passed against Prime Minister Mosisili, paving the way for a June 2017 election. This poll was contested by 27 of the 30 political parties registered with the IEC.

Despite the extremely short period IEC had to prepare for the 2017 election, it mounted a creative and vigorous voter education campaign with the support of local CSOs and some development partners. The aim was to achieve a voter turnout target of 85 percent. However, based on the official turnout figure of 46.37 percent, this ambitious campaign proved unrealistic. Several reasons have been advanced to explain this disappointing outcome.

The first explanation has to do with the election logistics. Due to the untimely nature of this election, only seven days (13-19 March 2017) were allocated for voter registration (EISA Pre-Election Assessment Mission, 2017). This had an adverse effect on the registration of new voters as well as transfers of those who had changed constituencies. As Commonwealth Observer Mission noted, "some citizens had faced challenges in registering during this short period" more especially those who "needed to travel some distance to the relevant IEC Constituency Office" (Commonwealth Observer Mission Report 2017).

The second possible explanation for low turnout in 2017 is related to the request by the army to deploy on polling day and the resultant conspicuous presence of armed soldiers in the vicinity of some of the polling stations. As the Commonwealth Observer Mission Report (2017) noted, the request itself was concerning in that it fuelled a speculation that the LDF and the incumbent government may not accept the election result if the opposition won. In the aftermath of the election, the IEC Public Relations Officer conjectured that the presence of the army in the immediate vicinity of the voting stations could have intimidated voters, nullifying the positive impact of the 85% campaign (Van Schie, 2017).

The third explanation is related to the general decline in support for electoral democracy. According to public opinion data from Afrobarometer, public support for elections has declined over the past decade. There is a significant drop in the number of Basotho who believe that elections ensure that voters' views are reflected. Furthermore, in the most recent nationally representative survey that Afrobarometer conducted, only 42 percent of Basotho expressed unconditional support for democracy as a form of government. This pales in comparison with the figures obtained from other

democracies in the SADC region. Support for democracy stood at 62 percent in Malawi, 65 percent in Namibia, 75 percent in Zimbabwe, 80 percent in Botswana and 81 percent in Zambia (Nkuebe, Malephane and Isbell 2017). Part of what frustrates ordinary Basotho is that the frequent change of government leadership has not yielded improved access to basic services. As a result, most of the voters are disgruntled and their patience with democracy is wearing thin.

3.2 Local Government elections

Since the start of Local Government system over two decades ago, three sets of elections have been held in Lesotho (2005, 2011 and 2017), as per the provisions of the Local Government Election Act 2004 and its subsequent amendment. The three polls were held at 6-year intervals though the law mandates an election every five years. Reasons for this included budgetary constraints, national political uncertainty/instability and changes in the legislative framework

During the course of this study, the Research Team was as unable to obtain complete turnout sets of data for the three elections from the IEC. The study reporting and analysis has relied on existing but scattered and sometimes anecdotal information from observer documents and the study interviews. These data, however, point to the declining pattern in voter turnout for local elections due to general voter apathy, spawned in part by the dysfunctional Local Government system. Indeed, the indication (including the latest IEC summaries) indicate an even worse scenario of turnout in Local Government elections that in in National Assembly polls.

3.2.1 The 2005 elections

These Elections were held in 2005. These were the first and were contested under the electoral model of FPTP. The voter turnout figure is not available, but the Commonwealth Observer Mission Report indicated that the overall voter turnover was low.[7] Altogether 3,869 candidates were fielded, few of whom were formally registered as political party candidates. Indeed, the poll has remained unique in the political history of Lesotho in that almost all candidates contested were elected as independents.

[7] Lesotho Local Government Elections 30 April 2005, Report of the Commonwealth Expert Team. Local Government Elections in Lesotho. http:// www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001408/p1752-Lesotho_Govt_April2005.pdf)

3.2.2 The 2011 elections

The Local Government elections were again held in September 2011 per the Local Government (Amendment) Act of 2011. These occurred a year later than the scheduled 5-year term, and one of the main developments that contextualised it (and indeed changed the technical as well as political dynamics of the poll) was the adoption of a complex new model grafted onto the standard FPTP: this is what became known as the "Zebra" model, which reserved 30 percent seats for women on a PR basis. The elections also became highly partisan when political parties fielded their party candidates competing with community-based candidates.

3.2.3 The 2017 elections

These elections which were held in October 2017 were organised separately from the Parliamentary elections held on 03 June 2017. In line with international trends, the most recent figures on voter turnout for local government elections are lower than for National Assembly elections. Focus Group Discussions with Maputsoe Urban Counsellors revealed very low levels of voter turnout which were observed by the candidates. A few examples were given where out of 100 percent registered voters the winners got far less than half. In fact, the figure hovered around 30-40 percent votes which is real measure of existence of low voter turnout in local elections. Being held after National Assembly elections in 2017 the perceptions that voters may have believed that their job was done and therefore felt no obligation to vote in the local elections, although this theory would not hold for the National elections which were held first However the answer may be found in the perceptions that national elections are more important than local ones. Local councils are largely undefined and local authorities are seen as not wielding any power. Interviews with community members also show that some communities have experienced less development and thus people do not see the need to vote because they believe polling stations are too far away or do not have time to go back to their home constituencies to vote. Some people explained that elections held on weekends when some people have other tasks to attend to and thus do not have time to vote.

4. Voter turnout patterns and implications

This chapter presents an analysis of voter turnout in Lesotho at constituency level. It seeks to validate or refute the assertion that voter turnout is low in Lesotho relative to other countries in the region. The chapter further discusses issues pertaining to voters roll and how it reflects patterns of voter turnout. The core issue addressed in the chapter is whether Lesotho's voter turnout is really low as acclaimed. And to what extent do voter turnout approximations based on the current voter's roll amplify the problem at hand: low and declining voter turnout? If a voter's roll has some defects which may explain low voter turnout, to what extent are these defects impacting on voter turnout, and in what age group are they more pronounced?

4.1 Patterns of turnout: constituency reflections

Although at national level voter turnout appears low and declining, there are constituencies that have consistently performed above national average during the period under review. The low and declining voter turnout at the national level reflects a number of challenges facing democratic dispensation in the country. However, one cannot turn a blind eye to the "cancelation effect" between low performing constituencies and high performing constituencies at national level which is dominated by low performing constituencies that dominate the rest thereby resulting generally in low voter-turnout.

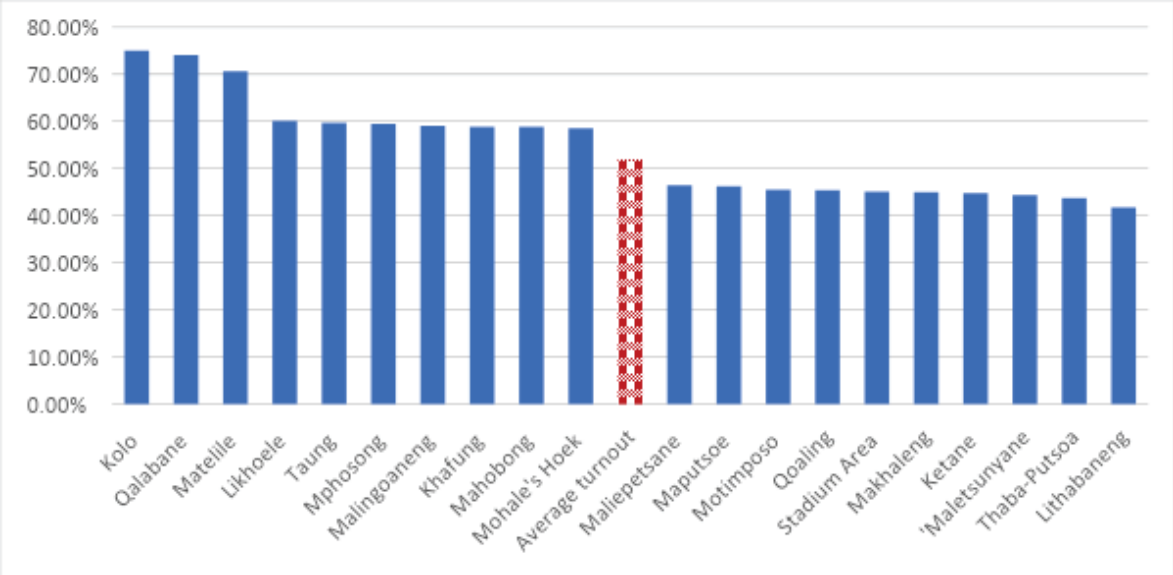
The average voter turnout rate for the 2012 National Assembly election was registered at over half of all registered voters (51.86%). This means that more than half of the voters participated in the poll in more than half of the constituencies nationwide. This chapter presents and discusses these dynamics, for each of the last three polls. This is done in order to both tease out the specific characteristics and dynamics that might make for the variation, and in order to inform the discussion of findings of this study.

4.1.1 Constituency performance in 2012

In total, 47 (out of 80) constituencies registered turnout rates of more than 50 percent in 2012, with three- quarters of all voters (74.95%) turning up to polling stations in Kolo (74.95%), Qalabane (73.99%) and Matelile (70.61%)— the highest-scoring constituencies in this respect. Of the ten highest-voting constituencies in 2012 National Assembly elections, four were in the Mafeteng district (Kolo, Qalabane, Matelile and Likhoele); two each in Mohale's Hoek and Leribe (Taung and Mohale's

Hoek, and Mphosong and Mahobong respectively), while Mokhotlong and Berea were represented by a constituency each (Malingoaneng and Khafung respectively). During the same period, Maliepetsane (46.33%), Maputsoe (46.19%), Motiposo (45.39%), Qoaling (45.30%), Stadium Area (44.98%), Makhaleng (44.88%), Ketane (44.71%), Maletsunyane (44.25%), Thaba-Putsoa (43.69%) and Lithabaneng (41.72%) performed below national average (see **Figure 2)**.

Figure 2: Ten Highest and lowest performing constituencies (2012 General Election)

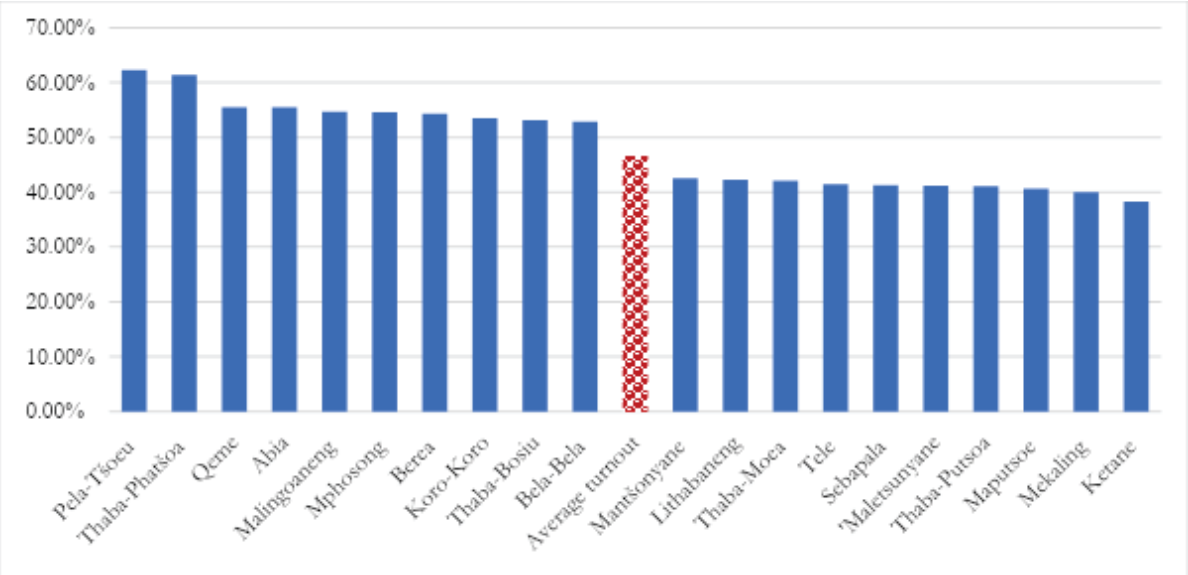


In 33 constituencies, less than half (50 %) of registered voters turned out to cast their votes for the 2012 election. Of the 10 lowest performing constituencies, four are found in the capital, Maseru. These are Motimposo (45.39 %), Qoaling (45.30 %), Stadium area (44.98 %) and Lithabaneng (41 %) (**See Figure 2**). With a turnout figure of 46.19 percent, Maputsoe is another urban constituency featuring among the 10 worst performers.

4.1.2 Constituency performance in 2015

The average voter turnout for the 2015 National Assembly election was registered at less than half of all registered voters (46.61%). As shown in **Figure 3**, the highest performing constituencies include among others, Pela-Tšoeu (62.32 %), Thaba-Phatšoa (61.40 %), Abia (55.46 %) and Malingoaneng (54.65 %). These constituencies registered a turnout rate of approximately 10 percentage points above the national average. Constituencies that registered below the national average turnout, and which qualify as worst performers, include Ketane (38.23 %), Mekaling (39.99 %) and Maputsoe (40.69 %).

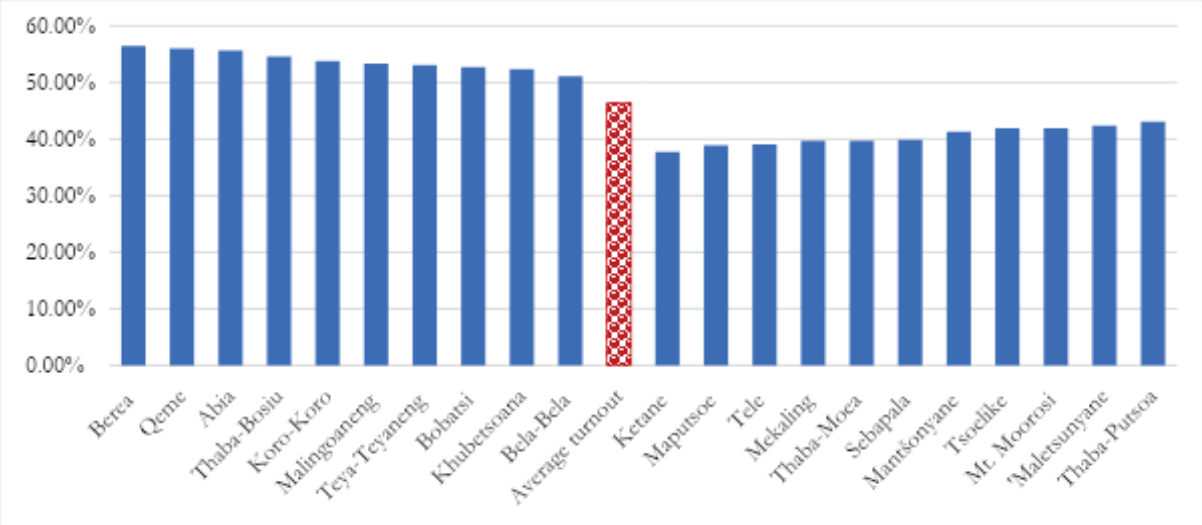
Figure 3: Ten highest and lowest performing constituencies (2015 General Election)



4.1.3 Constituency Performance in 2017

In the recent National Assembly election held on 03 June 2017, the average voter turnout was recorded at 46.37 percent. As shown in **Figure 4**, the highest performers included Berea (56.41%), Qeme (55.97 %), Abia (55.68 %) and Thaba-Bosiu (54.53 %). The lowest performers included Ketane (37.67%), Maputsoe (38.84%), Mekaling (39.68 %) and Tele (39.04 %).

Figure 4: 10 Highest and lowest performing constituencies (2017 General Election)



In the run-up to the 2017 National Assembly election, the IEC launched an ambitious 85% voter turnout campaign. As part of this campaign, the IEC and local Non-Government Organisations

intensified their voter education activities. This notwithstanding, the turnout dropped even further. Commentators and observers of Lesotho's general election have offered a number of explanations regarding the low turnout in the 2017 election. One such explanation was that the presence of the members of Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) in the immediate vicinity of the voting stations might have intimidated potential voters, nullifying the positive effect of the '85percent campaign'.

4.2 Voters roll and how it affects patterns of turnout

A central question surrounding the judgement of voter turnout revolves around the credibility and reliability of the voters' roll. In this connection, the questions are specifically as follows:

i) How reliable and reflective of reality is the roll?
ii) Voters' roll which specific aspects (especially age categorisation) suffer more defects?

These are the issues this section seeks to unravel, in order to truly understand the dimensions and extent of low voter turnout in Lesotho.

It seems the problem of bloated voters' roll started during the 2012 elections in which the total registered voters at the time stood at 1,127,980-a number higher than the 2007 registered voters by 211,750 (23%). The 2012 registration of eligible voters was even higher than the census number for eligible voters by 6 275 or approximately one percent above 100 percent coverage. Thus, the voters roll of 2012 constituted 101 percent of the total voting population. This is virtually impossible since when the voters' roll has registered every eligible voting population, the maximum it can reach is 100 percent. At the same time, 100 percent is also virtually impossible result because at any point in time there are eligible people dying and those who transit to the voting age category. All this makes it difficult to reach 100 percent registration coverage.

According to elections literature, in a few developed countries such as German (90.75 %), Iceland (96.8 %), Ireland (90.5 %), Italy (89.4 %), Japan (98.7 %) and Mongolia (92.2 %) for instance registration reach such high levels above 90 percent, whereas in most developing countries in particular in Sub-Saharan African countries with relatively cleaner voters rolls and better resourced, registration is reasonably 80 percent at maximum unless there are defects on the voters' rolls. For instance, registration coverage in Botswana in 2014 stood at 65 percent while in 2009 stood at 81 percent which was the highest since 1994. In South Africa, registration coverage stood at 73 percent except in 1993 when it reached 98.5 percent for the first time in the history of elections in South Africa. In Zambia and Mauritius registration coverage has reached the high of 91 percent and 95.7

percent respectively. However, in most Sub-Saharan African countries, registration coverage has averaged 75 percent utmost.

It remains to be interrogated further whether these defects are intentional or not as we will argue later. If one assumes an average of 77 percent registration coverage in 2017, 2015 and 2012 respectively, based on an average of 2007 and 2002 as the most probable registration coverage the country can ever reach given a number of compelling reasons discussed below, one can easily estimate a reasonable registration figure in those years respectively. Doing so, yields 956,273 registered voters in 2017 and 872, 488 registered voters in 2015 and finally 863, 713 registered voters in 2012. If 77 percent registration coverage is reasonable and perhaps plausible, it would yield voter turnout of 60.8 percent, 64.6 percent and 65.4 percent in 2017, 2015 and 2012 respectively. This would imply that voter turnout in the country is not as low as estimated by official statistics from IEC. The reasons why it is probably reasonable to assume that Lesotho registration coverage ranges between 77 percent and 80 percent include the following:

i) the challenging terrain in the country which has made it difficult to reach certain areas such as Ketane, Lebakeng, Qaqatu, Hloahloeng and other mountain areas
ii) incentives by society not to report deaths due to the desire to continue receiving pension income after the pension recipient dies
iii) the rapid rate of urbanization which in most instances has made the Village Chiefs to have far less influence in urban areas
iv) traditional marriages under which married women assume new names and surnames but do not always report these changes to IEC, thereby leading to double registrations; and
v) Lack of resources generally.

Therefore, if the 77 percent registration coverage is accepted as the most probable coverage the country can reach, it means that at minimum the 101 percent, 107 percent and 101 percent implied by the 2017, 2015 and 2012 figures respectively would be about 24 percent higher than the actual coverage. This implies that in every eight names on the voters' roll, about two are invalid. Johnson (2011) asserted that it could be that only 75 percent of the population is registered which implies that one in every five names on the voters 'roll is invalid. The 77 percent registration coverage that is slightly above that of Botswana (68%) and South Africa (73%) provides defects on the voters' roll of approximately 293,233; 337,591 and 264,267 people respectively in 2017, 2015 and 2012.

If we were to assume a similar coverage like to of Botswana (68 %), the Lesotho voter turnout would hover between 64 percent and 74 percent. These figures would reasonably approximate what a number of surveys such as the Afro-Barometer survey report in different years, which claim a 73 percent voter-turnout. In this nationally representative survey, we also came up with about 74 percent self-reported voter-turnout. We however recognise that individuals turn to exaggerate their propensity to have voted during the previous elections since it feels good to do so. Nonetheless, it can be argued that such overstatements can be approximated between 5 percent and 10 percent. If that is so, this brings us to a voter-turnout of around 65 percent.

While the country's voters roll is an open one with continuous registration (which makes it excellent in terms of inclusive democracy as pointed by Johnson (2011)), it makes cleaning voters' roll difficult, especially removing the names of the deceased and migrant citizens. It has been argued that a remedy to these defects would be to have periodic re-registration exercises every five years just like in South Africa and developed nations. This would prevent the build-up of dead people on the roll, which inevitably sparks political controversy. It would further remove the problem of name changes – especially for married women.

The Lesotho voters' roll has grown faster than the population between the 2006 and 2016 censi. Lesotho's population was estimated at 1,862,860 in 2006 and 2,007,201 in 2016, which represented a growth of 7.75 percent in ten years. This translates to population growth of about 0.77 percent per annum. Yet the voters' roll had registered 916,230 in 2007; 1,127,980 in 2012; 1,210,079 in 2015 and 1,254,506 in 2017, which represents a growth rate of more than 37 percent in ten years. The growth rate observed on the voters' roll between 2007 and 2012 alone is more than 23 percent while that between subsequent elections hovers between 3.7 percent and 7 percent.

Even though it is possible to have the growth rate of the voter's roll growing faster than the population growth, such growth can only obtain within a short time. This is often due to voter enthusiasm, political parties campaigning to get their supporters on the roll, and/or simply because of a new or big age cohort joining the electorate. It is therefore unusual to have the growth of voters' roll outpacing that of the population within any protracted period. This once again supports the assertion that Lesotho's voters roll is bloated.

The next vital question would be which age category contains more defects on the voters' roll? In addition, is it females or males who are duplicated on the voters' roll? These questions would take us to undertaking some basic checks of the voters roll by gender and age category. **Table 3** present

Lesotho's population by age group and by gender during the 2016 population census and the registered number of voters as at 26 June 2019. It is true that the population census numbers are two years behind but under certain reasonable assumptions we approximate the population census numbers in 2019. The Table shows that IEC voters' roll has under registered eligible voters in the age group 18-19 and 20-24 by more than 180,889 which represents more than 14.6 percent of total eligible voters. This provides further support to our findings that some voters did not vote because they were not registered. Similarly, voters in the age group 80-84 particularly females have been deregistered while males who are deceased have been maintained on voters' roll. At the same time, the voters roll has overestimated voting population in all age groups except 18-24. It seems reasonable to argue that Lesotho's voters roll has not accounted for migration, deaths and multiple registrations across these groups.

Table 3: National Population Voters roll by age group and gender

2016 Population Census by age Group and Gender				Reistered Voters by Age Group and Gender as at 25 June, 2019				Difference between registered voters and population census			
Age Group	Female	Male	Grand Total	Age Group	Female	Male	Grand Total		Female	Male	Grand Total
17-18				17 - 18	10	7	17				
18-19	41591	40,431	82,022	18 - 19	447	410	857		41,144	40,021	81,165
20-24	100440	98,827	199,267	20 - 24	52,592	46,951	99,543		47,848	51,876	99,724
25-29	93141	95,802	188,943	25 - 29	101,891	90,839	192,730		(8,750)	4,963	(3,787)
30-34	81189	86,956	168,145	30 - 34	103,558	89,558	193,116		(22,369)	(2,602)	(24,971)
35-39	62135	68,246	130,381	35 - 39	103,427	89,323	192,750		(41,292)	(21,077)	(62,369)
40-44	47630	48,665	96,295	40 - 44	75,660	63,297	138,957		(28,030)	(14,632)	(42,662)
45-49	38462	36,425	74,887	45 - 39	51,800	42,443	94,243		(13,338)	(6,018)	(19,356)
50-54	38574	31,785	70,359	50 - 54	42,064	31,607	73,671		(3,490)	178	(3,312)
55-59	34058	25,759	59,817	55 - 59	39,184	27,375	66,559		(5,126)	(1,616)	(6,742)
60-64	28451	20,770	49,221	60 - 64	32,727	21,999	54,726		(4,276)	(1,229)	(5,505)
65-69	22047	15,311	37,358	65 - 69	27,159	19,239	46,398		(5,112)	(3,928)	(9,040)
70-74	18791	12,017	30,808	70 - 74	20,659	13,177	33,836		(1,868)	(1,160)	(3,028)
75-79	15707	8,467	24,174	75 - 79	18,142	10,383	28,525		(2,435)	(1,916)	(4,351)
80-84	13197	5,424	18,621	80 - 84	12,496	5,444	17,940		701	(20)	681
85-89	5201	1,873	7,074	85 - 89	10,176	3,778	13,954		(4,975)	(1,905)	(6,880)
90-94	2127	652	2,789	90 - 94	3,526	1,020	4,546		(1,399)	(368)	(1,757)
95+	1447	305	1,752	95 - 99	2,350	826	3,176		(903)	(521)	(1,424)
				Event	934	795	1729				
Grand Tota	644,188	597,715	1,241,913	Grand Tota	698,792	558,464	1,257,256		(54,604)	39,251	(15,343)

It is therefore precise that Lesotho's voters' roll has some defects. However, such defects are not intentional and are caused by a number of factors as it was observed during our Focus-Group discussions. The plausible reasons behind these overestimates include:

i) lack of resources to clean voters' roll,

ii) lack of consensus between political parties on whether voters' roll should be cleaned or not

iii) Difficult terrain in the country which has made continuous cleaning of voters' roll more difficult although on paper it is claimed that Country's voters roll is an open one with continuous registration.

Sometimes lack of staff morale at district level has stifled this continuous cleaning process as some members of staff have not been continuously updating voters roll due to lack of morale and incentives. Our analyses also point that females are more over estimated by the voters roll than males which clearly talks to double registrations of females as they change surnames after marriage, and perhaps the effect of migration as more females have left rural areas to work in textiles industries in both Maseru and Maputsoe. It is possible that such individuals have retained their registration in rural areas while at the same time have registered at places of work under different names.

Table 4: Trends in Voter Turnout across Selected SADC Countries

Country	**Year**	**Voter Turnout**	**Total vote**	**Registration**	**VAP Turnout**	**Voting age population**	**Population**	**Coverage (VAP)**
Botswana	2014	84.75%	698,409	824,073	55.09%	1,267,719	2,155,784	65.00
Botswana	2009	76.71%	555,078	723,617	62.20%	892,339	1,990,876	81.09
Botswana	2004	76.20%	421,272	552,849	44.00%	957,540	1,561,973	57.74
Botswana	1999	77.11%	354,463	459,662	41.98%	844,338	1,592,528	54.44
Botswana	1994	76.55%	283,375	370,173	44.63%	634,920	1,443,000	58.30
South Africa	2014	73.48%	18,654,771	25,388,082	53.77%	34,691,652	54,002,000	73.18
South Africa	2009	77.30%	17,919,966	23,181,997	56.57%	31,678,238	49,052,489	73.18
South Africa	2004	76.73%	15,863,554	20,674,926	56.77%	27,944,712	42,768,678	73.99
South Africa	1999	89.28%	16,228,462	18,177,000	63.86%	25,411,573	42,424,823	71.53
South Africa	1994	86.87%	19,726,610	22,709,152	85.53%	23,063,910	40,436,000	98.46
Country	***Year***	***Voter Turnout***	***Total Vote***	***Registration***	***VAP Turnout***	***Voting age population***	***Population***	***Coverage (VAP)***
Lesotho	2017	46.37%	581,692	1,254,506	46.84%	1,241,913	2,007,201	*101 Not plausible*
Lesotho	2015	46.61%	563,972	1,210,079	49.77%	1,133,101	2,073,000	*107 Not plausible*
Lesotho	2012	50.04%	564,451	1,127,980	50.32%	1,121,705	2,052,000	*101 Not plausible*
Lesotho	2007	49.00%	448,953	916,230	38.63%	1,162,213	2,022,331	79
Lesotho	2002	66.69%	554,386	831,315	49.61%	1,117,567	2,177,062	74
Lesotho	1998	71.83%	617,738	860,000	61.71%	1,001,034	2,176,160	82
Lesotho	1993	72.28%	532,678	736,930	59.60%	893,780	1,943,000	86
Lesotho	1970	81.90%	306,529	374,272	70.13%	437,100	980,000	*106 Not plausible*

Table 5: Trends in Lesotho Voter turnout and approximations

Year	Voter Turnout	Total vote	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age population	Reg. based on 77% coverage	Turnout based on 77% coverage	Turnout based on 68% coverage
2017	46.37%	581,692	1,254,506	46.84%	1,241,913	**956,273**	**60.83%**	**844,500.8 (68.9%)**
2015	46.61%	563,972	1,210,079	49.77%	1,133,101	**872,488**	**64.64%**	**770,508.7 (73.2%)**
2012	50.04%	564,451	1,127,980	50.32%	1,121,705	**863,713**	**65.35%**	**762,759.4 (74.0%)**
2007	49.00%	448,953	916,230	38.63%	1,162,213			
2002	66.69%	554,386	831,315	49.61%	1,117,567			
1998	71.83%	617,738	860,000	61.71%	1,001,034			
1993	72.28%	532,678	736,930	59.60%	893,780			
1970	81.90%	306,529	374,272	70.13%	437,100	980,000	*106 Not plausible*	

Table 6: Trends in Lesotho Voter turnout and Voters roll defects

Year	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age population	Turnover (77% coverage)	Turnout (68% coverage Turnout)	Voters 'roll defects/77% coverage (approx.)
2017	1,254,506	46.84%	1,241,913	956,273 (60.8%)	844,500.8 (68.9%)	293,233
2015	1,210,079	49.77%	1,133,101	872,488 (64.6%)	770,508.7 (73.2%)	337,591
2012	1,127,980	50.32%	1,121,705	863,713 (65.4%)	762,759.4 (74.0%)	264,267
2007	916,230	38.63%	1,162,213			
2002	831,315	49.61%	1,117,567			
1998	860,000	61.71%	1,001,034			
1993	736,930	59.60%	893,780			
1970	374,272	70.13%	437,100	980,000 (106%)		

Table 7: VAP calculation of turnout (Lesotho)

2016 Population Census by age Group and Gender				Registered Voters by Age Group and Gender as at 25 June, 2019						
Age Group	Female	Male	Total	Age Group	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Grand Total
17-18				17 – 18	10	7	17			
18-19	41591	40,431	82,022	18 – 19	447	410	857	41,144	40,021	81,165
20-24	100440	98,827	199,267	20 – 24	52,592	46,951	99,543	47,848	51,876	99,724
25-29	93141	95,802	188,943	25 – 29	101,891	90,839	192,730	(8,750)	4,963	(3,787)
30-34	81189	86,956	168,145	30 – 34	103,558	89,558	193,116	(22,369)	(2,602)	(24,971)
35-39	62135	68,246	130,381	35 – 39	103,427	89,323	192,750	(41,292)	(21,077)	(62,369)
40-44	47630	48,665	96,295	40 – 44	75,660	63,297	138,957	(28,030)	(14,632)	(42,662)
45-49	38462	36,425	74,887	45 – 39	51,800	42,443	94,243	(13,338)	(6,018)	(19,356)
50-54	38574	31,785	70,359	50 – 54	42,064	31,607	73,671	(3,490)	178	(3,312)
55-59	34058	25,759	59,817	55 – 59	39,184	27,375	66,559	(5,126)	(1,616)	(6,742)
60-64	28451	20,770	49,221	60 – 64	32,727	21,999	54,726	(4,276)	(1,229)	(5,505)
65-69	22047	15,311	37,358	65 – 69	27,159	19,239	46,398	(5,112)	(3,928)	(9,040)
70-74	18791	12,017	30,808	70 – 74	20,659	13,177	33,836	(1,868)	(1,160)	(3,028)
75-79	15707	8,467	24,174	75 – 79	18,142	10,383	28,525	(2,435)	(1,916)	(4,351)
80-84	13197	5,424	18,621	80 – 84	12,496	5,444	17,940	701	(20)	681
85-89	5201	1,873	7,074	85 – 89	10,176	3,778	13,954	(4,975)	(1,905)	(6,880)
90-94	2127	652	2,789	90 – 94	3,526	1,020	4,546	(1,399)	(368)	(1,757)
95+	1447	305	1,752	95 – 99	2,350	826	3,176	(903)	(521)	(1,424)
				Event	**934**	**795**	**1729**			
Grand Total	**644,188**	**597,715**	**1,241,913**	**Grand Total**	**698,792**	**558,464**	**1,257,256**	(54,604)	39,251	(15,343)

5. Characteristics of voters and non-voters

What separates individuals who turn out to vote from those who do not? And, in what areas of comparisons are the differences largest and smallest? Guided by these questions, this chapter presents and discusses the main attributes of, and differences, between voters and non-voters in Lesotho. Drawing, primarily, on the analysis of the nationally representative survey data collected for three weeks in April 2019, the chapter focuses on the demographic, attitudinal and behavioural profiles of the people who turned out to vote in the June 2017 National Assembly elections and October 2017 Local Government elections. The chapter further evaluates the perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of the individuals who are not willing to vote in the future, particularly those who have consistently voted in the past. Understanding persistence in voter turnout can significantly inform policy responses to the declining voter participation in Lesotho.

5.1 Summary of self-reported voter turnout

In the nationally representative survey, the 1,811 respondents were asked to answer yes/no to the question whether they voted in the a) June 2017 legislative election, b) October 2017 Local Government election and c) any other general election in post-independence Lesotho. These questions produced what is known, in political methodology literature, as self-reported voter turnout data. The survey also sought to explore respondents' willingness to vote in the next election by asking, *Will you vote in the next election*? Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents declared their intention to vote in the next election while 35% said they will not. The remaining 9% were not sure yet whether they would turn out.

Slightly over half of the respondents (57.90%) claim to have turned out to vote in the 2017 Local Government elections while 72 percent made the same claim about the June 2017 legislative election. These figures are markedly higher than the official turnout figures for both elections; Local Government elections produced a turnout rate of less than 25 percent while National Assembly elections yielded an official turnout figure of 46.31%. There are at least two possible explanations for the differences between the official and the self-reported turnout figures. The first one lies in the fact that survey questions on whether one has voted often triggers social desirability bias— the tendency to (mis)represent oneself in an admirable way. This discrepancy between official and self-reported

turnout figures is, therefore, possibly linked to the fact that respondents who did not vote felt embarrassed to admit it and gave false information.

Because of the threat to the quality of survey data that social desirability biases present, most reputable survey research studies design voter turnout questions in ways that relieves the pressure to lie about one's electoral participation. For example, the carefully constructed Afrobarometer[8] voter turnout survey question is essentially meant to put the respondent at ease about the decision not to vote. The question reads thus:

> Understanding that some people were unable to vote in the most recent national election in June 2017, which of the following statements is true for you? [***Read out options***]

The response options include an array of utterly sensible reasons for not voting, such as: 'you were too young to vote, 'you decided not to vote', 'you were prevented from voting', 'you were too young to vote', 'you did not vote for some other reason' and 'you voted' (See Afrobarometer Lesotho Questionnaire 2017). The LVTO survey, which the analysis in this chapter draws upon, also asked a similar question and used similar tactics to minimise potential social desirability bias.

Nevertheless, as Highton (2005) and Holbrook and Knosnick (2010) remind us, while such strategies are recommended, they may not eliminate the social desirability bias.

The self-reported turnout rate of 73 percent reported by Afrobarometer for the 2017 legislative elections is remarkably consistent with the figures obtained by the nationally representative public opinion surveys that Afrobarometer conducted in 2017. In this survey, 73 percent of the respondents claimed to have turned out to vote in the June 2017 National Assembly election. In the 2012 Afrobarometer survey, 74 percent of Basotho claimed to have voted in the May 2012 legislative elections, while in a 2014 survey the figure was 73 percent self-reported turnout for the same poll. The official turnout rate for the 2012 National Assembly election was 50.04 percent: 23-24 percentage points below the self-reported voter turnout in 2012 and 2014

The foregoing analysis presents two conjectures. First, self-reported turnout rate is consistently incorrect and exaggerates actual voter turnout by an average of 25 percentage points. This implies that social desirability bias has consistently stayed within +/-4 percentage points over four nationally representative surveys of adult citizens: three Afrobarometer surveys and the LVTO survey that this

[8] Afrobarometer is the largest pan-African, non-partisan research network, that conduct public opinion surveys in close to 40 African countries, including Lesotho.

chapter draws upon. The second conjecture is that the objective data exaggerates voter apathy due to the outdated and highly bloated electors register. The official figures may underestimate actual turnout while self-reports may overestimate it. We have analysed official turnout statistics in more detail in **Chapter 4**.

Although the spectre of social desirability bias renders self-reported turnout data suspicious, their use to analyse the correlates of electoral participation produces results that are broadly similar to those yielded by more accurate measures of voter participation, including the item count technique (ICT) (Highton, 2005). It is, in part, for this reason that researchers continue to draw on survey data to understand, among other things, why some citizens' turnout to vote while others choose to stay away from polling stations. In fact, a large majority of studies on voter turnout in Africa draw upon survey data (Roberts et al 2014; Mattes 2012; HSRC 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg 2014). The analyses and discussions in the following sections draw from the LVTO survey data to sketch the demographic, behavioural, attitudinal and contextual attributes of voters and non-voters in Lesotho.

5.2 Demographic and socio-economic profile

The first set of individual-level attributes of voters thought to have a bearing on whether voters participate in elections or not are socio-demographic, such as their age, level of education, gender and place of residence. These attributes are presented and discussed in this section, with a view to understanding how and why they affect decisions to vote –and thus changes in the levels of participation.

5.2.1 Age

Generally, and in line with global trends, self-reported voter turnout is higher among older individuals. As T**able 8** shows, voter apathy in Local Government elections declined consistently and considerably as age increases. The vast majority (72.76%) of the respondents in the age group 18-24 did not cast their votes in the October 2017 Local Government elections. In sharp contrast, roughly the same percentage (72.22%) of those above the age of 75 did vote.

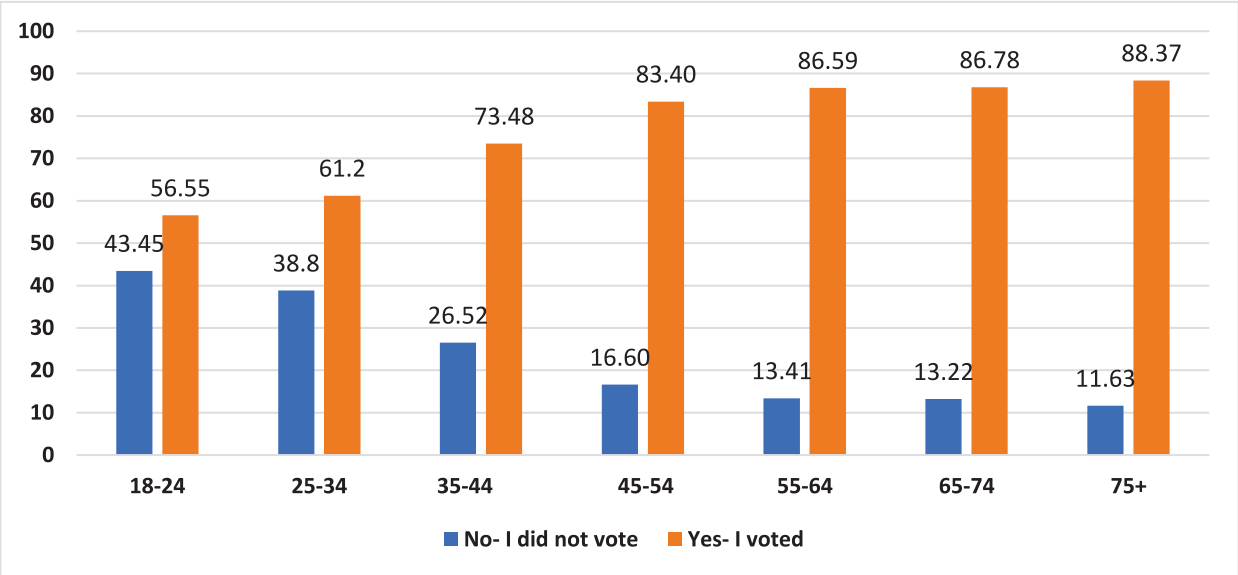
Table 8: Voting in 2017 Local Government Elections by Age-group

	AGE-GROUP						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
No- I didn't vote	72.76	52.33	40.00	31.06	29.92	29.75	27.78
YES- I voted	27.24	47.67	60.00	68.94	70.08	70.25	72.22

N=1803

The same trend as above can be observed when we analyse the relationship between respondents' age and turnout in the 2017 National Assembly elections. More than 80% of the respondents above the age of 45 claim to have turned out to vote in these elections. In contrast, 61 percent of those aged 25-34 and 55 percent of those aged 18-24 made a similar claim (See **Figure 5)**.

Figure 5: Voter turnout in 2017 National Assembly Election by Age Group



An assessment of the differential impact of the age variable suggests that all else being equal, the likelihood that a respondent has voted in the June 2017 elections increases by 10 percent when age increases from 25-34 to 35-44, and by 14 percent when it increases from 35-44 to 45-55. The largest change occurs when we compare the oldest age group (i.e. +75 years old) with the two youngest groups (i.e. 18-24 and 25 – 34); here, there is a 31 percent difference in the likelihood of voting between those aged 18-24 and those above the age of 75, and 27 percent difference in likelihood of voting between those aged 25-34 and those above the age of 75. To put these results in perspective, people above the age of 65 are five times more likely to vote than those aged 18-24. The main implication of these findings is that voter apathy is highest among young people.

5.2.2 Gender

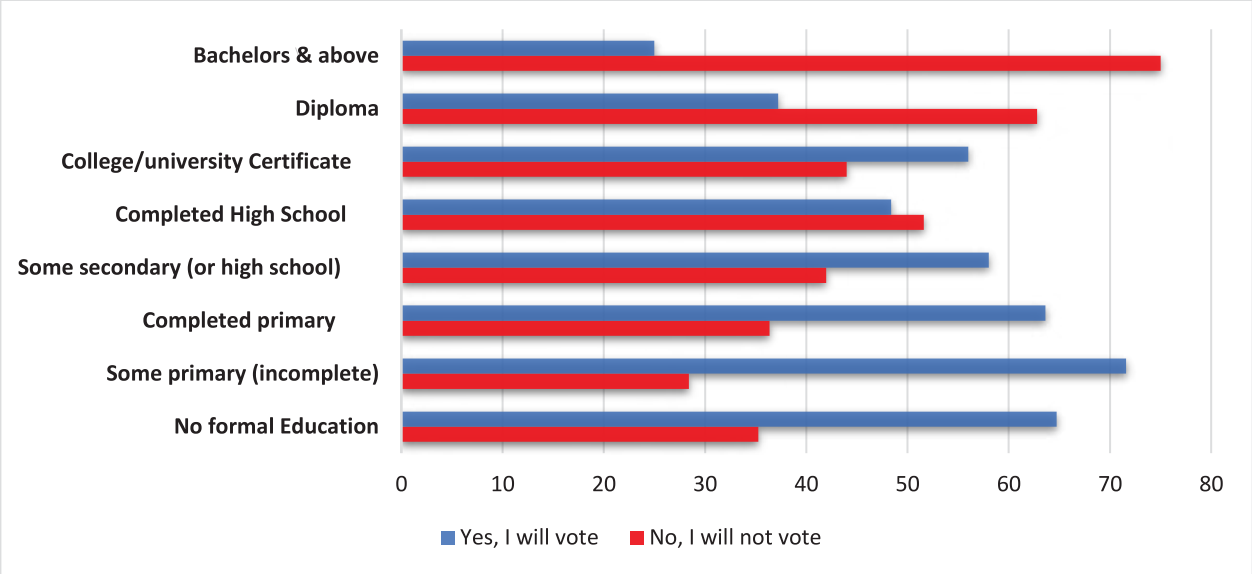
Although most emerging democracies have clear gender differences in political participation (see Solijonov, 2016), analysis of our survey data suggests that this is not the case in Lesotho. Seventy-seven percent (77 %) of female and 74 percent of the male respondents claimed to have voted in the 2017 legislative election. Fifty-eight percent (58 %) of the female respondents and 57 percent of their male counterparts reported turning out for the 2017 Local Government elections. These results are consistent with the self-reported turnout figures obtained from other nationally representative surveys conducted in Lesotho in the past five years. In the 2014 Afrobarometer survey, for instance, 75.25 percent of male respondents and 75.26 percent of their female counterparts reported turning out to vote in the 2012 National Assembly election. Similarly, in the 2017 Afrobarometer survey, 71.82 percent of female respondents and 70.64 percent of their male counterparts claimed to have voted in the 2017 legislative election. Taken together, these results indicate a negligible gender difference in voter turnout in Lesotho, which is inconsistent with subjective perceptions that Basotho women vote at a higher rate than men.

5.2.3 Education

There is a statistically significant difference in turnout across formal education categories. The largest proportion of voters in Local Government elections were drawn from the less educated citizens: 69 percent of those with primary-level education and 60 percent of those with no formal education at all voted in October 2017. On the other hand, slightly over half (53%) of those with some high school education, 45 percent of those holding college certificates, 49 percent of diploma holders and 44 percent of those with bachelor's or higher degrees cast their votes in the same poll.

The high rate of apathy among the educated comes out more clearly when the analysis focuses on respondents' willingness to vote in the future. Three in four (75%) respondents with a bachelor's degree or higher have no intention to participate in future elections. That is, only a quarter of the most educated adult citizens are willing to exercise their right to choose a government. In sharp contrast, willingness to vote in the next election is highest among those with no formal education (65 %) and some primary education (72 %) as shown in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6: Willingness to vote by level of education



We can take this analysis further by comparing changes in the likelihood of voting when a respondent's education changes (see **Table 9)**. All else being equal, having a University-level education (i.e. bachelors or higher) rather than an incomplete primary-level education reduces the intention to vote by approximately 48 percent. Similarly, having a University-level education (i.e. bachelors or higher) rather than a primary-level qualification reduces the intention to vote by approximately 43 percent, holding other factors constant. The amount of change in the likelihood of voting decreases significantly when we compare those with University-level qualifications and high school education only. The likelihood that an individual is willing to vote declines by 28% when we move from having completed University education to having completed secondary or high school education.

Table 9: Change in probability of voting for different contrasts of levels of education

Pairwise contrasts	Change	From	To	p-value
+Bachelors vs. Some Primary (Incomplete)	-0.48	0.70	0.22	0.00
+Bachelors vs. Completed primary	-0.43	0.65	0.22	0.00
+Bachelors vs. Completed Secondary/high school	-0.28	0.50	0.22	0.00

N=1556

While it is concerning that an increase in formal education seems to promote apathy, the finding is not entirely surprising, being consistent with previous research findings regarding the relationship between education and popular demand for accountability in Lesotho. As Monyake (2017) concluded,

for instance, the more educated Basotho are not any more likely than their less educated counterparts to support various mechanisms of vertical accountability.

The disconnect between education and willingness to participate in elections was investigated further during the qualitative phase of the study. Several key informants opined that voter apathy among the educated is symptomatic of the frustrations rooted in the failure of liberal democracy to deliver meaningful development and improved delivery of public services. One of the key informants observed,

> Just like the youth in this country, educated people are highly disillusioned with the state machinery. They are angry and frustrated with the lack of a genuine attempt to make the state work; to fight unemployment, combat corruption, grease the wheels of justice and provide public safety and security. They are frustrated with the enduring, sluggish provision of the public services that are more important to them as a social group, including the speedy issuing of licences, passports, to mention a few.

It also emerged during these interviews that the failure of the frequent elections to yield a stable government and improve the calibre of national leaders has disproportionately eroded educated people's willingness to vote.

The major reason for not voting that people with post high school qualification mentioned is, "*I am tired of voting/ I didn't want to vote*". This was mentioned by 38 percent of diploma holders and 40 percent of those with bachelor's degrees and above. On the contrary, the same reasons were mentioned by only 20 percent of individuals with no formal education and 13 percent of those with primary-level schooling.

5.2.4 Rural-urban residency

As was highlighted in chapter four of this report, voter turnout is generally lower in the constituencies located in urban and lowland areas than those in rural and mountain areas. Results of the survey are broadly consistent with this observation. They indicate that 63 percent of the voters in the Local Government elections of October 2017 were drawn from rural areas while 41 percent were resident in urban areas. A similar pattern of results can be distilled from the analysis of turnout in the National Assembly elections of 2017, which recorded 74 percent and 71 percent of participation rates from rural and urban areas respectively.

5.2.5 Other demographic and socio-economic variables

Other demographic and socio-economic variables such as marital status and employment status do not explain the differences between voters and the non-voters, even when the analysis considers the moderating effect of other influential factors such as age.

5.3 Behavioural profiles of voters and non-voters

This section examines the effect of citizens behaviours (e.g. contact with politician, rally attendance etc.) and habits (e.g. voting in past elections) on propensity to vote.

5.3.1 Voting in past elections

As intimated in section two of this chapter, respondents were asked to indicate in which other general elections apart from the recent 2017 and National Assembly elections they participated. A full 69% of the respondents voted in the 2007, 2012 and 2015 general elections. We refer to this cohort as serial voters. Slightly over three quarters (77%) of these voters cast their ballot in the 2017 elections while 91% of them turned out for the 2017 legislative elections. Rather disturbingly, a third (34%) of all the serial voters has no intention to vote in the next general elections. Approximately, two in five (39%) of those who voted in the 2017 National Assembly elections are not intending to vote in the future.

These results indicate, in line with the extant political participation literature, that an experience of voting increases the willingness to participate in current and future elections (Green and Shachar, 2000; Gerber, Green and Shachar, 2003; Denny and Doyle 2009). There are at least three mechanisms through which this works. First, regular electoral participation instils a sense that individual political actions are meaningful (i.e. internal political efficacy) and that the political system will respond to citizens' attempt to exert influence on it (i.e. external political efficacy) (see Finkel, 1983, Finkel, Sabatini and Revis, 2000). Second, regular electoral participation is a habit-forming exercise (Aldrich, Montgomery and Wood 2010; Gerber, Green and Shachar, 2003). According to Aldrich, Montgomery and Wood (2010), most serial voters turn out to vote even when they do not care much about the outcome of the election. This is because *habitual* voting, itself, provides some psychological benefits (Denny and Doyle 2009).

A third and related point is that repeated voting cultivates *'a voter'* identify so that those who regularly turn out to vote ultimately do this as an expression of who they are, not necessarily because they

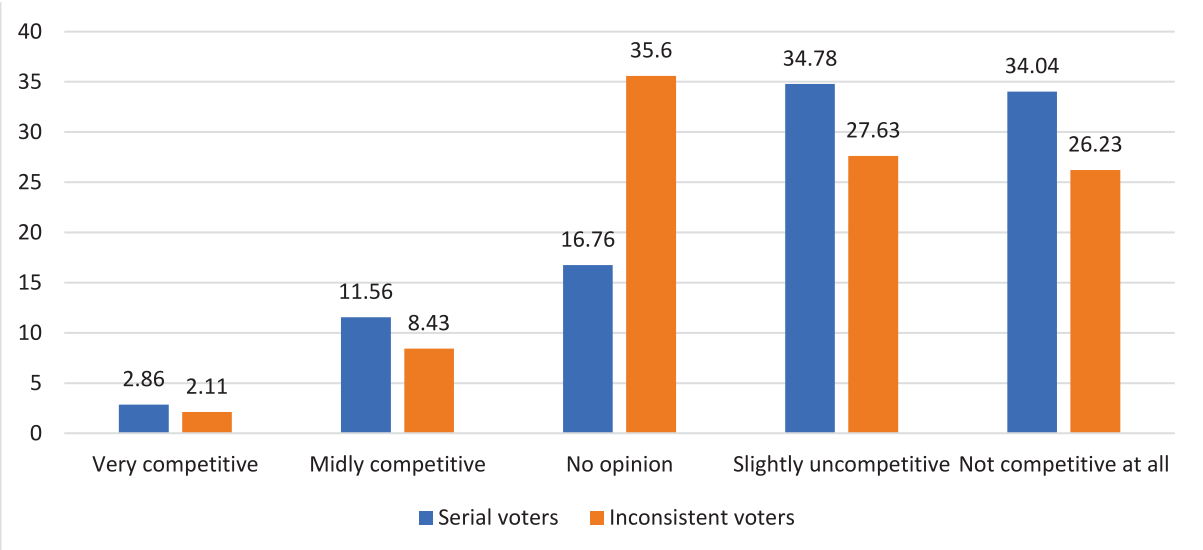
expect their vote to change the status quo or preserve it. As Gerber, Green and Shachar, (2003:548) argues that

> Going to the polls confirms and reinforces one's self-image as a civic-minded, politically involved citizen. The more one votes, the more one comes to regard going to the polls as "what people like me do on election day." Conversely, abstention weakens this self-conception and the feelings of obligation that grow out of it.

What separates the individuals who have voted consistently since 2007 from other voters in the sample? One of the major points of difference between the two groups lies in changes in individual interest in politics. Inconsistent voting is strongly associated with declining interest in politics. For instance, one third of serial voters (33%) and only 19 percent of inconsistent voters feel that their political interest has increased a lot over the past 10 years. Two in five (40%) of the inconsistent voters and 21 percent of serial voters feel that their level of political interest has remained the same over the past ten years.

Apart from changes in interest in politics, the perception of election competitiveness explains some of the differences between the two groups. Inconsistent voters constitute a smaller percentage of all the individuals who thought the National Assembly elections of 03 June 2017 were slightly uncompetitive or not competitive at all. Slightly over a third (34.04%) of serial voters and 26.63 percent of inconsistent voters thought these elections were not competitive at all (see **Figure 7**). This could mean that inconsistent voters are more sensitive to the perceived lack of election competitiveness than are serial voters.

Figure 7: Perception of election competitiveness (June 2017): serial voters and others

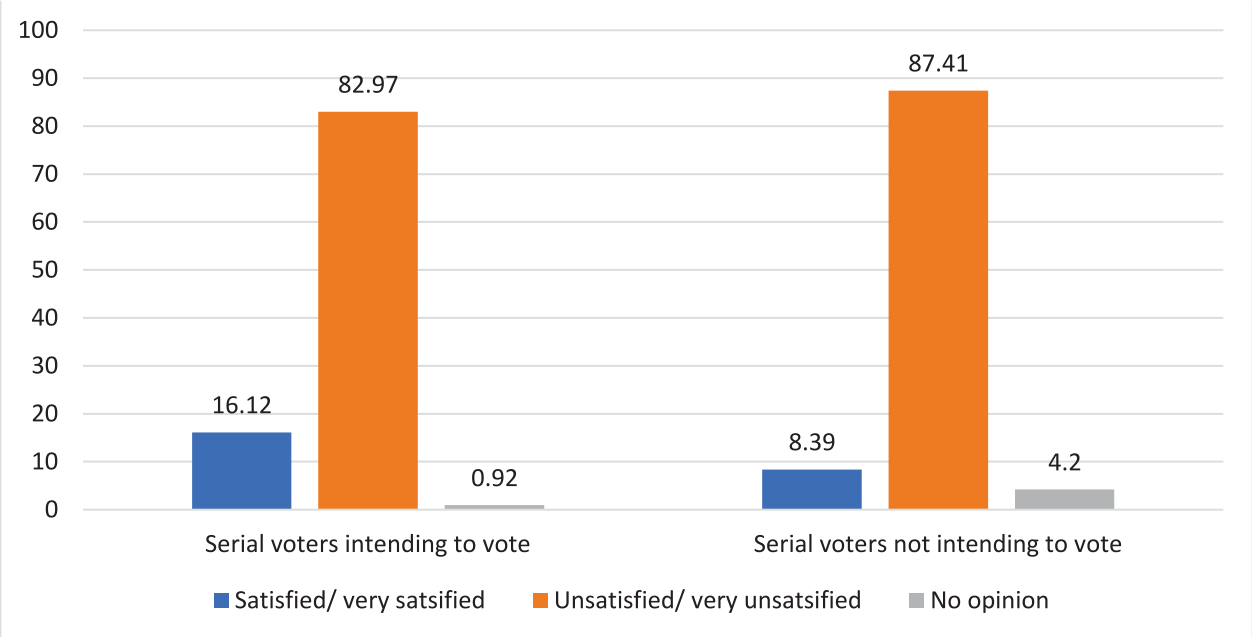


Another difference has to do with the main reasons for voting in the 03 June 2017 elections. Inconsistent voters tend to mention reasons such as "*I wanted to support my party*" (17 %), *I wanted to change government* (9 %), *I wanted to make a difference* (45 %) and *it is my duty* (27 %). The proportion of serial voters who mentioned the same reasons were as follows; I wanted to support my party was mentioned by 12 percent of the respondents; I wanted to change government (5 %); 'it is my duty to vote" (33 %) and I wanted to make a difference (47 %). Taken together, these results imply that the difference between inconsistent voters and serial voters revolves around the nature of the incentive to vote. Expressive incentive such as a sense of civic duty drives serial voting while instrumental factors such as the concern with the election outcome are key underlying motivations for inconsistent voters. This is consistent with the notion, hinted in the foregoing section, that expressive rationality drives serial voting.

Considering that a full 34 percent of the people who have been voting consistently since 2007 are unwilling to do the same in the future, these results raise a worrying prospect, which is that voter future elections' turnout is likely to be lower than it ever was. What are some of the factors that may encourage some serial voters to stay away from polling stations? To answer this question, we compare the attitudes of serial voters who are intending to vote in future elections with those of the serial voters who are not intending to do so across a range of issues. Seventy-seven percent (77 %) of the serial voters not willing to participate in the next elections are unsatisfied and very unsatisfied with the frequency of elections. On the other hand, a slightly lower percentage (71%) of the serial voters willing to vote again in the future feel the same way about the frequency of elections in Lesotho. As a more in-depth analysis indicates, the difference between these two groups of serial voters— those intending to vote in the future and those not willing to do so— is both substantively important and statistically significant.

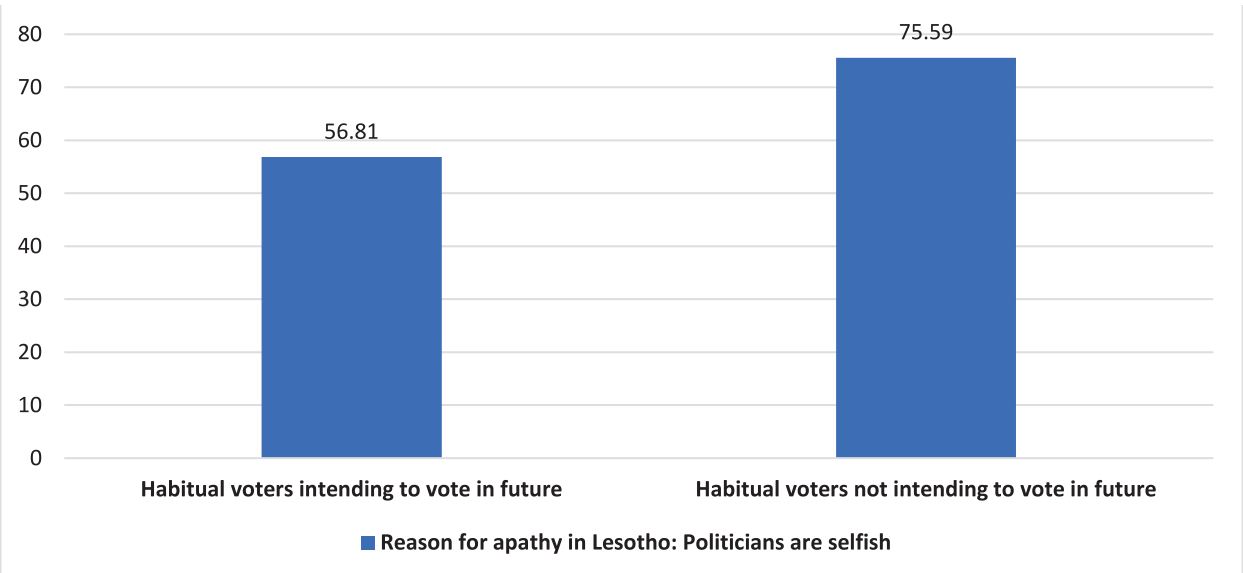
Another difference between serial voters intending to vote again and those not willing to do so lies in their feeling about the large number of registered political parties in Lesotho. Although four in five serial voters are unsatisfied and very unsatisfied with the number of political parties in Lesotho, the group that is willing to vote in the future has a higher proportion of respondents (16.12%) who are satisfied and very satisfied with the number of political parties in Lesotho (See **Figure 8)**.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with number of parties (serial voters intending to vote and not)



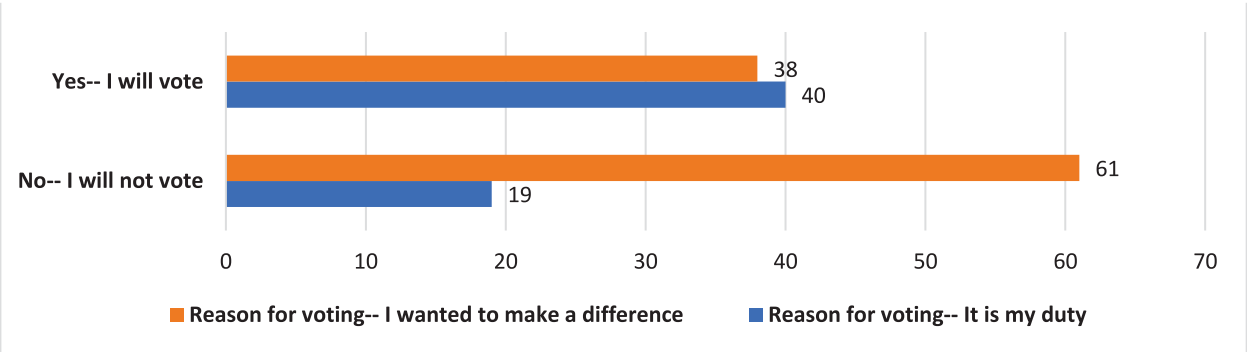
One major difference between the two groups lies in their perception of the role of politicians in perpetuating voter apathy. A significantly higher proportion of serial voters who are not intending to vote again (75.59%) feel strongly that the reason why turnout has declined is that politicians are selfish. This reason for low turnout was mentioned by slightly over half (56.81%) of the serial voters intending to participate in future elections (See **Figure 9**)

Figure 9: "Politicians are selfish" (serial voters intending to vote and not)



The most important difference between serial voters lies in their *personal* motives for voting in the 2017 legislative elections. The majority (61%) of serial voters not willing to vote again said the reason for casting their vote in 2017 was the desire to make a difference. In sharp contrast, only 38 percent of the serial voters intending to vote mentioned this as their main reason for turning out in the June 2017 elections (See **Figure 10**). Further to that, two in five (40%) of the serial voters willing to continue voting said a sense of duty was the main reason for turning out in the June 2017 elections. This is twice the percentage of the serial voters not willing to vote who were driven to the polling stations by a sense that it was their duty to participate in legislative elections (See **Figure 10**).

Figure 10: Serial voters' main reasons for voting in June 2017 by intention to vote



The main implications of these results are, first, that a serial voter's underlying motive for voting underpins her willingness to be involved in future electoral processes. Second, and related to the first, is that those serial voters who primarily view voting as a civic responsibility more than a vehicle for political change are likely to turnout in the future. Third, it may well be that not all serial voters are driven by the psychological benefits that accrue from the act of voting, and which underpin the decision to continue despite undesirable election outcomes and lack of meaningful changes in the community and the quality of the political leadership that makes it into parliament.

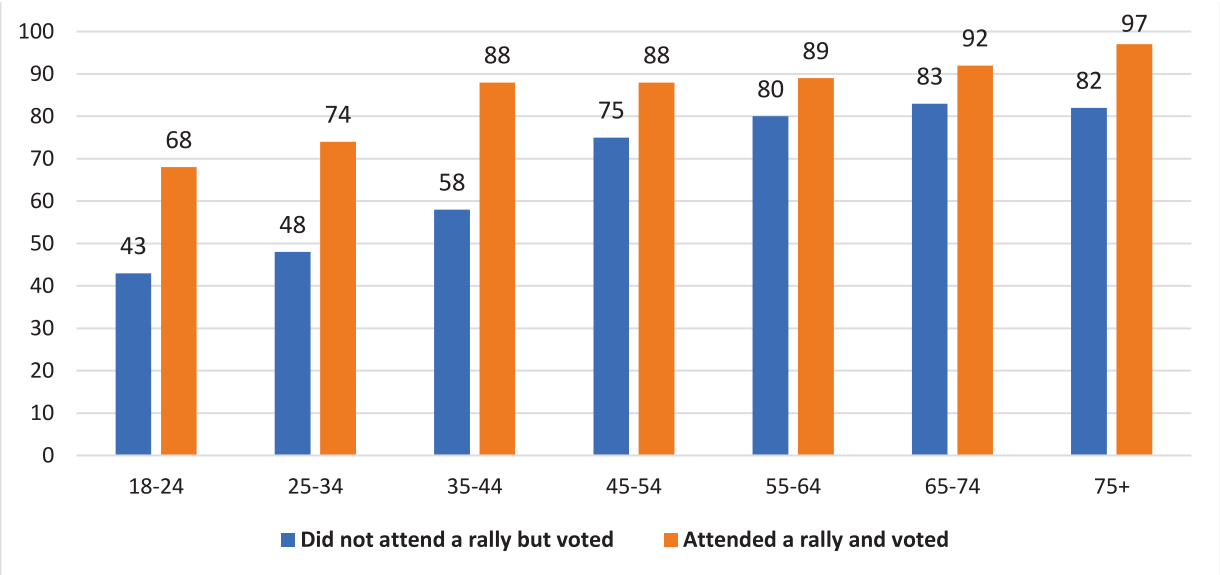
5.3.2 Political rally attendance

Attending rallies organised by political parties is strongly associated with both self-reported voter turnout and willingness to vote in future. Among the individuals who voted, 58.56 percent had attended a political rally in the run up to the 2017 legislative elections while 41.44 percent did not. Among those who did not vote, two thirds (67.55%) did not attend any political rally while 32.45 percent did attend. Political rally attendance positively influences voter turnout across the different age groups. Among those who attended political rallies and voted in 2017, 68 percent were aged 18-

24 while 74 percent were aged 25-34; 88 percent were aged 35-44 while 89 percent were aged 45-54. Lastly, over 90 percent of the voters above 55 years of age had attended a political rally.

Analysing the impact of political rally attendance between age groups can mask variations in the impact of rally attendance *within* these groups. Indeed, analysis of within-group variations reveals that rally attendance has a stronger impact for individuals between age 35 and 44. There is a 30 percent difference in voter turnout between respondents aged 35 and 44 who attended rallies and those who did not. This is closely followed by age groups 18-24 and 25-34. Among those in the age group 25-34, 48 percent did not attend a rally but voted while 74 percent attended a rally and also voted. In other words, the number of individuals aged 25-34 who attended a rally and voted is higher by 26 percentage points. Among those aged 18-24, 43 percent did not attend a rally but voted while 68 percent attended a rally and also voted, suggesting a difference of 25 percentage points in turnout between rally attendees and non-attendees in this age category.

Figure 11: Voting in 2017 General election by age-group and rally attendance



Overall, the analysis implies that campaign activities of political parties are extremely important factors of voter turnout, especially for individuals between ages 35 and 44. However, these results should be interpreted cautiously, bearing in mind the possibility of self-selection; respondents who attend rallies and vote, including those aged 35-44, could be far more politically active than those who do not attend rallies and do not vote. In fact, a full 77 percent of the individuals who attended rallies are active

members of political parties. This compares favourably to the 47 percent of non-active members who also attended rallies.

The foregoing notwithstanding, a closer look at the impact of rally attendance for the self-declared active and non-active members of political parties suggests that self-selection may not account for the observed impact of rally attendance. As shown in **Table 10,** having attended a rally is strongly associated with voting in 2017 legislative elections for both active and non-active members of political parties. Eighty-three percent (83%) of non-active members of political parties who attended a rally voted on 3 June 2017; 65 percent of the non-active members who did not attend a rally voted. A similar trend is clearly noticeable among the self-declared active members of political parties; 92 percent of rally attendees voted compared to 77 percent of non-attendees who also did.

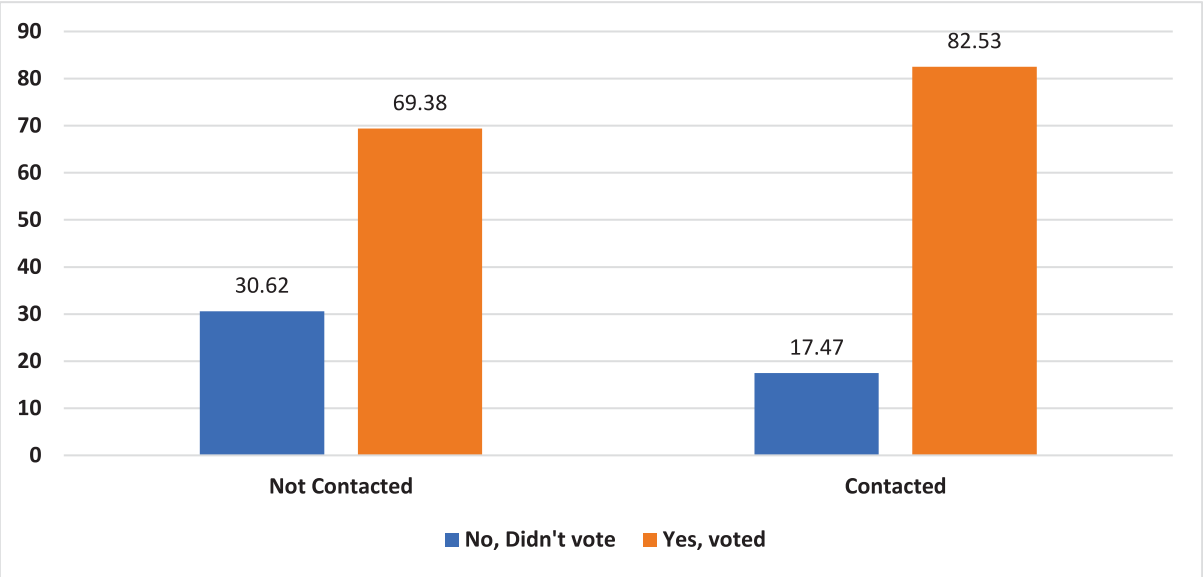
Table 10: Voting in 2017 General election by party membership and rally attendance

	Non-active members of political parties		**Active members of political members**	
	Didn't attend a rally	Attended a rally	Didn't attend a rally	Attended a rally
No, I did not vote	35,00	17,00	23,00	8,00
Yes, I voted	65,00	83,00	77,00	92,00
Total	100	100	100	100

5.3.3 Contact with political party representatives

Contact with political parties (i.e. political party representatives) seems to play a vital role in the decision to vote. Four out of five respondents (83%) who were personally contacted by a political party representative turned out to vote. On the other hand, as F**igure 12** illustrates, 69 percent of those who were not contacted voted.

Figure 12: Voting in 2017 General election by Contact by a Politician



Politicians seem to have had a slightly more contact with self-declared active members of political parties than they did the rest of the respondents. Slightly over half (56.66) of this group of voters were contacted compared to 45 percentage of non-active members of political parties who were also contacted. A combination of being an active member of a political party and being personally contacted during the election campaign has a strong effect on the likelihood of voting in the National Assembly elections but not Local Government elections. This differential effect is most likely to be associated with the fact that political parties' campaign efforts are far stronger during the National Assembly elections than they are during the Local Government elections.

One of the most important findings is that the youth are the least likely to have been contacted by politicians during the recent election campaigns. A third (34%) of those aged 18-24 were personally contacted compared to more than half of those aged 55-64 and 54% of those aged 65-74 who were also contacted (see **Table 11**).

Table 11: contact by a party representative by age group

	Respondents Age Groups						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Not contacted by party representative during the election	65.98	56.04	51.52	54.04	48.09	46.06	59.84
Contacted by party representative during the election	34.02	43.96	48.48	45.96	51.91	53.94	40.16

N=1803

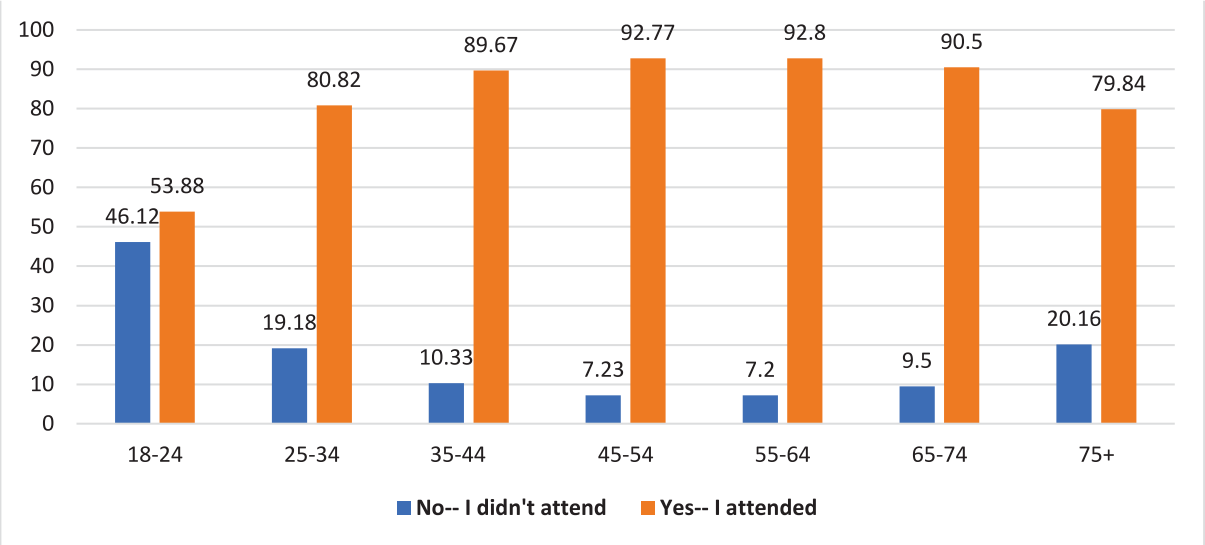
The youth who have been contacted by party representatives are slightly more likely to have voted than those who were never contacted. Taken together with the narrative in the foregoing section, these results shine light on the importance of political parties, as agents of political mobilisation, and correspond, in this regard, with the observation by Bratton, Mattes and Gymah-Boadi, (2005:244) that, "when it comes to voter turnout in Africa, political parties are the strongest institutional link between the political centre and the individual voter".

5.3.4 Membership in voluntary associations and civic engagement

Active membership in community policing forums increases the likelihood of voting in both and National Assembly elections. In contrast, active membership in church groups, trade unions and *stokvels* had no effect on voting, suggesting that more particularistic social grouping, such as religious organisations, are less likely to promote electoral participation. Respondents who had, during the past 12 months, gathered together with others to discuss community issues are significantly more likely to have voted that those who did not take part in these activities. Similarly, a majority (78 %) of the respondents who attended a *pitso* or public gathering () voted in both 2017 Local Government and National Assembly elections.

As with voting, participation in community activities varies with age. For instance, those aged 35 to 64 are about four times as likely to take part in community policing forums as individuals aged 18-24. Older individuals also attend *lipitso* at a significantly higher rate than young people, especially those aged 18-24. As shown in **Figure 13,** almost half of the respondents aged 18-24 did not attend a *pitso* in the past twelve months. In contrast, approximately four in five of those aged 25 years old and above attended.

Figure 13: Pitso attendance by age group



The slightly declining participation rates for those above the age of 75 reflects what Welzel, Inglehart and Deutsch (2005) refer to as *life cyclical pattern,* which reflects that "people tend to be most intensively involved in community life in the middle of their life-cycle…" (Welzel, Inglehart and Deutsch 2005). This notwithstanding, the results add to a now very coherent story, which is that political participation is in general much lower among young people. Their apathy is symptomatic of a generalised disengagement from public affairs.

5.4 Views and attitudinal profiles of voters and non-voters

5.4.1 Attitudes towards elections

The views of voters and non-voters about elections are virtually indistinguishable. For instance, 85 percent of the voters and 81 percent of the non-voters believe that elections provide the opportunity for citizens to correct the mistakes of the government. A full seventy-seven percent (77%) of the voters and 74 percent of the non-voters feel that elections provide an opportunity for citizens to contribute to the country's policy-making processes. Slightly over half (55.13%) of those who turned out in the June 2017 elections feel that elections must be made compulsory by law while 47.52 percent of those who did not turn out share similar sentiments. An equal majority of voters and non-voters (61%) feel that schools should teach children the benefits and responsibilities of voting and political participation.

Chi square tests of the above-mentioned differences between voters and non-voters confirm that indicate that the perception of these groups on the importance of elections and the need to introduce

democracy education in the school curriculum are indeed the same. It is safe, therefore, to conclude that differences between voters and non-voters has very little to do with differences in attitudes towards the value of elections.

5.4.2 Election competitiveness and political efficacy

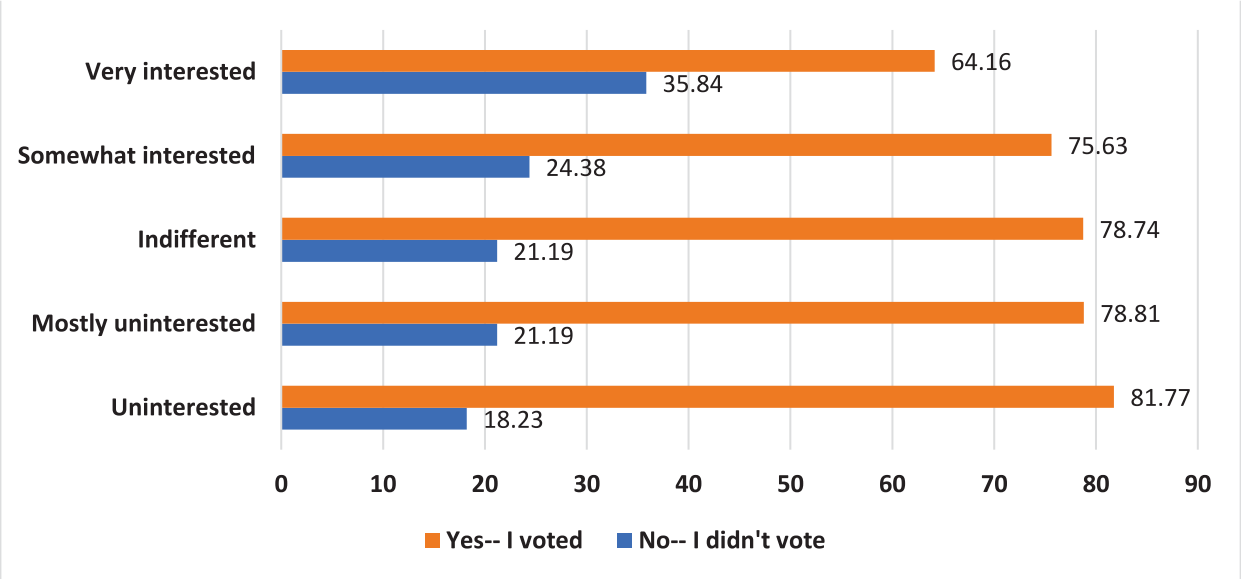
A third (34%) of the individuals who voted in June 2017 and 20% of those who didn't vote feel that these elections were not competitive at all. Furthermore, a third of the voters feel that the elections were less competitive than the snap elections of February 2015. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between turnout and perception of election competitiveness. The results indicate a statistically significant association between the two variables (X^2 (4, N = 1723) = 142.64, p <.01). Surprisingly, those who perceive elections to be less competitive at national level were more likely to have voted (v =0.29). The statistically significant association between the two variables is slightly stronger when we substitute national-level competitiveness with constituency-level competitiveness (v=33).

These results should be interpreted cautiously in light of the relatively large number of individuals who did not have an opinion about the competitiveness of elections at both national and constituency levels. A considerably large proportion of non-voters indicated that they had no opinion about party competitiveness for both Local Government and National Assembly elections. For example, 47% of those who did not vote on 3 June 2017 elections stated that they were unable to assess the national-level competitiveness of these elections. A self-declared inability to express an opinion on an attitudinal survey question is a good proxy for a sense of political efficacy. Considered in this light, we can conclude that even though those who vote do not consider elections as competitive, they have a significantly higher confidence in their ability to assess party system's competitiveness.

5.4.3 Interest in politics

The survey results show that interest in politics explains some of the differences between voters and non-voters in both Local Government and National Assembly elections. Nevertheless, contrary to initial expectations grounded in the vast political participation literature, voter turnout is higher among the individuals who claim to be uninterested in politics (see **Figure 14**).

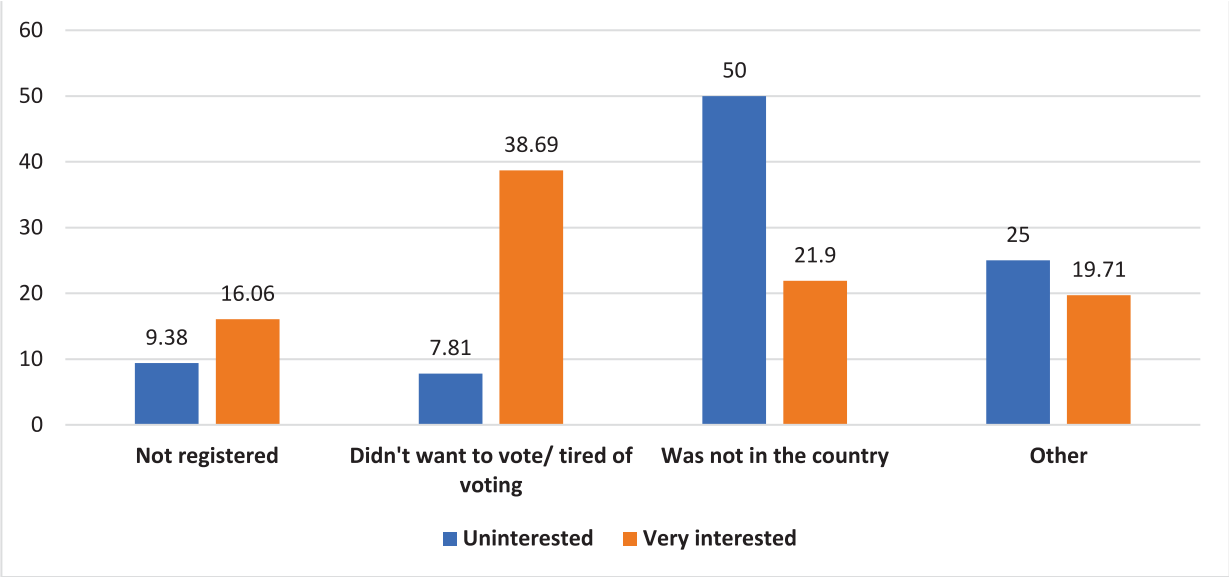
Figure 14: Interest in politics by voting in 2017 General election



A closer analysis of the data suggests that those who are interested in politics are approximately two times as likely to have voted in June and October 2017 elections as those who are very interested in politics. Further to that, there are no statistically significant differences in voting between exhaustive pairs of individuals drawn from the remaining four categories; uninterested in politics, mostly interested in politics, indifferent and somewhat interested in politics. It is only when each of these categories of individuals is compared with the 'uninterested in politics' category that a large and statistically significant change in the likelihood of voting emerges.

But, why would the people who profess to be interested in politics stay away from voting? One way to answer this question is to analyse the relationship between the variables, 'interest in politics' and 'main reasons for not voting'. **Figure 15** illustrates some of the main differences between respondents who are very interested in politics and those who are uninterested. The group claiming to be uninterested in politics constitutes almost 39% of those who didn't vote because they were tired of voting/ didn't want to vote while the second group (i.e. very interested in politics) constitutes only 7.81 percent. Furthermore, among individuals not registered to vote, the proportion of those who claim to be very interested in politics much higher than the proportion of those uninterested in politics.

Figure 15: Reasons for not voting by interest in politics



5.4.4 Cognitive awareness

The majority of respondents are generally uninformed about current affairs, key political and government figures as well as how Lesotho's electoral model works. Less than 10% of the respondents correctly mentioned the name of any Commissioner of IEC and the name of the Chief Justice. About one in five (17.92 %) were able to correctly name the Commissioner of Police while 31.65 percent correctly named the Leader of Opposition. Slightly over two thirds (68.68 %) of the respondents correctly mentioned the name of their own Constituency MPs. Furthermore, only 11 percent of the respondents claimed to understand how Lesotho's Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) model works.

Self-reported turnout rates vary depending on the level of political awareness and knowledge of the respondents. A large proportion of the respondents who turned out to vote in both 2017 National Assembly and Local Government elections correctly mentioned the names of the Commissioner of the IEC, Leader of the Opposition, Commissioner of Police, the Chief Justice and their own Constituency MPs. However, compared to the rest of the sample, a relatively smaller proportion of those who correctly mentioned the names of these public figures were willing to vote in future. For example, 54.62 percent of those who correctly mentioned the name of the Leader of Opposition were willing to vote. On the contrary, a slightly higher percentage of those who got the name wrong (65 %) and those who did not even attempt to guess (61 %) were willing to turn out in the future.

Table 12: Willingness to vote by knowledge of the leader of opposition

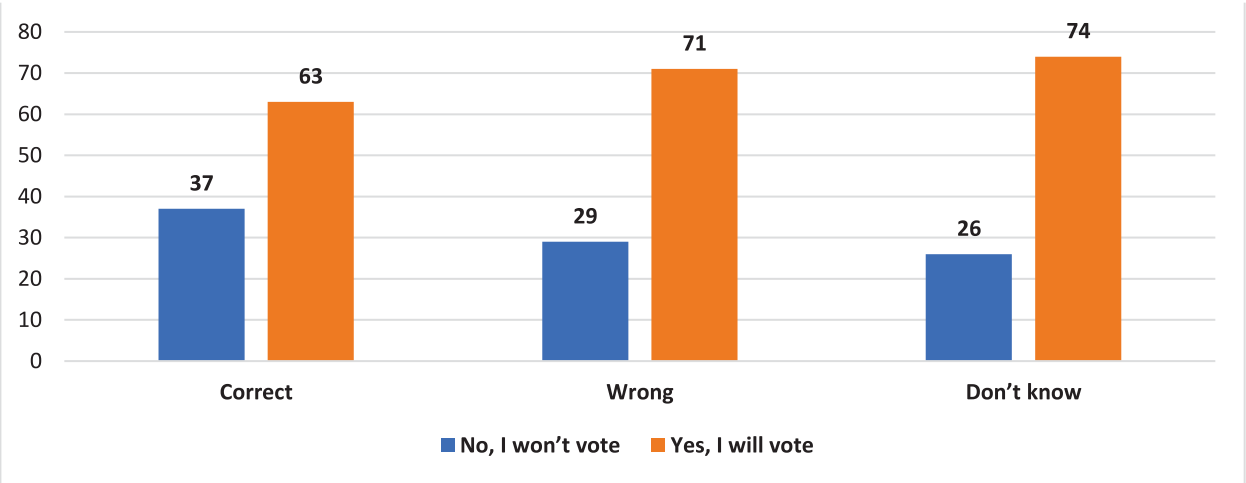
	Correct name	Wrong name	Don't know
No- I won't vote	45.38	35.19	38.86
Yes- I will vote	54.62	64.81	61.14

N-1625

To the extent that some of those who are politically aware and voted at a higher rate in 2012 are unwilling to vote in future, we can safely conclude that turnout is likely to decline significantly among the most knowledgeable voters. These cohorts of voters have two distinct characteristics; they are young and educated.

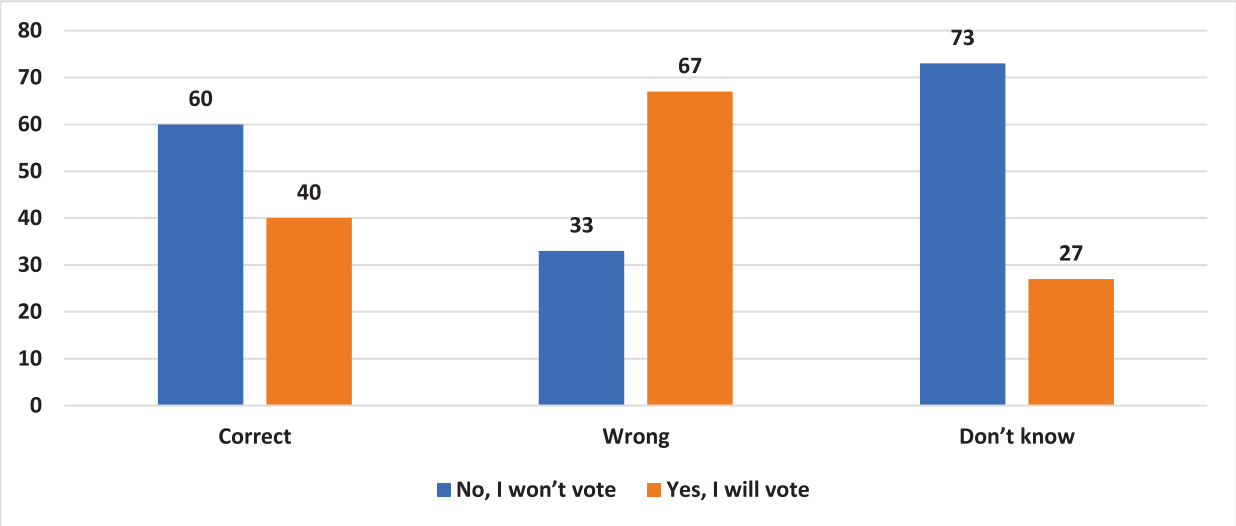
The majority of the older respondents with no education or only primary-level education either declared straight away that they did not know the name of key public figures inquired about or mentioned an incorrect name. Nevertheless, most of the members of these education groups were willing to vote in the next election. As shown in **Figure 16**, 70 to 75% of those who have attained some primary-level education and were willing to vote either incorrectly mentioned the name of the leader of parliamentary opposition or did not know his name.

Figure 16: Willingness to vote by knowledge of leader of opposition: respondents with Primary Education Only



Conversely, as shown **in Figure 17**, 73 percent of the Diploma holders who did not know the name of the leader of parliamentary opposition have no intention to vote in the next election.

Figure 17: Willingness to vote by knowledge of leader of opposition: College/University Diploma holders

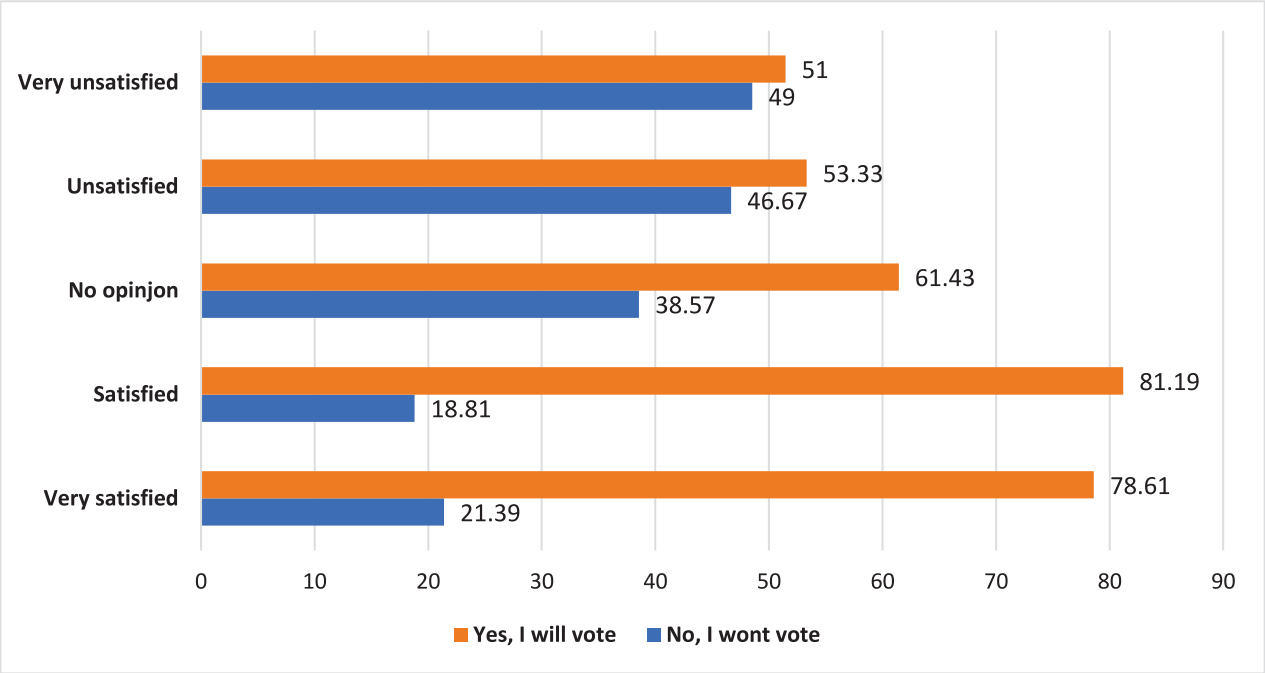


The danger that the trend described in the foregoing poses is that those who make decisions on who governs may not be exercising an independent choice as poorly informed citizens tend to rely on others, including family members, party representatives and traditional leaders to make political decisions (Bratton, Mattes and Gymah, 2005). This severely compromises the sanctity of 'electoral participation' which presupposes 'autonomous' decision-making of individual voters.

5.4.5 Performance evaluations

Performance of the Members of Parliament: One of the major differences between voters and non-voters is their levels of satisfaction with the performance of their constituency representatives in Parliament (i.e. MPs). A large majority of the respondents who are satisfied and very satisfied with the performance of their MPs are willing to vote in future. For instance, four in five of those who are satisfied and very satisfied with their current MP are willing to show up in polling stations. On the contrary, those who are unsatisfied and very unsatisfied with their MP are split in half; 51% of the very unsatisfied are willing to vote while 49 percent have no intention to turn out (see **Figure 18**).

Figure 18: Intention to vote by satisfaction with the performance of MP



Government Performance: Similarly, an increase in satisfaction with the performance of the government has a strong association with the intention vote. Eighty-six percent (86 %) of those who are very satisfied with the performance of the government are intending to vote in the future. In sharp contrast, 53 percent of those who are currently very unsatisfied have the same intention.

Performance evaluations seem to influence changes in political interest, too. Generally, and rather surprisingly, those who rate the performance of their MPs and the government poorly report a significantly *increased* interest in politics over the past 10 years. How can we make sense of these results? It seems that individuals who are increasingly interested in politics grade political institutions and actors rather poorly compared to those whose interest either stayed the same or decreased over the past ten years. An alternative explanation is that poor institutional performance increases political interest.

5.5. Who votes in Lesotho?

Drawing upon an analysis of the nationally representative public opinion survey, this chapter has distilled and presented the differences between voters and non-voters in both Local Government and National Assembly elections. The major differences between the two groups lie in their demographic and behavioural attributes. An average voter in Lesotho is older than 45 years old, resides in rural areas and is relatively uneducated. In terms of behavioural differences, the analysis indicates that

individuals who are most likely to turn out to vote have regularly attended *lipitso* and rallies organised by political parties. They are also active members of political parties and community policing forums, among others. Most importantly, the vast majority of people who voted in 2017 Local Government and National Assembly elections had consistently voted since 2007. The greatest concern is that over a third of these consistent voters are not willing to vote in the future. Part of what explains these voters' intention to boycott elections is their dissatisfaction with the high frequency of Lesotho's elections and the perception that political leaders are self-serving.

Regarding attitudinal differences, we find that increase in political interest and cognitive awareness erodes the propensity to vote. This contradicts our initial expectation based on political behaviour literature that people with strong interest in politics, who are most likely to possess more information about how the political and electoral systems work and who the major players are, will show a higher propensity to vote (see Denny and Doyle 2008).

The best way to make sense of the negative effects of political interest and cognitive awareness is to consider these results in the light of the corrosive effect of age and education. Most educated people maintain a stronger interest in public affairs and do understand a fair bit of what is going on in their country and beyond its borders. Most of them can easily mention the names of important national and international figures and explain how Lesotho's political and electoral systems work, especially the nuts and bolts of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) model. The majority of these educated respondents (i.e. those with College/ University level education) are between ages 24 and 45. It is not surprising against this background that interest in politics and cognitive awareness has an inverse relationship with willingness to vote and the propensity to have voted in the past.

6. Narratives of low and declining turnout

This chapter presents analysis of qualitative data on the reasons for voting or not voting from in-depth interviews with key informants (or experts), Focus-Group discussions and open-ended questions that were fielded as part of the survey questionnaire. The findings are presented in thematic headings related to explanations of low voter turnout for the National Assembly and Local Government elections, among different social groups and in the low performing constituencies.

6.1 Reasons from the survey

Each one of the survey respondents were asked to provide the most important reason for the low and declining voter turnout in Lesotho. This question was asked as both a structured, pre-coded question and open-ended question. Aggregating both these responses, we find that two thirds (67%) of respondents feel that the most important reason for declining turnout is that *'voting does not make a difference'*, followed by the perception that *politicians are self-serving* (62 %) and *the increased frequency of elections* (30%) (See **Table 13**).

Table 13: Most reasons for low and declining voter turnout in national elections

Reasons	Count	Valid Percent
Voting makes no difference	1215	67
Politicians are too self-interested	1131	62
Basotho are tired of voting	545	30
Basotho hate MMP	34	2
Basotho no longer like democracy	34	2

The fact that only two percent of respondents feel that citizens' declining support for democracy is one of the major reasons for low turnout stands in sharp contrast to the view of some of the interviewed experts.

Our analysis of FGD and Key Informant interviews reveals several reasons for low and declining voter turnout, and these are presented and discussed briefly below:

6.2 Attitudes towards political institutions

The analysis of qualitative data indicates that low voters comprise individuals who have lost trust in their parliamentary representatives. This seems to fanned by, among other things, the fact that "MPs do not consult the electorate in cases where they change parties and cross the floor in parliament - especially where this leads to changes in government or MPs' joining with their party rivals." In short, MPs are seen to fail their social contracts with the electorate.

Pre-Election alliances between political parties were mentioned as one of the main reasons for low voter turnout. This has been the pattern since the introduction of MMP (and argued result of it). In particular, the study's respondents cited the pact between DC and LCD in the run-up to the 2017 poll whereby these parties agreed to combine votes and support one another in each of the 80 Constituencies where they were contesting.9 Analysis of qualitative data indicates a view that some of members of the DC decided to boycott election, rather than vote for an "imposed" LCD candidate in those constituencies designated for that party. In the view of some of the participants, this was caused by the fact that this had not been a widely consultative decision.

6.3 Effects of electoral regulations

According to the qualitative data the MMP electoral system is perceived as not much of a contributor to low voter turnout which tallies with the survey results showing only 2% of respondents claimed that MMP was the main reason for not voting. Both Key Informants and National Voter Survey respondents regard the system as the best the country has adopted thus far, although others consider it complicated and its workings not well known and/or easily understood by many people: only 11% of the survey respondents said they understand it.

Still, MMP is blamed for political instability in the country because it can be manipulated for political expediency which allows for people who were not elected become MPs and even become Ministers. The argument here is that PR legislators are not accountable to the electorate but to the party (that nominated them) and its leader, unlike the constituency based FPTP representatives.

[9] In reality, the pact was among DC, LCD and PDF. The gripe of many supporters of the first two parties was the main controversy and was based, among others, on the relative strength of these (with LCD having been devastated electorally since 2012), and remaining rancor and distrust for LCD among DC members who had split from the former ruling party in 2012. Because PFD was allocated only one seat to contest, there was little disaffection in connection to its allocation.

The abolition of the two-ballot version of MMP model since 2012 and introduction of a single ballot, interviewed experts claim, eliminates the voter's ability to exercise their right and split their vote where voters would prefer to (choosing different party/candidate for either ballot). Indeed, participants in FGDs complained that political parties impose constituency candidates against popular will, which problem would be solved by use of a double ballot. In such cases voters have withheld their votes, therefore adversely affecting turnout.

6.4 Party institutionalisation, proliferation and coalition governments

The study findings indicate that voters' willingness to vote is eroded by the formation and pervasive fragmentation of political parties, usually towards election time. They get confused and find it difficult to choose which party to follow or whether their vote would have the desired impact on the election outcome, therefore they end up choosing not to go to the polls:

> There are so many political parties to choose from with some having similar mottos, it makes people not to choose the party to vote for, especially when those pries break from the already existing ones which have had issues that made people to lose interest in voting.

The strong perceptions of respondents are that political parties often present similar policy manifestos but fail to strictly talk to them in their electoral campaigns. As voters they often failed to differentiate between the parties and what they stood for. Therefore, they end up concluding that politics and elections especially voting are worthless.

Political parties are perceived as too weak to stimulate voter turnout among the electorate. They do not serve as democratic vehicles as they are characterised by internal conflicts and divisions causing instability within and in the country as a whole. This in turn adversely affects people's desire to participate in elections.

Imposition of party candidates by some political party leadership in 2017 elections somewhat affected voter turnout because it was viewed as undemocratic and restrictive to peoples' choice to vote for their desired candidates. Therefore, some stayed away from voting because of this weakness of most political parties. A related issue, particularly important among "congress" supporters in 2017, was the electoral pact between LCD and DC, which some supporters of either party felt was unfair as it was agreed among the leaders without their input –as reflected in the lower than normal votes for either party.

The poor calibre of leadership across all levels of and their lack of policy proposals to sell to the electorate is another reason for low voter turnout. Political parties and their leadership focus more on personality politics and hate speech and not articulate their different policy positions, in their campaigns.

Multi-party coalition governments since 2012 elections appear to make it difficult for parties to pursue individual party policies (these may be different or conflicting). An Expert interviewed made an example of dual citizenship which was a priority policy for PFD but outright rejected by their then coalition partners LCD and DC. This then creates the impression among voters, of unfulfilled campaign promises or lack of commitment by politicians.

6.5 Electoral frequency and voter fatigue

The survey results indicate that 62% of the respondents said they were tired of voting and this sentiment was corroborated by qualitative findings that Key Informants and FGD participants who contended that voter fatigue among Basotho contributes to low turnout because of frequent parliamentary elections. People no longer see value in elections because nothing changes to better their lives: *"ba bona ho fetola botlolo moriana oa tšoana* "(only the bottle changes but the medicine is the same). The perception is that such frequent elections serve as a self-enriching instrument for politicians:

> *People are fed up! They see no value in endless elections except it is about self-enriching MPs at the expense of the masses, they enjoy high salaries, interest free loans, pensions. Government policies do not reflect improvement of people's lives. Obviously, voter fatigue sets in heightening low voter turnout by the electorate* (A Key Informant Observed).

The study findings also point to snap elections as one of the causes for low turnout in 2015 and 2017 elections which were announced to occur within three months.[10] This posed the biggest challenge for IEC especially on voter transfers and registration of new voters because of the short window period for updating the voters' roll. This situation made it impossible for mobile and migrant voters who had to change voting centres and first-time voters to register, particularly if still away from their homes (in

[10] In reality, though, the electoral period (time between announcement and polling day) is legally 90 days or three months. The reference appears to be more to the frequency of elections rather than the period stipulated for announcing them. The Lesotho Constitution provides for elections **within** five years, meaning that, under normal circumstances, polls would be held every five years –although this is the limit outside which the life of parliament expires: there is **no stipulated minimum** window period between elections.

school or places of employment). Similarly, snap elections affected the contesting candidates who were unable to effectively continue campaigning, as well as the electors.

6.6 Quality of governance

Several reasons were advanced by respondents and explained as responsible for citizens' disassociation with elections and voting. These relate to government systems, performance and processes. The most importantly cited are, poor service delivery; increasing mistrust of and lack of confidence in public institutions and actors; patronage and corruption.

The highly perceived level of patronage and nepotism or *se-oeso-oeso* especially in cases of service delivery and employment opportunities as well as corruption and non-accountability in government services are said to quell the desire by the citizens to turn out on Election Day. According to discussions with study participants low voter-turnout results from disgruntled electorate by patronage-based distribution of resources in which case some members of their societies have benefited from Government projects while others have not. After their candidate wins the political office, they (candidates) turn their backs on the electorate. Respondents complained that they see electoral outcomes promised to them during campaigns like jobs, community development projects not benefiting them but awarded based on political affiliation, party loyalty and kinship ties by those in power. They witness selective developments where projects are directed to the constituencies of government ministers and influential senior officers. They believe that the corruption that has engulfed all public service agencies and agents has discouraged people from voting.

6.7 Unfulfilled promises and poor service delivery

The most important reasons for low voter turnout in both local and national elections also include false and/or unfulfilled campaign promises of politicians. Almost all respondents across FGDs and Key Informants expressed a "No Service delivery, No vote" attitude in their responses. They asserted that they go to the polls to vote for political parties that articulate their demands and aspirations to become government (infrastructure, electricity, water in the main). Yet it turns out that electors do not realise any of the promised services or improvements to in their socio-economic status, particularly in the constituencies consistently show low voter turnout.

Most of the FGD participants stated that they withdraw from electoral participation as most constituents strongly feel disappointed by unfulfilled promises and government's poor service delivery

regardless of the political party in power. "*'muso ha o re sebeletse*." was the prominent sentiment expressed by respondents complaining about poor and delayed delivery of services by the government. In both the survey and group discussions urbanites especially among the young and educated complain is poor service delivery of things like licenses, passports, number plates, etc while the rural folks' infrastructure - roads, clinics, electricity are commonly mentioned. Respondents especially in the rural mountain areas (namely Mantšonyane, Thaba-Putsoa, Machache, and Mokhotlong) singled out their disappointment in failure of government's failure to secure wool and mohair market deal favourable to the farmers and its inability to curb stock theft. As some FGD participants argued,

> *We have been voting people to power, yet out lives never change; they fail to report back to show where we have decided not to participate anymore in elections. These people are self-serving*

The implications of this narrative are that society has deserted voting due to the general feeling that there is no value in voting since it has not changed their lives instead things are worsening on the ground. All participants view such discontent and frustration with the government as the main factor/reason voter turnout will decline further in the next elections.

6.8 Limited access to information and weak/partisan media

Some respondents said they did not vote because of limited access to information barring them from making rational choices to vote and how to do so. Also, they do not know why they vote because they lack exposure to issues and/or current affairs. So, they stay away. For instance, in Ketane constituency where people reside in remote villages where access to information on electoral processes is limited. Without information these people are unable to make informed choices because of them not knowing who to vote for and how.

However, in Maseru constituency respondents mentioned that they have media platforms including radio, newspapers, television and social media which expose them to variety of information. Yet, with this awareness level some do not vote.

Some experts and FGD participants see low voter turn-out as a result of weak and partisan private media. They argue that media, particularly private and social media, spread false information or fake news. This has confused and discouraged members of certain communities and demographics from voting. Participants also asserted that Lesotho media hardly talked about civic and democracy education as it only focuses on sensational politics likely to discourage voter participation. Moreover, IEC underutilises media to engage with the electorate, particularly young people. Yet turnout among

this group remains low.

6.9 Electoral management and voting processes

This theme relates to study findings on the identification and explanation of the reasons for low voter turnout related to the IEC's organisational issues with a displacement effect on the electorate. They are internal to and under the control of the IEC as the electoral management body.

6.9.1 Location of polling stations

The study has established that polling stations that are located far away from some villages displace voters from the polls and therefore contribute to low voter turnout. Although the past ten years have seen IEC establishing polling stations at vicinities closer to people, some participants still claim that certain polling stations are far to reach especially by the elderly people, pregnant women, the disabled and the sick. Key Informants and FGD participants from Mantšonyane, Ketane, Tele, Mekaling and Thaba-Putsoa opined that voting stations are far from some villages. For instance, in Mantšonyane, the Ramabetha voting station was closed and all names transferred to Ha 'Nokoane. Residents of Ramabetha complain that Ha 'Nokoane is too far. This increases the cost of voting. Some of the respondents' narratives in this regard succinctly summarised the situation *"Re hloka ho pheha mefao*" "*re tšaba lipeto hoba re tsamaea ka likhohlong*". In Ketane constituency, it was reported that residents of Ha Ramakholela are made to cast their vote at the polling station of Ha Batsi Moreneng. These villagers are rivals, and there is an ongoing conflict and fighting over grazing lands and recently people's houses were torched at Ha-Ramakholela allegedly by residents of Ha-Batsi.

6.9.2 Discriminatory experiences with elections and voting

There is a feeling of discrimination and non-citizenship in the case of remote cases like Tele Constituency whose residents mention that they resent elections and voting because of the language barrier and lack of development projects. They go to neighbouring S.A seeking services, like schooling and employment which makes them not to come back and vote, and/or take their vote there because they associate with the languages spoken and job opportunities. They feel discriminated with no sense of national citizenship.

IEC registration does not cover everyone and thus not inclusive of particularly schooling youth, rural residents especially in hard to reach places for example. There is also a bias of voter education material,

content, coverage and language to PLWD, Youth, minorities and rural Basotho which renders it ineffective to persuade voting. This issue is dealt with at length in **Chapter 8**.

6.9.3 Constituency delimitation and boundaries

The redrawing of electoral boundaries is viewed as another reason displacing voters from the ballot. Constituency delimitations by IEC based on 2006 census data appears not to reflect the actual population within constituencies especially over the past three elections (2012, 2015, 2017). The responses of Key Informants and discussions with members of civil society pointed to a high possibility that constituencies such as Tele, Thaba-Moea and Thabana-Morena. Maseru no longer meet the minimum population requirement for a constituency -more precisely, these appear to fall below the average constituency size. Similarly, it appears that IEC does not consider how pragmatic delimitation of boundaries is. For example, the study established from the interviews that people from Ha Mokauli village fall under Masite electoral division and therefore go to vote at Masite polling station which is a long walking distance that they are not willing/able to make and therefore give up voting. For instance, it was reported that delimitation of the Maputsoe constituency occurred twice in 2015 and 2017 which is reckoned a factor that adversely affected voter turnout. In 2015 some areas that formed part of Maputsoe Constituency, namely Ha Chaka, Ha Matsoete, Popopo, to Thabana-Borokoana and Ha 'Mathata were taken to constitute part of Tsikoane Constituency. Further delimitation of Maputsoe Constituency boundaries by the IEC came with the 2017 snap elections to extend Tsikoane by adding Matekiling and leaving only Taung and Majakaneng areas constituting the Maputsoe constituency.

Interviews with the Commission indicate that the problem is being attended to and it is envisaged that in the next elections voters will not be negatively impacted by this problem. Because the IEC is currently dealing with the challenge and is reviewing constituency boundaries per Section 12 (67) which provides for that constituency population should be 10 percent above or below an average quota. The Commission is also in the process of installing GIS; and Constituency Officers are being capacitated and trained on the tool.

6.9.4 Effects of external and internal migration

The study findings strongly indicate that low voter turnout also results from the migration factor which is driven by lack of jobs in the domestic market. This occurs both internally from rural to urban areas and externally from Lesotho to South Africa by the productive age groups. These do not find it

necessary or feasible to return home frequently, even to vote because there are few job prospects in Lesotho. This migration factor is more pronounced in constituencies like Maputsoe and Tele. In Tele for instance, FGD participants asserted that most of their youths have migrated to Ceres in South Africa to work as farm and/or as domestic labourers.

These absent potential voters are distracted from casting their vote which poses a number of effects on voter turnout. First, it is assumed that migrants would have registered to vote in their homes yet at election time, they do not return to cast their vote. Second, is consideration of the cost and benefits of voting, especially for migrants, whether in Lesotho or (mostly) in South Africa. For example, workers in Maputsoe and Maseru constituencies (which are manufacturing centres), are expected to leave to vote in their homes yet these migrants' tendency is not to vote considering the opportunity cost against the benefits they forfeit. Additionally, because voting day is normally on Saturday, there is not enough time for many to travel to their home constituencies to vote -unless they are registered where they work. Finally, for those employed outside the country, there are no formal arrangements that would allow them to travel to Lesotho to vote (in the absence of expatriate -voting).

6.10 Reasons specific to Local Government elections

The main reasons and explanation for low voter in Local Government survey results indicate that the most important reasons for not turning up at the polls to vote in the local government are that the voters were displaced and most were not in the country at the time (13 %); or not registered (6.33 %). Others said they did not want to vote (5.69 %); were tired of voting (2,5 %); and some felt (1.16%) Local Government elections were not important; while an insignificant number said they did not know where to go to vote (0.77%). This implies lack of or limited voter information. Yet others mentioned that their names did not appear in the voters' roll (0, 61 %). The study findings indicate other important reasons and explanations mentioned by Experts and FGD participants for low turnout in Local Government elections which include the following.

6.10.1 Focus on National Assembly vs. Local Government elections

There is less interest in participating in Local government elections for they are perceived by many including the electorate, politicians and the IEC itself not as less important compared to the National Assembly elections (Maputsoe FDG). There are several explanations for this, including the following:

- ***Budget allocation and/or support:*** ostensibly IEC is unable to support Local Government campaigning with party funds because these are made available (by donors) mostly for national polls. This restricts the resources available to candidates at this level

- ***Political party support:*** parties do not appear to sponsor Local Government aspirants, and the system is essentially a "voluntary" one where individuals indicate their interest and there is seldom contestation among party members to be candidates. This is distinctly different from national elections, where the national Executive Committees of parties are often involved in the organisation, supervision and/or vetting of candidates for election under their banners. Indeed, LG elections in 2005 had a majority of no-party candidates and representatives.

- ***Party coverage (candidate placement):*** In addition, no party, including the 3-4 biggest, contested all LG seats in 2017 (whereas ABC, BNP, and LCD/DC normally contest all National Assembly seats)

- ***Practical/technical incentives:*** MPs get more prestige, money and opportunities than Councillors –therefore the national contest attracts more interest and attention from parties, media, potential candidates and the public

There was a strong feeling among FGD participants and Key Informants that between national assembly and local elections the former is comparatively regarded more important. In their view IEC and political parties do not take LG elections seriously ("*ha ba li etsetse lerata joaloka tsa Paramente*"), therefore implying such elections attract less voter interest, and in turn lower turnout.

> Basotho have not yet appreciated the importance of all elections; they lack education by government. Because the central government is not willing to let go power to Local Government hence people do not see the value of Councillors but see them as 'stooges'

Councillors FDGs also expressed the same sentiment that IEC and political parties lack of commitment to these elections; they are not given the same publicity as the National Assembly elections. Resources especially campaign funding are not deployed to support local candidates and raise awareness and public interest in the elections by both these entities. An FGD participant in Thaba Putsoa opined as follows: "You don't see political parties making the same noises they make when we are heading for the National Assembly elections".

6.10.2 Inept and ineffective local government system

One other outstanding reason for low voter turnout in Local Government is the general perception among participants that the Local Government system is useless and ineffective. "*Ha re so bone bohlokoa ba council le local government Thaba-Putsoa mona*," one participant said**.** Decentralisation of services appears to be far from making an impact on the ground as resources devolved to local level are inadequate or non-existent. Seemingly the parent Ministry of Local government is reluctant to provide required leadership and capacity, provide necessary resources both financial and infrastructural and sensitise stakeholders about their respective roles. These challenges have defeated the ambitious objective of the country's Local Development Programme to achieve development-oriented local authorities in Lesotho. The findings indicate an apparent failure of Local Government to play an intermediary role between the citizens and central government and be direct provider and creator of enabling environment for communities which therefore does efficiently and effectively respond to citizens' demands and implementation of development policies and project activities promised during the Councillors' electoral campaigns. This has diminished citizens' trust in the system and local authorities to deliver expected outcomes.

Local election popularity is very low as candidates for National election use what are rightfully duties or responsibilities and achievements of local councillors for their election campaigns.

> *By the time local election period arrives, we have nothing to use in our campaigns…. People do not see the importance of electing multiple people to perform same duties; they see councillors as a waste of government's money, hence the reluctance to take interest in voting during local elections. …They [electors] still do not know the difference of duties between parliamentarians and councillors.* Opined some FDG participants.

6.10.3 Politicisation of service delivery

People are ignorant of responsibilities/functions of councillors; decentralization is not effective because of continued centralization of their functions.

Councillors are frustrated because they do not have plans to mainstream and services to run. Cabinet Ministers from central government directly provide service delivery. *"Litšebeletso li a ha ha bo matona"* so service delivery is selective and directed to Cabinet Ministers 'constituencies. Therefore, according to the respondents in councillors FGDs service delivery has become a political tool. This discourages people from voting because they fail to see why they should cast their votes to elect Councillors since they cannot deliver! In fact, people regard MPs as more credible than Counsellors given that in most

the disparity in the number of those who elected MPs vs. Counsellors is glaring. The latter's votes are so small in number. "They win in very low numbers, yet it is the same people voting" observed a Counsellor in Maputsoe FGD.

6.11 Reasons for voting in national vs. government elections

6.11.1 Reasons from survey results

While the study focus is on low voter turnout, it is important to acknowledge the fact that 72 percent of surveyed respondents reported to have voted in the 2017 elections and briefly highlight what motivated them. They provide two broad reasons which should be viewed and understood or explained in two ways being first is the act of voting and the outcome for doing so. In this context the most important reasons that motivated the majority of 49.1 percent to vote for was the desire to make a difference, 31 percent felt it is their duty to do so, 13.4 percent wanted to support their party and 6.4 percent wants to change government/ruling party. The 23.5 percent of respondents gave reasons for not voting in the National Assembly elections in 2017. Of these the majority of 33 percent said they were not in the country, 20.6 percent which constitute majority of the respondents said they were not registered, an almost equal number gave other reasons; 16.3 percent did not want to vote while less than 10 percent were tired of voting (6.1%), and had their names omitted from voters' roll. A very insignificant number (0.2%) refused to answer.

The most important reasons mentioned for voting are: the desire to make a difference for 59.7 percent of the respondents; the feeling that it is both their duty and the dictate of the law for 25 percent while 9.7 percent wanted to support their party and to change government and or the ruling party/is as shown in **Table 14.**

Table 14: Reasons for Voting in Local Government Elections

Value	Frequency	Valid Percent
Not Applicable- Not Voted	772	42.62
It is my duty/the law	259	14.3
I wanted to make a difference	617	34.07
I wanted to support my party	100	5.52
I wanted to change government or ruling party(ies)	57	3.15
DON'T KNOW	6	0.33
Total	1811	100

6.11.2 Qualitative reasons

This report also presents qualitative reasons given for voting and most importantly to understand and explain why a high of 72 percent of respondents in the survey claimed they had voted when asked why they turned up to vote during Election Day. While there are many factors that the respondents advanced as influencers to participate and cast their votes in elections, the study findings revealed the most common and important reasons. The evidence from qualitative data findings and analysis provided most commonly mentioned reasons for voting which are thematically grouped and summarily presented in Box 1 according to the importance of the act of voting and the outcome of voting (PRA Inc. 2004).

- ***Exercising one's democratic right, and/ or fulfilling duty as a Citizen:*** In this context the top most common reasons to vote for 31percent of respondents is that they vote as to exercise their [democratic] right and/or duty *("ke tokelo ea rona ho khetha"*) therefore indicating that the act of voting is viewed by respondents as important as it is a right and duty or responsibility that if not exercised could mean an end of democracy.

- ***Opportunity /the right to influence the government:*** Some respondents viewed voting also as an act of giving the voter the right to influence the government decisions and actions.

- ***Expression of Loyalty and support to political party and/or candidates:*** Loyalty and support to political party and/or candidates was the reason to vote for 13.4% of respondents. *"I voted because I was supporting someone I know",* one said. Hence voting gets respondents an opportunity to support their preferred candidates and/or political party.

Other reasons for voting related to voters' anticipation of the positive outcome of the elections which came out as the most important, including the following:

- ***Desire to make a difference and Change government:*** The majority constituting 49.1percent of the respondents voted because of their desire to make a difference while a relatively fewer, (6.4%) in the survey said they vote to bring about change government/ruling party. Their attitude was voting "because I wanted to change the previous government", one said, and "because I was very hurt by the previous government and I was taking revenge" said another.

- ***Hope for improved lifestyle:*** Respondents mentioned that for them voting is an act of hope that the new political leadership would be different from the current one and bring positive changes in their personal lives, the community and the country. One participant said in the 2015 and 2017 elections, residents of Maseru Constituency badly wanted to change the government, and install the one they hoped would respond to people demands, "We wanted to elect a different party into power because of the chaos and bloodshed witnessed under the rule of the ruling party of the time".

- ***Gaining good life benefits or Personal favours:*** Diverse individual and collective voices of respondents in the discussions gave other reasons related to the outcome of voting. In some cases, people voted because they were promised good life benefits or given personal favours such as jobs by political party leaders and candidates. Participants in the Thaba-Putsoa civil society FGD for example, also emphasized the fact that most people are driven by individual favours from politicians and not necessarily the benefits that accrue to all residents of their constituencies.

- ***"For our children's future":*** In the rural constituency areas, of e.g. Thaba-Putsoa and Tele people said they perceived voting as a necessary act to secure a future for the next generation; being influenced by the emotion that they were doing it with a belief that it is somehow beneficial for their children's future. "*Re se re khetha molemong oa bana ba rona feela"* an FGD participant said.

- ***Appealing Party Manifesto and Politicians influence:*** Another reason found to be compelling to some people to vote is the appealing political party manifestos "I voted because of the attractive party manifesto" said a young respondent in urban Maseru. Furthermore, political activism by politicians influences some of the electorate to vote. For instance, the survey results indicate that four out of five people that were contacted by politicians voted.

6.12 Special groups

This section of the report presents perceptions and attitudes of respondents from the usually marginalised social or special groups, namely, women, People Living with Disability (PLWDs), Youth and minorities on reasons for low political participation and particularly voting among their specific groups. Reviewed literature indicates that democracy, especially an election, is fundamentally about numbers and inclusion. It should be recalled that the biggest social groups and those considered most

vulnerable requiring attention in Lesotho are women making up more than 50 percent of the population, the youth (aged 18-35) constituting more than 70 percent and people living with disability forming 2.5 percent of the population. The findings highlight common as well as unique though equally interesting and important reasons for low voter turnout in general elections in the country over time among these social groups. While older women do participate in elections, the youth do not as they have become disenchanted with politics and politicians.

6.12.1 Women

. Similarly, among the female respondents who did not vote in 2017, 58 percent did not receive IEC-driven voter education. Of interest for this study was to establish the reasons and explanations for low voter turnout for women. The study found the following causes peculiar to women:

- Lack of freedom of movement and issue of personal security (Maputsoe) hinders women's ability to go out to vote.
- Basotho migrant women working in South Africa especially usually lack adequate time, money and security to travel home to vote.
- Some traditional/social practices limit women's agency and participation in public life. Newly lactating mothers cannot participate in the public space shortly after the child's birth and because the IEC law or policy does not give them special treatment, they fail to go out to vote.
- Basotho women usually change their maiden names upon marriage and adopt the names of their new family per Basotho patriarchal value system and acquire new identity and place. This change may not be transmitted on time or at all to the IEC to effect necessary changes to allow the woman to vote.

6.12.2 People living with disabilities

A significant number of the Lesotho population is either old or disabled. The 2016 census estimates that 2.5 percent of the population have disabilities, and that visual impairment and difficulty remembering are the most prevalent types of disability with prevalence rates of 36.2 and 36.8 percent, respectively. These figures imply that 8.6 percent of the people are either old or disabled, which means there is an increasing need for social services and safety nets to take care of these people. The electoral law of Lesotho gives people living with disability voting rights; however, these continue to be marginalised as there are no measures and facilities to ease the voting process for this group, a situation which has limited voting.

Box 1: Reasons for Low Voter Turnout in PLWD

- Polling stations are not easily accessible
- No simplified messages for PLWDs. VEA working with PLWD but content is standard and not targeting this group.
- No guidance and confidentiality in use of Braille template. Communities lack knowledge on the use this tool, also IEC also lack capacity in this regard.
- Media is unfriendly; nobody speaks about PLWD generally and especially during election time
- Violent system of politics and lack of adequate security during voting constrain PLWD from participating in political campaign rallies.
- Politicians' false campaign promises to improve lives of PLWD, give them jobs, enact and enforce favourable laws and policies.
- Brief voter education period and limited/weak communication which deny some PLWD enough time to grasp VE.
- Government's slow progress in mainstreaming plans and strategies towards disability generally and particularly in election and voting processes.
- Institutional barriers for PLWD from registering results in their inability to cast their vote, despite provisions of Sec. 5 of the 2011 Electoral law.
- PLWD have limited Political Participation; they are absent in political structures because of noncompliance with the provisions of Section 30 of 2011 Electoral law which allows for their political participation. The Zebra model only caters for women. In PR listing political parties place PLWD very lowly, with limited chances for their inclusion. *"We are not empowered as politicians' have low understanding of disability and representation.*" (Key Informant)
- Inadequate role of LANFOD in stimulating voting among its members considering their small number.

6.12.3 Youth

The study reveals several reasons deterring the number of youths' interest in casting their votes, although it is mandatory to do so as their civic responsibility. As presented in **Figure 19** three major reasons for young people not to vote as expressed in the survey are that they were not registered; they were out of the country and they did not want to vote. There are also qualitative reasons provided by youth and also presented here.

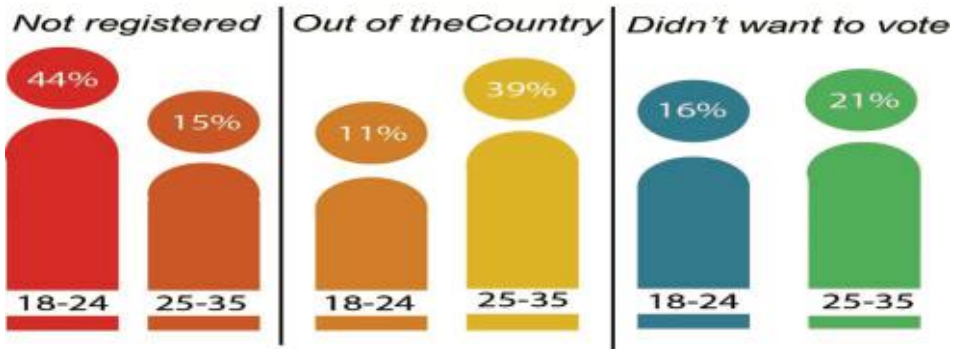
Lack of registration is prevalent among 44 percent in the 18-24 years age group who claim to be displaced by among others the IEC laws and administrative issues related to registration processes already alluded to earlier in this report.

Some raised the issue of being unregistered because of poor services at local IEC office. The instance raised was that the office attendants are always in rush for something and make the person who came

for services to wait forever. So, the youth are very impatient people to wait for such services. Others said that they do not know much about registration processes, while most also mention that they are usually away schooling, working out of the country or herders residing at the cattle posts (*balisana ba lulang metebong*). There is no online registration facility which they can easily access from wherever they are. This could explain the sluggish rate of new registrations.

The second major reason mentioned by 39 percent of 25-35 age groups is that they *are usually out of the country* on Election Day. This suggests that this productive age cohort is distracted by circumstances even if they wanted or planned to vote. This sentiment strongly came out in the Tele Constituency for instance where FGD participants asserted that most of their youths have migrated to Ceres in South Africa in search of jobs as farm labourers and from other constituencies like Maputsoe they go away to perform domestic work and/or construction work across the border since their local communities and domestic labour market have failed to provide them jobs and they remain in abject poverty.

Figure 19: Main reasons why youth do not vote



The third major reason for not voting is 25 percent said they did not want to vote for the 25-35 age group while 16 percent are among the 18-24 age group. The reasons and explanations given for this act are connected primarily to the consequence of young people generally becoming disassociated from the economic, political and electoral system. as a result, of: fatigue or apathy; politicians being too self-interested no service delivery (no *Specific personal (economic and other) interests*); and, exclusion by the system (governance, economic and political) in terms of representation in decision making structures and processes, employment which is rife among this demographic group, poor national leadership calibre, corruption, inadequate civic education and poor infrastructure. Hence, like most Basotho they find elections to be irrelevant to their lives. They view it as way politicians enrich themselves and not concerned about the future of young people.

From the qualitative data the most important reason why young people do not vote is lack of employment and exclusion from political power, lack of civic education, decision- making structures and processes as well as irrelevance of elections to their lives as explained in the subsequent sections.

This is the topmost cited reason by youth which makes them see no value of elections and their relevance to improving young people's lives. The perennially high rate of youth unemployment which is 32.3 percent (against the average national rate of 33 percent[11], is the major reason which is found to erode voter turnout in the national elections by this social group. Most of the young people are unemployed so they do not appreciate the value of elections and participating in them. Party manifestoes do not say much about the youth therefore they see no role youth in election activities. The participants in youth FGDs noted that

There are very few job opportunities created for the youth, especially in the government sector. So, the youth has decided not to vote as they gain nothing from government. Those who still go to vote understand their civic duty or want to either change or keep the existing government.
Participants complained that the government seems to be recruiting pensioners instead of the youth. As a result, the youth, who comprise most voters, stay away from the ballot box during elections. As an FGD participant in Maputsoe put it

> Our youth do no vote the most, which is worse because they are the future of this country. They attend rallies in large numbers, but they go for fun (mostly eating and drinking alcohol). Most of them have not even registered. They are looking for jobs and they feel that government is not doing much in creating jobs.

The youth reluctance is caused by misunderstanding of the political and electoral system; there is no clear separation of power and duties of IEC and the government. They believe that the coalition governments are caused by the introduction of mixed member proportion, which according to them was introduced in 2012. They also express high sense of rejection of local authorities such as local councils and chiefs, as executive bodies.

The young people do not understand that it is their responsibility to vote and put a government of their choice in power. Available literature indicates that Lesotho scores low at 0.336 and ranked 21 out of 54 CWC with regard to civic engagement with youth due to limited programmes and

[11] *BOS (Continuous Multipurpose Survey (Q1, 2015)*

interventions by the political parties targeting the youth to participate effectively in party and the country's politics, leadership and decision-making processes.

Young people do not fully engage in political participation as they view it to be for people who benefit from such system. They feel that in the context of looking at the realities of Lesotho as the youth are most side lined and disadvantaged by the system when it comes to resources allocation, provision of services, practice of democracy, etc which perpetuate the reluctance to vote seen in this generation. An FGD participant in Maseru noted as follows:

> *Our youth are not given enough opportunities to prove themselves on the difference and improvement they can bring to the nation at large. This is evident in the absent number of youths in government and politics at large. The youth see politics and voting as something for older people or vibe and they lose interest as they feel left out by the system.*

The participants perceived the way our society is structured denies the youth the platform to share their views in public gathering, or *lipitso* especially in issues that considered important. Even if given the platform they say that their ideas do not get support from those considered as executive, so the youth pull out from participating. A Politician admitted that "*Young people have expectations, but we (politicians) are failing them" They say that Members of Parliament and Community Councils are not passionate about developing the country and the communities they come from, rather they consider politics as shortcut to the flashy lifestyle.* An instance was discussed about a corrupt former Maputsoe Councillor who used public resources meant for community development project for personal gain.

Political parties do encourage the youth to be politically active but, in most cases, it is observed that there are some youth especially in the rural areas and not genuinely active they mostly go for rallies for fun such a free alcohol, food and good times. This was also admitted by urban youth in both Maseru and Maputsoe. The politicians try to attract the youth with these entertainment activities, promising them to create jobs after winning political office.

This is most hard, they stated that because they still young mischievous ways still very fresh in the mind of their community and they cannot oversee those mistakes rather the judge the character based on those mistakes. The youth FGDs revealed that unemployment found among the youth really contributes to their poverty status, hence they cannot be easily voted for because their ability to lead the people will be judged on their economic status.

Some participants especially youth feel that their lack of representation in national issues and in parliament has discouraged young people from voting. They contend that most members of

parliament are of advanced age group who are conservative and do not appreciate issues that affect the youth. Because of limited civic education they say that they feel disempowered and helpless to fight or push themselves from the margins into the centre of power spaces. In this regard a Key Informant in political leadership observed that:

> *Our youth are not given adequate opportunities to prove on the difference and improvement they can bring to the nation at large. This you can see from the absent number of youths in government and politics at large. The youth see politics and voting as something for older people or vibe and they lose interest as they feel left out by the system.*

The participants over and over emphasized on the age of the candidates competing for political office are very old, and surely the interest is going to clash, so they are not really motivated to vote for old people.

A majority number of Basotho youth have lost interest in participating in any election-based activity because there are no opportunities created to develop them. They have low level of trust towards the government and express their diminishing partisan support for failing to respond to their demands. *"How do we convince people to vote when they obtain nothing for their votes? I think numbers will keep going down";* one young participant retorted.

The age of the candidates competing for political office are very old, and surely the interest is going to clash; youth are not really motivated to vote for old people.

The youth say they have better things to do rather than go waste their time in long queues just to vote for people who completely forget about them immediately when in power. They are even more aggravated that the elderly and people living with disability are given preference when they reach the polling stations, while as young people they have to wait in the voting lines for their turn to vote. This active cohort of voters claim they are too busy and have no time to waste queuing to get to the ballot box instead of doing other things *"hence we walk away*….[and/or] *go to the bars to drink in the meantime but forget or give up un voting"* some urban FGD participants explained.

Young people feel strongly that the current civic and voter education messages in particular and political messages in general, may not be appropriately communicated to youth and therefore they (Youth) may know less about the political process. The perception of young people who participated in FDGs was that utilizing *lipitso* as a strategy in voter education or attending political rallies is not the best means to transmit political messages to them. These are attended mostly by adults and are not interactive enough; they are about preaching ideas to the audiences. Young people feel addressed;

therefore, they usually do not attend *lipitso* or they go there only for entertainment, mostly because political messages do not come through the platforms that they use regularly (social media, interactive technology). Indeed, urban FDG youth participants highlighted the irrelevance of some of the strategies used -to target them (e.g. Bonanzas and sport competitions).

Some young people say young people vote less because they perceive politics and voting as a thing for older people, more so because even the candidates and party leaders are old. This age difference explanation between youth and older people appears to be the case according to most studies is that while the youth are the most vocal and visible members of many political parties (rallies, public protests and singing, at political party gatherings or *ho haila,* etc) they seem not to vote on election day comes but it is the elderly who turn up. They say they will go to vote when their turn comes.

6.12.4 Remote constituencies and ethnic minorities

The ethnic minority status and Citizenship Rights of Amaxhosa and Baphuthi in the Southern region expressed difficulties with voting because they are discriminated, and their demands not being met by political parties competing in elections. Some voters like in Ketane constituency do not vote due to conflict situations in their villages e.g. Ketane or simply because they live in remote areas where access to information and electoral processes is limited. **Box 2** provides information concerning reasons for low voter turnout in low performing rural and urban constituencies.

Box 2: Reasons for Low Voter Turnout in Rural and Urban Worse Performing Constituencies

- Negative effects of External/cross border and Internal/rural urban migration due to lack of jobs in the domestic market): affects mostly rural turnout because of absent migrants during elections labouring in Ceres farms "kitchens" and construction companies in SA (typically for Tele, Mjanyane and Mekaling); factory workers and job seekers (Maseru and Maputsoe);
- Constituency delimitation. Consider the case of Tele Constituency has been given as a special case
- Inadequate civic education: educators unable to cover many rural villages; materials are foreign; most people cannot read voter education messages; no strong media coverage to inform Ketane.
- Distant and inaccessible polling stations that are far from some villages; women, elderly cannot easily make the distance and safely (e.g. Thaba-Putsoa and Ketane "*ba tlameha ho pheha mefao";*
- No voter educators in isiXhosa or Sephuthi languages; targets factory workers in Maputsoe town at the expense of villages; brief delivery at firms and/or late and inadequate distribution of materials in remote rural/mountainous places
- Mistrust of state institutions, policies and politicians e.g. Wool and mohair policy in Machache, Thaba-Putsoa and Mantšonyane.
- Flaw of the MMP in Floor crossing brings about disappointment and mistrust in MPs (Thaba-Putsoa and Tele MPs
- Strong feeling of discrimination and non-citizenship as the case with the Tele Constituency residents who resent elections and voting
- No full coverage of registration by IEC; not inclusive of schooling youth, rural residents especially in hard to reach places for example
- Intra-community conflicts in neighbouring villages of in Tele in Quthing and Ketene in Mohales Hoek district.
- Transport costs and economics of voting (voting has become costs due to travel costs) for rural voters, unemployed youth and migrant workers
- Unresponsive government to needs of electorate in terms of inclusive decision-making (youth, women), unemployment, and poor service delivery of basic needs and of infrastructure- clinics, electricity points, lack of reliable water supply (e.g. Maputsoe) and poor road maintenance; and services like licensing, passports, number plates service point, discourage voting and cause some respondent to detest politics.
- Exposure to weak and biased or no media and negative information influencing their choice not to vote
- Disconnect between voting and urban youth and educated folks who are supposedly more informed and enlightened.
- . Poor political leadership calibre (urban youth)

7. Efforts to stimulate voter turnout

There is a growing international consensus that civic and voter education is an important factor of electoral participation and civic engagement more broadly. The main outcomes of civic and voter education include instilling cognitive awareness and political knowledge, reinforcing democratic attitudes and building civic competencies. The objective of cognitive awareness and political knowledge aspect of civic education is to confer information on how the country's political and electoral systems operate; how the government is structured, functions of the election management body and, importantly, how citizens can engage meaningfully with government, voicing opinion and making decisions. The reinforcement of democratic attitudes aspect refers to democratic values and norms such as interpersonal trust, political tolerance and unconditional support for democracy as a form of government. The civic competency aspect refers to the ultimate aim of civic education, which is to empower citizens with the skills to hold the government accountable.

This chapter evaluates the impact of civic education on voter turnout. In both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study, special attention was given to the nature of the relationship between civic and/or voter education efforts and turnout.

7.1The nature of civic and democracy education

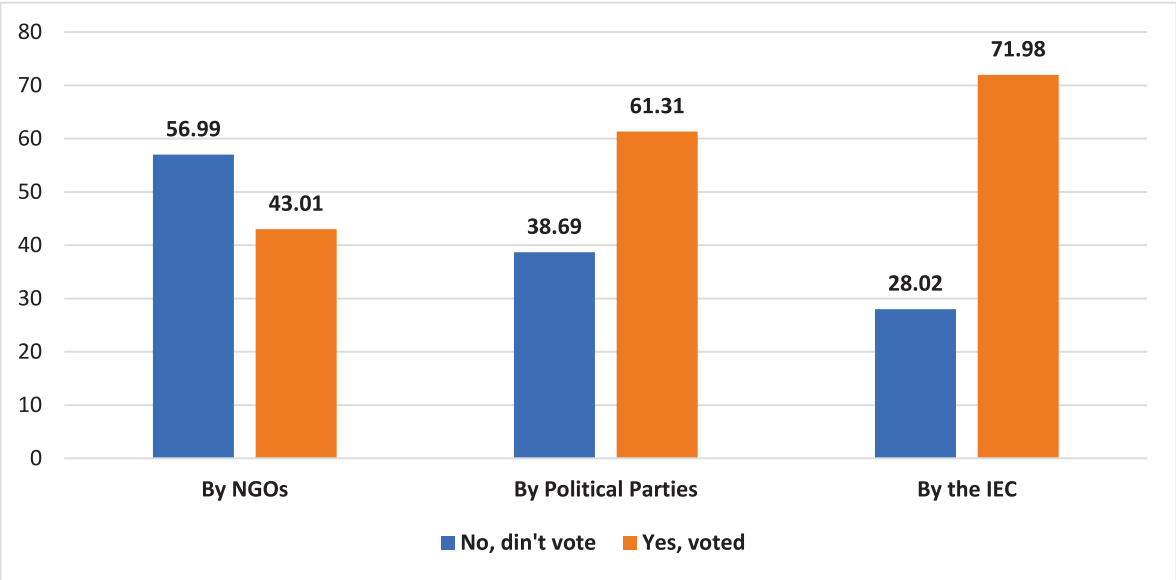
In Lesotho, there are three main drivers of civic and voter education: The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Political Parties. Non-governmental organisations such as the Development for Peace Education (DPE) and more recently, GIZ through its Participatory Initiative for Social Accountability (PISA) focus more on civic/ democracy education while the IEC tends to put more emphasis on voter education. The main objective of voter education is to develop an understanding of electoral processes, including the electoral system, the roles of all the stakeholders in an election, voter registration procedures, the balloting process, voting stations, duties and responsibilities of polling officers, functions of the IEC, the need to value one's vote, the secrecy of the ballot, the electoral code of conduct and the need to protect the integrity of the election system through citizen oversight. Voter education is usually delivered during the election period when the IEC partners with local NGOs to roll out country wide interventions. Some political parties also engage in voter education in the process of campaigning.

During Local Government elections, the content also covers among others, the composition of local councils, duties of councillors, naming of electoral divisions and allocation of special seats for women.

7.2 The impact of civic and voter education

The public opinion survey asked respondents to state whether they received voter education from a) the IEC, b) NGOs and c) political parties during the last election period. The response options to each of these questions were a simple 'YES' or 'NO'. As shown in **Figure 20,** the IEC appears to have covered the largest proportion of the voting population as its voter education campaign reached approximately two thirds (63.47 %) of the respondents. Slightly over half of the respondents were reached by political parties (54.01 %) while campaigns by Non-Governmental Organisations reached slightly more than a third of the respondents (36.56 %).

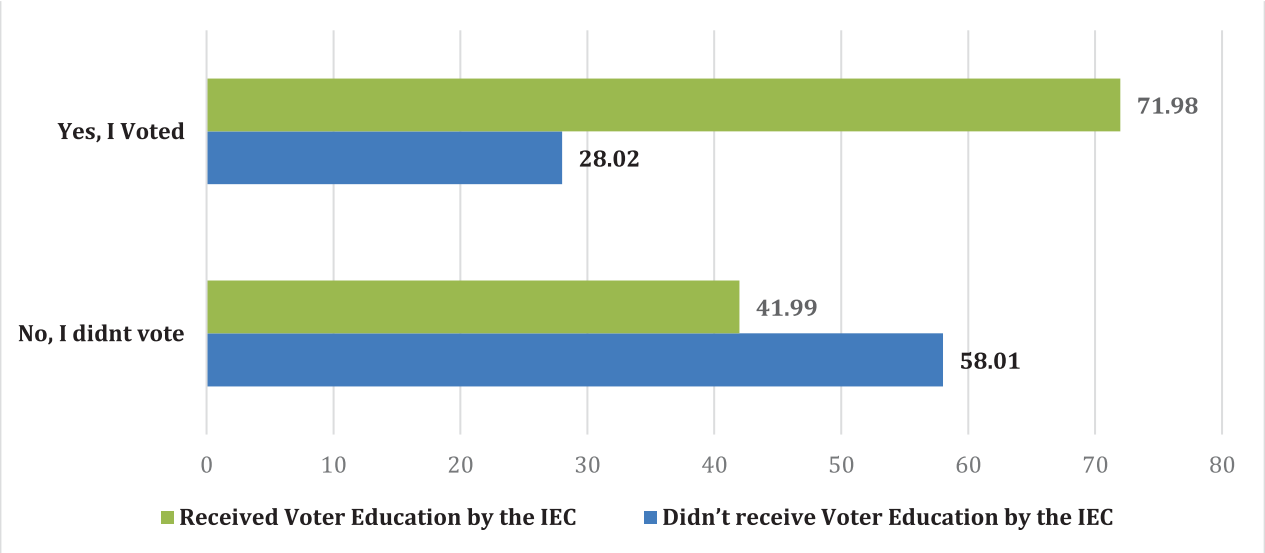
Figure 20: Distribution of people who received voter education during last elections



The pattern depicted in **Figure 20** is consistent across gender groups. For instance, among the male respondents who did not vote in 3 June 2017 National Assembly election, 56 percent did not receive IEC-driven voter education while 44 percent received it. Similarly, among the female respondents who did not vote in June 3 2017 National Assembly election, 58 percent did not receive IEC-driven voter education while 42 percent received it. In sharp contrast, 73 percent of male respondents who voted had received IEC-driven voter education compared 27 percent who voted despite not being exposed to these interventions. Among the female respondents who voted, 72 percent received IEC driven voter education compared to 28 percent who voted despite not being exposed to any IEC campaigns.

Put simply, the vast majority of the people who voted had participated in voter education programmes run by the IEC. **Figure 21** depicts the percentage of the female voters who received IEC voter education.

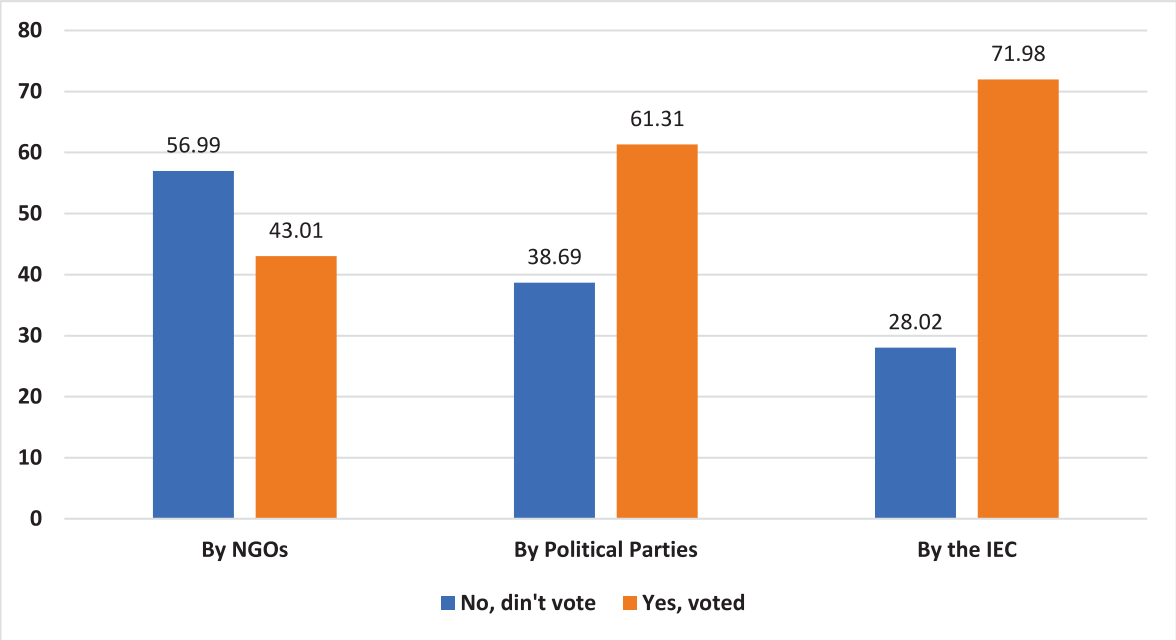
Figure 21: Female Reception of IEC voter education by voting (2017 General election)



The same pattern as above can be observed when we analyse the impact of voter education delivered by political parties. Across both gender categories, voter turnout in the 2017 National Assembly election seems to proceed in tandem with exposure to voter education by political parties. The majority of the female (61%) and male respondents (64%) who voted had been exposed to political party driven voter education. The effect of campaigns by NGOs is rather weak compared to the generally positive effect of IEC and political party voter education campaigns. Around 40 percent of men and women who voted in the 2017 National Assembly election had not been exposed to NGO driven voter education. This means that most male (58 %) and female (57 %) recipients of NGO driven voter education did not cast their ballots.

Figure 22 summarises these results by comparing the percentages of female voters who received voter education from each of these institutions. As the Figure demonstrates, a higher proportion of female respondents who received voter education from the IEC voted in the 2017 National Assembly.

Figure 22: Female Voting by institution delivering voter education: 2017 General election



The link between exposure to voter education and voting in the 2017 Local Government elections is very similar to the results described in the foregoing. That is, male and female recipients of voter education by political parties and the IEC are significantly more likely to vote than those who never received these interventions. As was the case with voting in National Assembly elections, NGO driven voter education had significantly less impact on voting in Local Government elections compared to the other two voter education platforms.

We probed these results further during the key informants' interviews and Focus-Group discussions. There is a strong perception that most of NGO personnel delivering voter education are not well trained. This affects their ability to educate effectively and maintain political neutrality during the civic and voter education interventions. A couple of incidents were mentioned pointing to a growing perception among voter education recipients that some NGO personnel canvass for other parties in the process of rolling out voter education. They quote and rehash what politicians have said in their examples and in trying to motivate people to vote. The following narrative succinctly captures the respondents' views:

> *Civil society and other NGO's have tried their bit in civic and voter education, but they do not reach all parts of the country. In areas where they do reach, information is not fully grasped by participants. In some areas, NGOs are met with obstacles such as being associated with a certain political party or parties*

The perceived bias of NGOs was also apparently reported to the Commonwealth Observer Mission during the 2017 National Assembly elections period. The Mission noted:

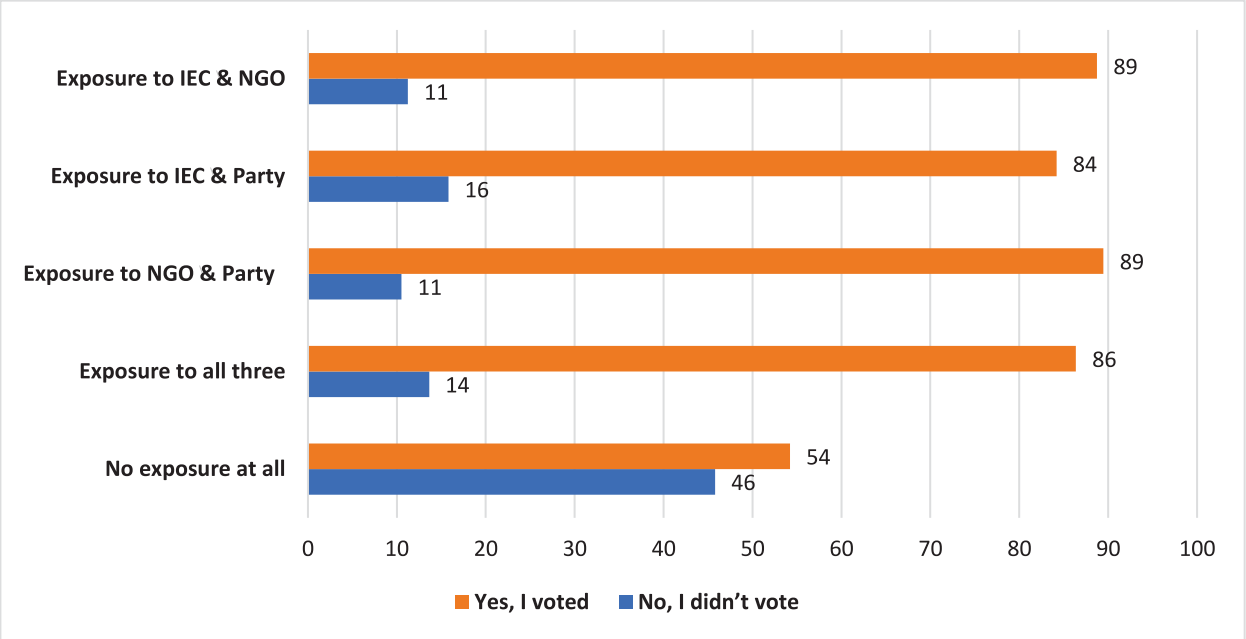
> *We heard some criticism from political parties who were part of the incumbent governing coalition that the CSOs conducting the civic and voter education exercise were not impartial, but either favoured the opposition or were mouthpieces of the international organisations who funded the exercise, and the CSOs told us that this political criticism had a negative effect on their effort* (Commonwealth Observer Mission Report 2017:11)

7.3 The cumulative effect of voter education

How do respondents who have been exposed to a combination of voter education interventions (i.e. IEC, political parties and NGO campaigns) perform compared to those who never took part in any of these interventions or only took part in some? In other words, is there a compound effect of exposure to voter education campaigns? To answer these questions, we count all individuals who were exposed to voter education by the three institutions and assign them the label 'exposure to all'. *Second,* we count everyone who never took part in any voter education programme and assign them a label 'No exposure at all'. *Third*, everyone who took part in IEC and Political Party voter education programme but not NGO is assigned a label 'IEC & Party'. *Fourth*, everyone who participated in IEC and NGO voter education programme is assigned the label 'IEC & NGO'. *Fifth,* we count everyone who received information about voting from the NGOs and political parties and label them 'NGO and political party'.

As **Figure 23** suggests, among those who did not receive any voter education, there is a small (9 %) difference in turnout in the 2017 National Assembly election. In sharp contrast, among those who have acquired voter education from the three sources, 14 percent did not vote while 86% voted, producing a 72 percent turnout difference between the two groups. This adds to the now coherent message that exposure to voter education has had a powerful effect on voting in the 2017 National Assembly election.

Figure 23: turnout in June 2017 election by exposure to a combination of voter education platforms



The probability of voting increases by 22 percent when we move from a respondent who never took part in any voter education programmes to one who participated in all three voter education campaigns. However, contrary to our expectation, this is not the largest probability change. As shown in **Table 15**, the largest change is observed when we move from no exposure to voter education to exposure to IEC and Non-Governmental Organisations (pr=0.253, p<0.01). This means that holding constant other factors, the combination of IEC and NGO voter education campaign produces the strongest effect on the probability of voting. This notwithstanding, it should be noted that while the NGO voter education campaigns augments the IEC campaigns, it fares rather poorly on its own. As shown in **Table 15**, for instance, there is no statistically significant difference in turnout between being exposed to NGO-led campaign and not receiving any voter education during the 2017 National Election period. This contrasts sharply with a highly significant probability change from not receiving any voter education to receiving it only from the IEC or political parties.

Table 15: Pairwise Correlation: exposure to voter education (and not) by provider

Pairwise comparisons	Change	From	to	P-value
No exposure at all vs. exposure to all three vs.	0.221	0.622	0.843	0.00
No exposure at all vs. exposure to NGO & Party	0.215	0.622	0.837	0.03
No exposure at all vs. exposure to IEC & Party	0.19	0.622	0.812	0.00
No exposure at all vs. exposure to IEC & NGO	0.253	0.622	0.875	0.00
No exposure at all vs. exposure to Party only	0.212	0.622	0.834	0.00
No exposure at all vs. exposure to IEC only	0.188	0.622	0.81	0.00
No exposure at all vs. exposure to NGO only	0.053	0.622	0.675	0.639

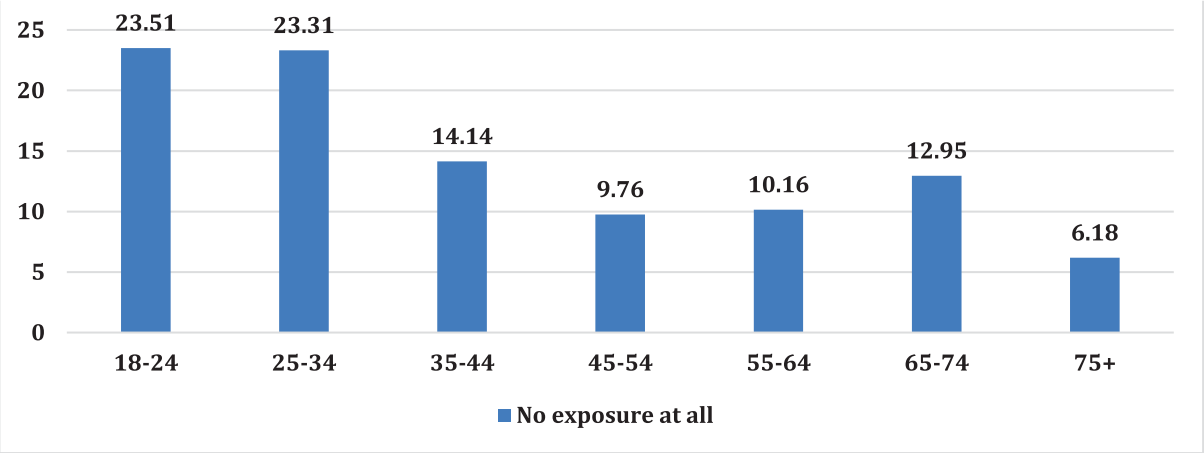
It is important to emphasise that those who took part in voter education events and programmes organised by all three institutions do not seem to have a significant advantage over those who took part in only two, irrespective of the combination. That is, in terms of the probability of voting, an individual who was exposed to voter education by only one institution is not different from an individual who received his/her education from multiple sources.

7.4 Targeted interventions: Youth

The greatest concern of the IEC and election stakeholders in Lesotho is the apparent apathy among the youth. Indeed, as we have noted in **Chapter five** of this report, those between the ages of 18-24 and 25-35 are significantly less likely to have voted in the most recent election in Lesotho. To remedy voter apathy among the youth, the IEC and its voter education partners have tried to target the youth. Ahead of the National Assembly election of 03 June 2017, the IEC conducted several workshops across the country to sensitise the youth about the importance of voting. Workshop participants are usually drawn from different electoral divisions and youth organisations in the district in question. The methods of delivering voter education to the youth include presentations by the IEC voter education personnel with frequent breakaways into small groups for in-depth discussions. Role-playing is also used as one of the pedagogical formats for delivering voter education to the youth.

Scanning through IEC Reports on voter education (especially workshops), one gets a sense that many of these are not very well attended. In the workshop held for the youth in Thaba-Tseka, on 16th and 17th August 2017, attendance rate was estimated at 58 percent. Indeed, analysis of the public opinion survey suggests that voter education efforts disproportionately reach those above the age of 35. As shown in **Figure 24**, the rate of non-exposure to any voter education campaign is highest among those between ages 18 and 35 and falls steadily as age increases.

Figure 24: Distribution of respondents who did not receive voter education by age group

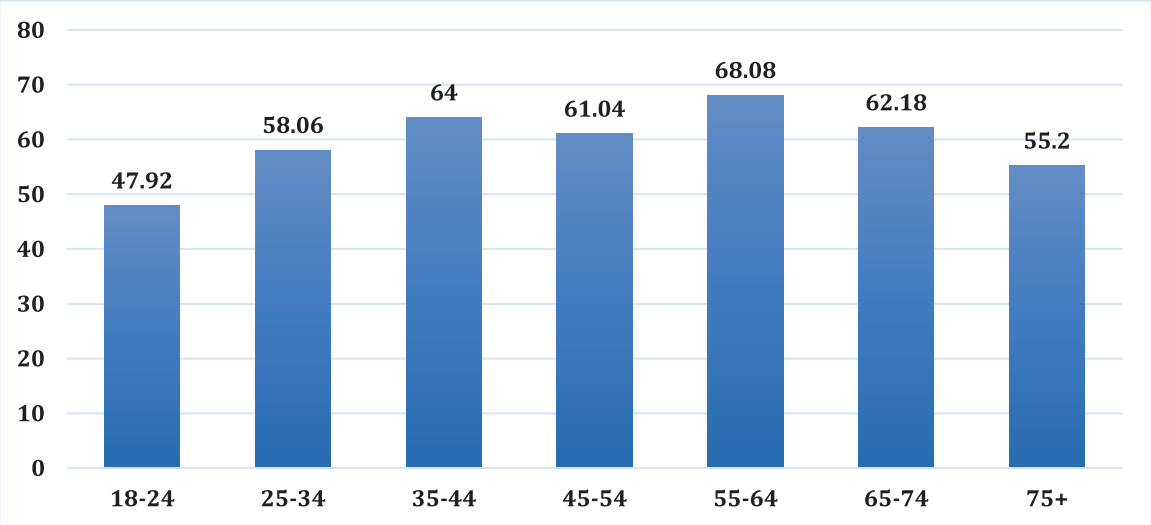


A similar pattern can be observed when we consider these campaigns alone. The age groups that are least exposed to IEC voter education interventions are the 18-24-year olds (11.24 %) and age those above the age of 75 (5.06 %). Nevertheless, the age category with the highest number of recipients of IEC voter education is 25-34 and 35-44.

7.4.1. Use of media platforms

Most of the respondents (57 %) confirmed noticing or receiving an advert about the importance of voting in the most recent election. The 55-64 age-group has the largest number of recipients of elections related messages (68 %), followed by the age group 35-44 (64 %) and 65-74 (62 %). The 18-24 age-group has the smallest percentage of respondents who did not notice any advert about the importance of voting (48 %), followed by those above the age of 75 (55 %).

Figure 25: Distribution of respondents who noticed an advert on voting by age group



7.5 Challenges of civic and voter education

1. ***Limited content:*** This study's participants have noted that electoral education does not contain key elements of civic and democracy education. The topics covered in voter education are more on voting procedures and lack the civic/ political component, which most recipients appear to be eager to discuss or hear about.

2. ***Interventions are too generic***: The electoral education interventions are not tailored to the needs of the recipients and areas where interventions take place. This generic approach tends to exclude certain segments of society such as tertiary students, professionals and people living with disability. The professional and higher education students are usually not covered on the assumption that they are already acquainted with national issues, electoral processes and voting procedures.

3. ***Geographic coverage is also limited***: Study's participants also demonstrated that electoral or voter education does not spread wide enough to reach to all communities where it is most needed.

4. ***Brief and not continuous:*** most study participants identified the fact that interventions are not continuous as another challenge to the education-based responses to declining turnout in Lesotho.

5. ***The capacity and the effectiveness of the executing agencies are questioned:*** As intimated in previous sections of this chapter, there is a strong perception among that the NGOs that partner with the IEC to deliver electoral education are politically biased. The feeling is that representatives of these organisations quote and rehash what politicians have said in their examples and in trying to motivate people to vote. There is also a feeling that these organisations activist role automatically cast them as politically biased, which works against them when they get into the field to deliver electoral education.

6. ***IEC- civic and voter education department:*** one of the greatest challenges to civic and democracy education efforts concerns the capacity and structural/ organisation issues of the department responsible for civic and voter education in the IEC.

    - First, this department has limited technical, human-resources and financial capacity. The current structure of the IEC is such that the C&E manager does not have control

over the IEC employees responsible for voter education at district/ constituency level. The permanently employed Voter education Assistants (VEA) do not belong to the Civic Education department. Instead, they report to Electoral Operations through the District Electoral Officers (DEOs). This leaves the Civic Education department with virtually no staff at constituency level where much education ought to take place.

- Second, our interviews with the IEC reveal a conflict of roles between Civic and Voter education and Public Relations functions of the organisation. All media-related activities, including those that impinge directly on voter education, are handled through the Public Relations office. This is at odds with best practices from other EMBs in Africa, including Ghana, South Africa.

- Third, in terms of technical challenges, the C&E department does not have anyone with sufficient knowledge of research methods, monitoring & evaluation and importantly, political science/ studies to advice on and drive content development, design and delivery mechanisms.

- Fourth, at the time of collecting data for this study, IEC district and constituency-level employees were highly demoralised by among other things: lack of resources to deliver civic and voter education (e.g. only one vehicle serves all constituencies in a district), poor renumeration packages and poor prospects of upward mobility within the organisation.

7.6 7.6. Impact assessment mechanisms

IECs monitoring system is found to be very basic, and often *ad hoc*. IEC visits the areas in which educators claim to have visited and verifies with local chiefs. It has no way of knowing what has been taught, how it was delivered and the impact it has had beyond the "badly" written reports filed by voter educators. Our examination of these NGO reports and the IEC monitoring forms showed some gaps of unfilled data in the forms. As it turns out, educators simply list the number of people who attended the gathering and community engagement methods employed. There is no information that could assist IEC to ascertain the impact of the interventions.

These challenges notwithstanding, there have been efforts to provide IEC with monitoring capacity and techniques. In 2015, UNDP assisted in the monitoring of IEC voter educators. Monitors were

employed and remunerated by the UNDP. However, due to resource constraints (e.g. transport); monitors couldn't travel to many places where voter education purportedly occurred. In 2017, LCN was assigned the task of monitoring the NGOs rolling out voter education.

Box 3. Field narratives: the state of Civic Education and Impact on Civic Engagement for Voter Turnout

- Civic educations not done by IEC because they were accused by political parties of influencing the electorate.
- CE is therefore implemented in a rather ad hoc fashion.
- Lesotho has no "professional cadre of civic educators" a Key Informant observed.
- Those carrying out CE, lack technical/intellectual capacity to theorise, contextualise and rollout civic education programmes in ways that, all stakeholders understand it.
- There is no universal definition of the concept of CE and understanding of what it entails among those working in this field.
- The approach to C &VE that is often employed is undemocratic.
- The area of civic and democracy education is quite murky and most stakeholders see it as an informal/out-of-school enterprise.
- In its current form CE programming doesn't seriously engage the question of whether the interventions are meaningful to participants. Why do people attend community engagements (e.g. *Lipitso*)? How can we make their times worthwhile? How can we make them more interested?
- There is a need for the integration of human rights and democracy education in high school curriculum. This should entail among other things teacher training institutions embracing this understanding, so that principles of democratic governance are not scattered across the curriculum

8. Discussions of key findings

If elections are the simplest and most direct avenue for citizens to choose a team of representatives who will make policy decisions that affect their lives and run the state on their behalf, then, the less they participate in this process, the less of their preferences will be reflected in the state. Simply put, where the majority of citizens do not vote, the very essence of representative democracy is eroded because electoral outcomes are not reflective of them, but only of the zealous few who participate. It may be argued that this in turn sparks crises of political legitimacy among governments.

At the normative level, democracy is ideally about reflecting the will of the people in the state. Therefore, the failure of citizens to partake in voting as a democratic process poses a problem: that the opportunity provided as a right for citizens to fashion the state according to their preferences is not utilised. At the extreme, this may delegitimise the state through apathy, or, at least, result in underrepresentation in the state of significant social groups through their non-participation –or conversely, the overrepresentation of numerical minorities who actively participate in voting.

In short, "[l] low and unequal turnout is a serious problem for democracy because election results fail to reflect the preferences of the citizenry" (Fowler, 2013:4). Further, therefore, the teams that emerge from such pools, the institutions they are entrusted with running, and the decisions they take, may eventually lose their legitimacy –if not credibility at least.

The purpose of this chapter is to distil from the previous chapters the key messages and discuss their implications as a basis for the recommendations presented in the next chapter. At this juncture, it would be helpful to recall the key determinants of voters' willingness to exercise their vote. These will provide the analytical framework for discussing the findings of this research.

8.1 Voter turnout factors

Three broad groups of factors are identified as influencing levels of and changes in voter participation in elections. They are

> *Firstly*, contextual-technical factors that are things beyond the control of the elector, including legal provisions for qualifying and exercising the vote (such as the exclusion of expatriate citizens (migrants), the difficulty or complexity of the ballot, logistical arrangements available

on polling day (including the positioning of polling stations and their distribution –based, among others, on geography and population concentrations, access facilities and so on). These hurdles to voter participation vary from country to country and may also depend on the socio-economic level of development –although that is not the full story.

Secondly, there are socio-political and cultural contextual factors obtaining in a community. Limited information, social attitudes (towards politics and voting directly, and towards forms of expression by certain groups and individuals –like lactating mothers, youth, religious groups, etc), security considerations (personal and general safety issues) and similar conditions also influence the willingness and ability of citizens to exercise their voting rights. Thus, where there is widespread perception that political participation is antisocial or undesirable in some way, this may go to explaining limited participation such as voting -despite legal permissions to do so. The influence of these factors is surely diminishing around the world, as democracy is increasingly taken to be the preferred form governance (and elections as a central element therein). But, how far are these relevant in Lesotho?

Thirdly, there are personal attributes (and attitudes and behaviours) of voters. Here the interests, personal attributes, and behaviours (education, age, civic mindedness, etc.) have been used to create matrices aimed at explaining and predicting how individuals and groups behave (including voters). Among the issues in this category are the relative ease of access to attribute-aggregated versus group data on voters.

Still, the above sets of variables and their interrelation in determining and explaining voter behaviour are complex; and each cluster/combination alone fails to provide full explanations of human behaviour. What does the evidence from this study say about the situation in Lesotho?

This analysis uses the framework above to identify the salient elements that are most apt in explaining the situation in Lesotho with regard to the choice of qualifying voters to vote or not, with a view, among others, to advising on interventions that might help address weaknesses and/or limit the influences that result in declining turnout.

In defining and conceptualising the problem of low and declining voter turnout, we start with an exploration of the bases for estimating and measuring the main dependent variable: voter turnout. Our key findings in this regard are as follows:

8.2 Voter turnout measurement and its implications

As far back as 2012, allegations have been made in the local media, election observation reports and more recently, the report from the office of the Auditor General Report that Lesotho's official turnout statistics could be inaccurate. It is against this background that the study started with a comprehensive review of the voters' roll in order to ascertain the veracity of the claim that voter turnout is low and declining. In this connection, the major finding of the study are as follows:

Being a calculation of the number of eligible voters (whether measured as registered voters or as potential voters based on overall eligibility criteria), voter is defined as the number of electors who actually turn up and cast their votes on polling day. This is usually recorded as a percentage, reflecting the ratio of "active" voters for the specific election. A central question surrounding the judgement of turnout in an election (and therefore of whether there is cause for concern) revolves around the **credibility** and **reliability** of the voters' roll -this being the baseline upon which evaluations are made.

In this connection, two central questions were explored, namely, how reliable and reflective of reality is the roll? and if it is defective, which specific aspects (especially age categorisation) suffer more defects? An additional question relates more 0directly to the inquiry here, viz, what are the implications of these effects on both the turnout of voters, and on Lesotho's democratic consolidation (including the work and credibility of the election management body)?

> *Firstly*, we identify two ways to measure voter turnout: registration-based calculations (REG), which is the system used in Lesotho, and voting-age population-based method (VAP), which is becoming increasingly popular because it is regarded as more reliable.
>
> *Secondly*, we find that Lesotho's REG based calculations underestimate turnout because of their reliance on a questionable voters' roll. Here the following defects and their sources are identified: multiple registrations (where one voter registers several times, whether under different names or the same, or in different constituencies), multiple marriages (particularly for women, where because of changes in name for each union occurs, but these individuals are not identified as multiple subscribers), non-removal of the deceased (this appears to emanate from weak coordination among state institutions including IEC, as well as inefficient consolidation of IEC databases –cleaning of lists).

We estimate that these defects have resulted in an overestimation of voter registration to over 100 percent of all eligible citizens, particularly in the last three polls (2012, 2015 and 2017). To the extent that the analysis here accurate, we estimate Lesotho's voter turnout to be around 60.8 percent, 64.6 percent and 65.4percent for 2017, 2015 and 2012 elections respectively. That is approximately 18 percentage points higher than the official turnout statistics from the IEC. Remarkably, this estimated turnout figures are much closer to the self-reported figure obtained from our nationally representative survey as well as the 2012, 2014 and 2017 Afrobarometer surveys, which place voter turnout between 71 to 74 percent. Therefore, it would appear that voter turnout for National Assembly elections is not and has never been lower 50 percent.We further estimate that a more realistic registration coverage of 80 percent would, given recent electoral results, reflect slightly more favourable adjusted turnout that is comparable with the African and regional averages of 70-75 percent in National Assembly elections.

The implications of Lesotho's distorted voters' roll include, in the main, that

First, it undermines the efforts of IEC and its partners in boosting voter turnout (and indeed the laudable, if unrealistic, target in the 2017 elections for a turnout of 85 percent as set by the IEC). Yet in fact such efforts might have worked to a large extent.

Second, it taints the image and reputation of IEC as an election management body, and of the country in general. In short, this weakness gives a distorted image of the health of Lesotho's political system. This will further weaken the citizens' and observers' (including Lesotho's international partners and supporters) trust in the country's governance institutions and political system.

The study does, however, find that voter turnout has been low and declining -although the magnitude is only slightly below the regional averages. Indeed, this figure seems to have declined by an average of five percent from 2012 to 2017. This means, that the issue should therefore remain a point of concern of all election stakeholders. Specifically, it means that the sources of voters' roll defects, whether technical or operational, need to be addressed urgently.

8.3 Trends and patterns of voter turnout

In the eight recognised elections surveyed in this study (national and local) over the past 54 years, voter turnout in Lesotho has declined from a high of 81.9 percent in 1970 to a low of 46.4percent in

2017. This therefore confirms the concern that turnout is both on the decline and, as indicated above, low (though the latter has not always been the case).

The biggest increase (jump) was between 1965 (62.3%) and 1970 due, among others, to heightened political interest in the first post-independence poll of the latter year. In similar fashion, the 1993 and 1998 elections registered impressive rates that match the regional averages in Southern Africa. The biggest fall came between 2002 (66.7%) and 2007 ((49%) despite changes in electoral model (2002) and similar heightened interest following controversies including the emergence of parties (Lesotho Congress for Democracy in 1997 and All Basotho Convention in 2006) that challenged the electoral supremacy of incumbents. Since then, national voter turnout appears to have steadied at or below 50%. On the other hand, local government elections have perennially registered disappointing levels below the 50 percent mark over the past two decades -with the 2017 poll registering a dismal 25 percent.

A distinct observation in this regard has been twofold: that at national level, the last three polls have recorded the lowest levels of turnout, and that local government elections do not attract as much voter interest and national polls. Reasons for these are discussed in detail above, but the following key factors are important to highlight:

First, it appears that the frequency of elections (triggered in the main by premature collapse of government cause by internal party conflict and proliferation of splinter organisations) has had a dampening of voting enthusiasm –even among habitual voters.

Second, the systemic and political marginalisation of local government also appears to deter voters from exercising their vote in these polls. A comparison of levels of turnout between the two spheres of government indicates that none of government, IEC, political parties and voters give sufficient regard to these. Again, the seasons here crosscut across technical-contextual hurdles (including the legal reservation of seats for women, retention of the old FPTP, no support and funding from IEC and political parties for campaigning and candidate registration, etc) and socio-cultural-political ones (including overlapping mandates and resultant conflict with traditional authorities). This has the implication that local government structures, which are closest to the people, are losing credibility and trust in the eyes of the voter, with possible dire consequences for their legitimacy and justification for their existence.

In the last three national elections (2012, 2015 and 2017), Maputsoe (urban Leribe) has featured among the ten worst-performing constituencies, and urban areas appear to dominate this category over the

years too. At the other end, Mafeteng lowlands constituencies dominated the high-performing category in 2012, while Maseru peri-urban ones have emerged as regulars since 2015. Overall, however the pattern is mixed between urban-rural, lowlands-highlands, and district distribution of constituencies in terms of either high- or low-turnout constituencies in these polls, although the Southern and South-eastern districts of Quthing and Qacha's Nek feature more regularly in the low-performing category.

It therefore appears that while globally issues of locality (urban versus rural settings and geo-social or geographical) do not have a significant or long-term effect on turnout, certain constituencies have shown consistent underperformance (Maputsoe being a particularly interesting case). Therefore, the unique features of these constituencies, beyond the initial findings presented here, need further study. This is because these settings also share common features with constituencies that have shown less consistency in either high or low voter turnout. In addition, further investigation would need to be undertaken to identify what makes for both positive and negative changes in voter turnout in those constituencies that have shown either a serious decline or significant improvement (the Maseru peri-urban areas that have improved the Mafeteng lowlands areas that have declined). In the end, the lesson here is that explanations for fluctuations may need a deeper exploration, including contingent effects such as the behaviour of MPs (not performance) prior to elections, the status and degree of competition for nomination within parties, inter-party rivalries in the constituency, etc. These were beyond the scope of this study but could possibly shed more light in particular on fluctuations in turnout in either direction.

While the national patterns confirm both declining and low voter turnout, constituency-level analysis gives a more nuanced picture, and findings from the lowest-preforming constituencies indicate factors that talk to the socio-cultural-political context that affects voting, primarily migration and marginalisation. These are policy-impact issues that point to weaknesses in the national polity, and their solution can assist in stimulating voter confidence in the political system.

8.4 Personal attributes

While voters and non-voters share many characteristics, voters tend to be older than 45 years old, have low or no formal education and reside in rural areas. In terms of behaviour, we find that active voters regularly attend community meetings (i.e. the *lipitso)* and rallies organised by political parties, are also active members of community groupings, and sometimes of political parties. Specifically, we find that

- People above the age of 65 are five times more likely to vote than those aged 18-24
- Those with primary level education are significantly more likely to have voted in both Local Government and general elections, compared to those with university education.
- Rural dwellers are significantly more likely to vote than their urban counterparts –although constituency-to-constituency level analysis nuances this
- No clear gender difference between voters and non-voters at all age groups

Regarding attitudinal differences, we find that increase in political interest and cognitive awareness erode the propensity to vote. This contradicts our initial expectation, based on political behaviour literature, that people with strong interest in politics are likely to have more information about how the political and electoral systems work and who the major players are. They are also likely to be much more interested in the outcome of the election, which along with their greater understanding of the key national issues around the election, should increase their willingness to vote.

The best way to make sense of the negative impact of political interest and cognitive awareness was to consider that the majority of these educated respondents (i.e. those with university level education) are between ages 24 and 45, urban dwellers who do not attend political rallies. It is not surprising therefore, that interest in politics and cognitive awareness display an inverse relationship with the willingness to vote and the likelihood to have voted in the past.

Active voters tend to be consistent in their voting behaviour, having voted at least once before the most recent poll. In this connection, however, ostensibly because of the intervention of social and other contextual factors (and reasons, such as dissatisfaction with the high frequency of elections, the perception that politicians are self-serving and the ever-increasing number of political parties –also reasons of non-voters and non-serial voters as among the most important), approximately two in five of the people who voted in the 2017 general election are not intending to vote in the future. Further worryingly, over a third of these consistent voters are not willing to turnout in the next elections. This is consistent with the finding while turnout may not be as low as we thought, it is likely to continue declining.

The underlying message from our analysis of individual-level factors in this study is that the failure of the political (and electoral) system to make elections meaningful for ordinary people engenders a sense of political resignation and the eventual exit from electoral politics. The following is a summary of the major reasons for this sense of fatalism.

Box 4: Summary of Reasons by Importance of Act and Outcome of the voting

Reasons according to Importance of Act of Voting	Reasons According to Outcome of Voting
• Exercising one's democratic right and/or fulfilling duty as a citizen • Opportunity/the right to influence the government • Loyalty and support to political party and/or candidates • Desire to make a difference; Revenge - Change of government/ruling party. • Appealing party manifesto	• Making a difference • Change of government/ruling party • Attaining promised and/ good life benefits or certain favours • Hope for improvement in one's life • Benefit to the next generation

As indicated, our analysis suggests that the high levels of political interest and cognitive awareness that most of the youth display do not translate into higher rates of voter turnout. There are several reasons why this is the case:

- Institutional barriers to voter registration; the youth complain that registration centres are seldom open and that when they are open, registration equipment does not work.
- Strong feelings or perceptions of political exclusion partly rooted in the hierarchical structure of the society.
- A sense that voting is not the best way to influence public policies on youth-related issues.
- Irrelevant civic education content and ineffective outreach strategies
    - Lack of civic and voter education strategies and programming specifically tailored for the rural, and the educated urban youth; and that which is school based for those youngster teenagers about to graduate into the voting population.
    - Utilisation of *lipitso* as a strategy in vo*ter edu*cation is not the best means to reach young people. Public gatherings are historically attended by the adults.
- Long queues at polling stations
- Anger with the slow pace of development which is responsible for and exacerbates youth unemployment.

While the above reasons for not voting are significant for the youth, they first apply across the age categories as well, and second, demonstrate the extension of personal attributes to considerations of motivation and instrumentality (rather than pure attributional categorisation) in the explanatory model used here. In short, people vote or refuse to vote on the basis of motivations, incentives and aversions

–these being elements of their interpretation of the social universe within which these decisions are made.

8.5 Main socio-contextual factors and their effect

From the foregoing, it is clear that turnout is affected by the interplay of factors that result in the citizen feeling disenfranchised, despondent and marginalised. Beyond the personal-level influences identified so far, the context and dynamics of daily life (as well as those relating directly to voting) are also important. Below is a discussion of some of these in relation to constituencies that consistently registered either low or declining voter turnout over the past three consecutive elections, the general population, as well as special groups.

External migration: Conservative estimates from DHS (2014) are that almost half of the households in Lesotho have at least one member earning a living as a migrant worker in especially South African farm, construction and domestic (household) industries. This is a cross-cutting phenomenon that affects all demographic groups and contributes significantly to low turnout among the productive age groups. While most of the migrants are registered in their home constituencies, they usually do not return to vote, creating an impression of low turnout in affected constituencies, particularly Mekaling, Maputsoe, Tele and Likhoele. The phenomenon is pronounced in these areas because they border South Africa-Lesotho frontier crossings, with Tele also housing Basotho of Xhosa ethnicity with close ties to their kin in the Republic. The lack of economic opportunities in Lesotho (high unemployment), combines with socio-cultural marginalisation to strengthen migration in areas like Tele in particular, thereby weakening these citizens' regard for the Lesotho state.

Internal migration: Analysis of data from Mantšonyane, Mekaling and Thaba-Putsoa identifies migration from rural to urban areas as a crucial factor for the low turnout recorded in these constituencies. Again, it seems that most urban migrants, who are registered in their rural towns/ villages, do not bother to make transfers to nearest urban registration/ polling centres in order to avoid having to go back home to vote. However, it is important to mention that the snap nature of the 2015 and 2017 elections did frustrate attempts by potential voters to make such transfers as reported in a number of observer mission reports and Focus-Group discussants.

Outdated delimitation of constituency boundaries. Due largely to migration, most constituencies have far less than the required number of resident voters, yet voter turnout is calculated as the proportion of the actual voters against these non-existent registered voters.

Access to information about elections: illiteracy was identified as one of the key factors of low turnout in low performing rural and mountain constituencies. Most individuals are unable or unwilling to spend time reading voter education material distributed during voter education campaigns. Apart from that, poor access to electronic media shuts them out of important voter education messages transmitted via radio and television.

Poor policies of the government: study participants especially in the rural mountain areas (namely, Mantšonyane, Thaba-Putsoa and Mokhotlong) singled out their disappointment with a number of government policies, especially the new regulations on the sale of wool and mohair. It is important to note that most respondents in the national survey (especially in Semena, Mashai, Mosalemane, Machache, Thaba-Tseka and Senqu constituencies) voluntarily referenced the controversial wool and mohair regulations when illustrating their cynicism and discontent with government policies. Participants in the Focus-Group discussions held in the Mantšonyane constituency singled out the wool and mohair saga as the main reason for not intending to vote in the future.

Location of polling stations: in constituencies such as Mantšonyane and Ketane, some voters, especially those living with disabilities, complain about the long distances they have had to travel to their designated polling stations. The location of polling stations seems to have a strong impact on voter apathy among the citizens who see no personal and community-level benefit of voting. The personal cost of voting becomes too high when one has to travel a long distance to participate in an event that he/she perceived to be useless.

Box 5: "We don't belong here": the curious case of Tele
Most residents of the Tele Constituency speak the isiXhosa/SePhuthi languages. The FGDs conducted in Mjanyane unearthed strong feelings of discriminations among these minority groups. As it turns out, a large number of Tele constituents view themselves as members of a distinct socio-cultural and linguistic group with stronger ties to the Xhosa communities across the border in South Africa than here in Lesotho. Furthermore, their dual citizenship status (which is currently illegal in Lesotho) allows them access to social welfare/ protection services (e.g. old age pension) and employment opportunities in South Africa. When coupled with the ubiquitous poverty and government neglect in Tele. The psychological, economic and political disconnect with the state in Lesotho, produces the high rate of apathy witnessed in this constituency. Tele residents do not feel the need to contribute to the political life in Lesotho.

8.6 Techno-contextual factors and their effects

Lesotho's voting firmament includes the following elements, which influence and condition the ability, willingness and possibility of electors to cast their vote. The effect of these may begin from preparations long before the poll, and end on the day of voting. They are,

- *Registration provisions* include continuous registration (rather than election-specific registration), and compulsory registration (but voluntary voting). The first provision has contributed, among others to the bloated voters' roll through an accumulation of data from multiple registrations and historical/legacy registration. While this does not 0directly deter electors from voting, it has been shown to contribute to the miscalculation and underestimation of voter turnout.

- On the other hand, the fact that it is compulsory to register but voluntary to vote, means that voters have incentives -to subscribe, but none -to participate, leading to an "automatic defaulter" mechanism built into the system. This has the implication that, among others, positive and purposeful action has to be made to stimulate turnout, in the context where (if effectively implemented) registration has already built an overwhelming baseline template to predicate low turnout because of dissonance with voting.

- For migrants (whether domestic or external) the tradition of *voting over the weekend* (even when polling day is a holiday), provides little allowance to travel for voting. Under normal circumstances, it takes at least half a day to travel from places in Lesotho (mostly Maseru and Maputsoe-Hlotse) and longer from places in South Africa (including as far as Durban, Rustenburg and Cape Town). This therefore means that there is limited or no incentive for

many low-paid migrants to travel home (the regular registration place for many) to vote, given both the time -constraints, opportunity and actual costs of the trip. This is a particular challenge for women and youth, and possibly for the disabled.

- *Lesotho has no provision for allowing non-resident citizens* (except official diplomatic staff there) -to vote outside the country. This, combined with the abovementioned travel difficulties, tends to prevent expatriate migrants and Diasporic citizens from voting. With Lesotho's significant expatriate population (which some estimates put at up to 25 percent of the de jure population), it has a significant impact of turnout rates

- The FPTP system, the main component of Lesotho's voting model at national level*, mandates that voters cast their vote in a specific constituency and at a specific polling station*. This is in order to make it easy to calculate constituency seats, but it also tends to force many voters to travel outside their regular places of abode if they have either moved or migrated temporarily for employment, education of other reasons. The implications of this are already outlined above.

- Since 2012 (following the new National Assembly Electoral Act, 2011*), Lesotho has consolidated the General election ballot, using one instead of two* as was the practice in the preceding two polls. This was ideally to effect the "compensatory" aspect of MMP. However, the removal of the second ballot has had the effect of removing voters' choice to split their ticket, thereby voting strategically were his choice is not congruous between candidate and party. Single ballot Perhaps the drop in turnout since the single ballot may be a feature of this effect in addition to the other reasons mentioned.

- *While Lesotho's ballot is simple* by all standards (no multiple polls, no referenda concurrent with representative polls), it is almost exclusively tailored for the seeing, English and Sesotho competent electors. For the disabled, some members of ethnic minority communities and the illiterate, this is an unfriendly, excluding document –as are also the material ad strategies that are employed for voter education. This then has the effect of denying and/or leaving out many citizens, including also the youth –who would presumably prefer to vote "non-paper".

The above are only a few of the important hurdles that respondents in this study (voters ad experts) have identified as reducing the likelihood of electors to vote on polling day. Indeed, reinforced by the other influences of society and personal attributes, these go a long way to explaining why such significant numbers of registered, eligible voters do not cast their votes in Lesotho

8.7 Vote-stimulation efforts

Although analysis of qualitative data suggests a large room for improvement in Lesotho's civic and voter education industry, it is encouraging to note that an individual who participated in a voter education programme is significantly more likely to vote than the person who did not. The IEC-run voter education programmes had the strongest effect on the likelihood of voting. This appears to be due to the relatively thorough training that IEC voter educators receive in terms of content, delivery methods and overall professionalism. In fact, there is a strong perception among this study's participants that most NGO personnel delivering voter education are not as well trained as those under the control of IEC. Poor training and monitoring of NGO personnel seem to hamper their ability to educate effectively and maintain political neutrality during interventions. A couple of incidents were mentioned pointing to the fact that some NGO personnel quote and rehash what some politicians have said in trying to motivate people to vote. This has been perceived by some education recipients and politicians as being politically biased.

Paradoxically, canvassing for political parties in the process of rolling out civic education does not seem to undermine the positive effect of voter education delivered by political parties. This is because, unlike the CSO personnel, political party functionaries are expected to be deliberately biased and to encourage the audience to expose the mistakes of the government and other political leaders during the rolling out of voter and civic education. For fear of being labelled politically biased CSOs and the IEC may deliberately avoid getting into sensitive governance issues, such as poor service delivery despite the fact that the audience may show willingness to discuss these during civic and voter education campaigns. Agents of political parties, on the other hand, would ideally use such issues as examples to illustrate a point about political accountability, representation and other key issues in civic and democracy education

9. Conclusion and recommendations

Democracy entails, as a minimum requirement, that all citizens have the right to vote, and those who fought for the establishment of democracy and universal suffrage assumed that everyone, or almost everyone who had the right to vote would make use of this precious democratic right." (Lijphart,1998).

Lesotho's voter turnout has been lower than the regional averages for the past 25 years (since 1993, when the country resumed elective politics). This has also been accompanied by decline, with turnout dropping from 76 percent in the democratising poll of 1993 to a low of 46 percent in 2017. This has been the pattern with both general and local-level polls. This study confirms both trends (i.e. low and declining turnout), and therefore the concern of the EMB and other electoral actors in Lesotho.

However, the template or base upon which existing calculation of voter turnout, the national voters' roll, has been described as bloated and unrealistic. While the public observations on this issue raised concern about aspects that would undermine the credibility and reliability of elections in the country, this study has identified the effects of a bloated or distorted roll as, first over estimating the voter registration figures resulting from in the main, legacy problems and technical defects of the register, and second therefore, an underestimation of the turnout in all polls. This study further confirms the below average and falling turnout but finds that the magnitudes of the problem have been exaggerated by over ten percentage points in each case, primarily because of voters' roll defects. In short, the problem of low and declining turnout exists, but is not as severe as official figures claim.

Voter turnout at constituency level has fluctuated over the years, but three general patterns have emerged, especially in the past three national polls, viz a) while geographical factors do not appear to have a significant effect, southern and south-eastern constituencies feature consistently among the lowest-scoring in turnout b) Maseru lowland peri-urban constituencies have improved turnout performance, while their Mafeteng counterparts have dropped out of this category c) the Mohokare belt, lowland Leribe urban constituency of Maputsoe has featured consistently in the low-performing category, mainly resulting from the effects of cross-border and intra-country migration for employment.

A Lesotho voter is older than 45 years old (with those above the age of 65 are five times more likely to vote than those aged 18-24), resides in rural areas, and has a relatively low level of formal education. In converse, a non-voter is younger than 45 (and even more typical for the under-25s), has more than a high-school education, and resides in an urban setting. Only a quarter of the most educated adult citizens are willing to exercise their right to choose a government.

Behaviourally, an active voter regularly attends *lipitso* or community meetings and rallies organised by political parties, has contact with political parties and has experienced voter education campaigns, while non-voters reflect the opposite behaviours and experiences. For active voters, casting a ballot is viewed as a right and a civic duty, but non-voters abstain because they see no incentive value in doing so. Worryingly, over a third of respondents who have been voting consistently since 2007 are unwilling to do the same in the future. This means that turnout is still likely to decline further in future.

The propensity to vote is also lower among ethnic minorities and people living with disability, primarily owing to their feelings of marginalisation and disenfranchisement, leading to limited general participation (the feeling that the political system is not accommodating of their group, especially at decision making and agenda-setting), effects of migration (internal and external, thereby marginalising them spatially and denying them opportunity at election time), dearth of electoral (and general political) messages that both target their issues or are presented in formats consumable by these groups, and general marginalisation from the socio-political and economic system.

For the youth it is generalised disempowerment emanating from unemployment (which denies then both resources to engage and incentive to do so -for lack of visible benefits of voting). For women, entrenched traditional practices (public appearance, changes in names, etc), and security concerns feature among the prominent obstacles to turnout. For people with disabilities and minorities, the general issues revolve round perceived discrimination and lack of outreach and support (e.g., language of communication, mobility facilitation etc).

Migration (primarily for economic livelihood purposes), disillusionment with politics and feelings of marginalisation/exclusion are the main reasons for electors' refusal or reluctance to vote, while technical hurdles are also important factors.

The biggest effect in persuading non-participants to vote is where the encouragement and information is delivered by IEC, political parties and NGOs –although it is unclear how the sequence and reinforcement patterns work.

Undoubtedly low turnout results in citizens' loss of faith in democracy as a form of government. Two paradoxes that need further exploration are found in the study: namely that i) poor assessments of government performance coincide with increased interest in public affairs and ii) the more informed and politically interested, the less likely an elector is to vote.

9.1 Framework for recommendations

In this context therefore, we present below a preliminary summary of recommendations, focusing, among other on the following:

- Technical recommendations (primarily for IEC and direct electoral stakeholders), viz
    - Voter roll and related issues
    - Institutional, operational capacity and communication within IEC
    - For improving Electoral Education towards addressing low and declining voter turnout (for IEC and other election actors)
    - Coordination and relations with partners, mainly political parties and NGOs.
- Recommendations relating to strategies and approaches for Lesotho's electoral community to improve voter turnout (including, where possible, lessons to be learned from other jurisdictions, as well as national-level innovations), and
- Recommendations aimed specifically at improving the legal, policy, approach and content changes that the IEC could adopt in developing their Electoral Education towards addressing low and declining voter turnout.

9.2 For IEC

Because the IEC is the primary institution entrusted with the management of elections and related issues, we start with recommendations that address it as the main constituency. These recommendations seek to address areas directly and indirectly relevant to ensuring improved measurement, management, stimulation and recording of voter turnout. Therefore, these will cover both internal, institutional policies, processes and capacity, as well as coordination with other partners.

9.2.1 The voters' roll

The voters' roll is an important base for establishing the actual number of voters in Lesotho, and therefore the template from which calculations of turnout are made. It has, however, been identified

as the source of problems that threaten to undermine the credibility of elections, and, by extension, the IEC and other institutions of state. The recommendations in this regard are as follows:

Recommendation 1. *Urgently review and re-launch the voters' roll, including linking this to the civil registration systems.* This will involve both coordination with other actors (Ministries of Development Planning (BoS) and Local Government), improvement in internal capacity (employment of a Statistician) and processes (liaison and transmission of data from local level to the central databank)

Recommendation 2. *Update and improve IEC electoral management technologies including ensuring that Electronic Voter Identification Devices (EVIDs) are in good working condition.* This may involve infrastructure (ITC) outlay, for which IEC would need to mobilise resources.

9.2.2 Financial resources, management and controls

While not a central element of the research here, it is clear from our findings that IEC has and continues to face constraints in terms of financial resources (and therefore the acquisition of other resources to enable efficient and effective operations), internal controls and autonomy of financial management. In this connection therefore we recommend that IEC must:

Recommendation 3. *build the capacity to mobilise resources independently and reduce its over-reliance on government for funding.*

Recommendation 4. *Tighten the enforcement/implementation of regulations relating to financial accounting internally, by political parties* (for party and campaign funding), *and NGO partners.* This would be part of a larger and more robust Monitoring and Evaluation system that the Commission would need to put in place

9.2.3 Institutional human resource and technical capacity

Because at the heart of any institutional efficiency gains lie human resource capacity, we recommend the following for IEC:

Recommendation 5. *Review, restructure, and beef up the Civic and Voter Education department* by, prioritising civic education and availing human, financial and technical resources to this department. This would include deploying a Political Scientist and a Researcher in its staff complement. The Political Scientist

would, among others be key in the conceptualisation and development of CVE materials and their implementation, while the Researcher would be part of the M&E team who directly identifies trends in CVE, and coordinates improvements, interventions and adjustments to strategies for delivering content

Recommendation 6. *improve communication and coordination between top management and lower levels employees of the Commission, and between units of IEC.* This to address the low and declining morale of district and constituency levels employees by clarifying and improving lines of reporting between field/district officers (.Voter Education Assistants (VEAs) and Civic and Voter Education officers) and at Head Office between units with overlapping or complementary mandates

9.2.4 Civic and voter education

As the main thrust of IEC outreach to voter, civic and voter education should be strengthened. This means the following for IEC:

Recommendation 7. *Develop a continuous, comprehensive and systematic approach to civic education,* including advocating for the integration of civic education into the national school curricula. This means that IEC must graduate from the narrowly focused electoral education to civic education. The design, content and approach of civic education should promote a home grown understanding of what democracy means in everyday life for citizen the state and from among them.

Recommendation 8. *build an in-house capacity to develop, roll out and monitor continuous and comprehensive civic and voter education.*

Recommendation 9. *Pay special attention to and develop material and appropriate approaches to reach special groups (youth, PLWDs and ethnic minorities) in ways and on communication platforms that are accessible to them.* This would mean, inter alia, the use of diverse multimedia platforms (including social media) to roll out continuous civic education and to particularly targeting youth

Recommendation 10. *review IEC's partnerships with local CSOs/NGOs with a view to improving the effectiveness in rolling out of voter education.*

9.2.5 IEC Strategic plan, Monitoring and Evaluation

Recommendation 11. *Develop a Strategic Plan to set out the core values of the Commission as well as measurable goals, objectives and outcomes.* A strong internal operational audit and/or M&E system should be a core component to ensure timely feedback that informs adjustments and focus in all areas

9.2.6 Election administration

The logistical and administrative arrangements surrounding elections (polling arrangements, structure of the ballot), are identified as some of the key contingent hurdles to turnout. Therefore, we recommend that IEC

Recommendation 12. *Consider and explore ways of facilitating migrant and expatriate (Diaspora), PLWDs and youth voting* through, among others the diplomatic missions (external migrants), mobile polling stations and use of council and Chiefs' premises (PLWDs, internal migrants, women and the elderly), as well as electronic voting (youth, migrants).

Recommendation 13. *Expand the linguistic and communication platform of the Commission and its partners to meet the needs of PLWDs* (Braille, sign language), *and ethnic minorities (*Sephuthi, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, etc), *and social/electronic media (youth).* This would cover both CVE and voting (including ballots).

Recommendation 14. *Consider simultaneous elections, combining both National Assembly and Local Government elections.* This would address the problem of differential (and lower) voter turnout in local elections versus national polls, as well as the resource allocation and support deficiencies (campaign funding, party support) identified

Recommendation 15. *Consider reintroducing the dual ballot in MMP elections.* This would address the stated concern of voters that the consolidated single ballot denies them the opportunity for strategic (split or choice) voting.

9.3 For the government

Recommendation 16. *Provide adequate funding to the IEC,* particularly for an Integrated CVE programme (rather than the current electoral VE funding).

Recommendation 17. *Adopt a comprehensive national civic education policy* that provides a basis for both out-of-school and school-based CE curriculum, and assist IEC in the mobilisation of resources for its implementation, monitoring and regular revision

Recommendation 18. *Improve general governance, especially the delivery of services, fulfilment of campaign policies, reduction of corruption and favouritism, and depoliticization of services* (MP-Councillor rivalry). Improve the resource, authority and effectiveness of local government. Create conditions for and/or opportunities for sustainable livelihoods (employment) in Lesotho to ameliorate the pull of employment outside the country. These are seen as some of the key causes of voters' decisions to abstain from voting, and addressing these issues would restore faith in the political system

9.4 For the electoral community (NGOs, political parties, CSOs, etc.)

Recommendation 19. *Provide leadership and democracy education/training to MPs, Local Councillors and Traditional leaders* (NGOs, CSOs, educational institutions).

Recommendation 20. *Strengthen civic education, for political parties have proved to be some of the key drivers of voter participation.* IEC-NGO-party partnerships on this issue may be a possibility to be explored to develop a national CVE architecture.

Recommendation 21. *Calibrate electoral observation to cover public responses to CVE initiatives, opinion polls and quality of service/quality of governance surveys.* This would contribute positively to building stock of M&E data to assist in evaluation and follow-up of CVE initiatives.

Recommendation 22. *Develop youth-targeted CVE strategies and use youth-friendly platforms such as social media, voter clubs, etc.*

Recommendation 23. *Develop of user-friendly, sector-targeted materials and approaches (beyond youth, to also cover linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, etc).* These would be part of an integrated national approach (IEC-parties-NGO collaboration).

Bibliography

Blais, Andre. 2000. *To Vote or not to Vote? The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Bratton, M., R. Mattes and E. Gyimah-Boadi. 2005. *Public opinion, Democracy and Market Reform in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bratton, Michael, and Nicolas van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bratton, Michael. 1998. "Second Elections in Africa." *Journal of Democracy*, 9:3 (51-66).

Bratton, Michael. 2002. "Wide but Shallow: Popular Support for Democracy in Africa." (http://www.afrobarometer.org/abseries.html)

Commonwealth Observer Group. 2017. Lesotho National Assembly Elections 3 June 2017. The Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Observer Mission Report 2012. Lesotho National Assembly Elections

Denny K and O. Doyle, 2009. "Does Voting History Matter? Analysing Persistence in Turnout". *American Journal of Political Science. 53(1*): 17-35

Electoral Institute of Southern Africa Pre Election Assessment Report 2017

Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. Lesotho National Assembly Elections Mission Observer Reports 1998-2017. www.eisa.org.za

Finkel, S. E., Sabatini, C. A., &. Bevis G.G, 2000." Civic education, civil society, and political mis-trust in a developing democracy: The case of the Dominican Republic." *World Development*, 28, 1851-1874.

Finkel, Steven E, 1985. "Reciprocal Effects of Participation and Political Efficacy." *American Journal of Political Science* 29(4):891–913

Fowler, Anthony George, 2013, "Five Studies on the Causes and Consequences of Voter Turnout" (Doctoral dissertation), Harvard University.

Gerber, Alan and Donal P. Green and Roni Shachar, 2009. Voting May Be Habit-Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment. *American Journal of Political Science* 47(3): 540-550

Green, D P., and R. Shachar, 2000. "Habit Formation and Political Behaviour: Evidence of Consuetude in Voter turnout. *British Journal of Political Science*. 30(4): 561-573

Harris, Peter 2010, *Birth: The Conspiracy to stop the '94 Election*, Cape Town: Umuzi.

Holbrook, Allyson L. and Jon A. Krosnick. 2010. Social desirability bias in voter turnout reports: Tests using the item count technique, *Public Opinion Quarterly*74(1): 37–67

Independent Electoral Commission, 2017. Analysis Report on Voter Educators' Reports for 2017 Local Government Elections. Civic and Voter Education Department, IEC. Maseru

Independent Electoral Commission, 2017. Summary of NGOs Reports for the National Assembly Elections.

Issakson, Ann- Sofie, 2014. "Political participation in Africa: The role of individual resources" *Electoral Studies*. 34 (240- 266)

Kotze, Dirk, 2014. "Elections in 2014: A Barometer of South African Politics and Society?" in Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy, *Elections Update South Africa, 2014*, Johannesburg: EISA (9-17).

Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission, 2017. Lessons Learned Workshop Retreat on the 2017 National Assembly Snap Elections, 3 June 2017. Workshop Proceedings Report, Botha Bothe, December.

Letsie, Tlohang, 2012. "The 2012 General Election in Lesotho: A Step towards Consolidation of Democracy" *Journal of African Elections* 12:1 (June)

Lijphart, Arend, 1994. *Electoral systems and party systems: a study of twenty-seven democracies, 1945-1990*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lodge, Tom, 1999, *Consolidating Democracy: South Africa's Second popular Election*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Mattes, Robert, Yul Derek Davids, Cherrel Africa, and Michael Bratton, 2000. "Public Opinion and the Consolidation of Democracy in Southern Africa," (http://www.afrobarometer.org/abseries.html).

Monyake, M., 2017. "Bringing the Citizen Back in: Individual-level Correlates of Popular Demand for Accountability in Lesotho". In M. Thabane (ed) *Towards an anatomy of political instability in Lesotho*, 1966—2016. National University of Lesotho, pp131-161

Monyake, M., 2017. "Was Lesotho's voter turnout exaggerated?" *Pambazuka.* (https://www.pambazuka.org/democracy-governance/was-lesotho% E2% 80% 99s-low-voter-turn-out-exaggerated)

Mukurunge Tawanda and Takura Bhila, 2018. "Social Media and Political Party Campaign Case of Lesotho June 2017 Election" International Open Access Journal ISSN No. 2456-6470. Vol.-3, Issue-1, December. Available at https://issuu.com/ijtsrd.com/docs/i5i_social_media_and political_partpolitical part

Muthien, Yvonne, ed., 1999*, Democracy South Africa: Evaluating the 1999 Election*, Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council Publishers.

Ndletyana, Mcebisi, 2010. "Introduction: The Significance of the 2009 Elections" *Journal of African Elections* 9:2 (October)

Ngau Peter, and Musyimi Mbathi.,2010. "The Geography of Voting in Kenya: An Analysis of the 2007 Presidential, Parliamentary and Civic Voting Patterns" in Kariti Kanyinga and Duncan Okello, eds. *Tensions and Reversals in Democratic Transitions: The Kenya 2007 General Elections.* Nairobi: SID&IDS.

Pinkleton, Bruce E., & Austin, Erica W. 2001. "Individual motivations, perceived media importance, and political disaffection," *Political Communication,* 18 (321-334).

Pinkleton, Bruce E., Austin, Erica W., & Fortman, Kristine K.J, 1998. "Relationships of media use and political disaffection to political efficacy and voting behavior," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 42 (34-49).

PRA.Inc. Information Intointo Strategy, 2004. Low Voter Turnout: A Survey of Voters and Non-Voters. Elections Manitoba. March.

Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Tuning in, tuning out: The strange disappearance of social capital in America," *PS: Political Science and Politics,* 28 (664-683).

Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon & Schuster.

Reynolds, Andrew, ed., 1994, *Election '94 South Africa: The Campaigns, Results and Future prospects*. Claremont: David Phillip.

Rolfe, Meredith 2012, *Voter Turnout: A Social Theory of Political Participation*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Schumpeter, Joseph, 1943. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. New York: Harper

Solijonov, Abdurashid, 2016. "Voter Turnout Trends around the World". *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* (International IDEA), Strömsborg, Stockholm, Sweden. Available at https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/voter-turnout-trends-around-the-world.pdf

Southall R. and Petlane T., eds., 1995. *Democratisation and Demilitarisation: Lesotho General Election of 1993 and its Aftermath*, Pretoria: Africa Institute.

Southall, Roger, and John Daniel, eds., 2009., *Zumani! The South African General election of 2009*, Johannesburg: Jacana Press. Reports Consulted

Appendices

Appendix 1: Voter Survey Sample Design

Appendix 2: Polling Station Areas Where Survey Data was Collected

Appendix 3: Study Questionnaire

Appendix 4: GPS Map of Survey Data Collection Coverage

Appendix 5: List of Interviewed Expert/Key Informants

Appendix 6: Key Informants/Experts Interview Guide

Appendix 1: Voter Survey Sample Design

In order to come up with a nationally representative sample, Lesotho was taken as the primary domain, with eligible voters (age 18 and above) as the population. The research team was keen to use the sampling frame provided by the IEC's voter register in order to cluster respondents into polling stations, constituencies and finally, districts. Before carrying on with sampling, due diligence was exercised in that the research team compared the IEC data with the sampling frame from the Bureau of Statistics (BoS) to ensure that there were no serious discrepancies between the two. Had such discrepancies been identified, the research team would have preferred the BoS data and used Enumeration Areas (EAs) rather than polling stations as the primary sampling units (PSU). In the absence of significant differences between the two sampling frames, the team went on to utilise the IEC data to estimate the sample.

First, to determine the size of the sample, the following formulae was used:

Preliminary Sample Determination

Formula	*Calculation*
$n = \frac{Nz^2 \times 0.25}{[(d^2 \times (N-1) + (z^2 \times 0.25)]}$	$\frac{1252630\ (3x3) \times 0.25}{[(0.05x0.05) \times 1252629] + [(3x3) \times 0.25]}$
Where N = total number of eligible voters d = desired level of precision z = standard deviations corresponding to desired level of confidence	$\frac{2818418}{3133.82}$
And N = 1252630 (estimated from IEC statistics) d = 0.05 z = 3 (confidence 99.7)	899.35
	Preliminary Sample Size = **899 Voters**

Second, the estimated (preliminary) sample size was then adjusted for the estimated response rate. It was estimated that a response rate of 50% shall apply. The preliminary sample size was then divided by the expected response rate, with the final sample size as shown below

Adjusted (Final) Sample Size Determination

$\frac{\text{preliminary sample}}{\text{expected response rate}}$
$\frac{899}{0.50}$
Final Sample size = **1798 Voters**

Finally, the sample was stratified according to criteria agreed with the Client. The agreement was for the survey to be as nationally representative as possible. This meant that all the 80 constituencies had to be visited.

The survey sample was therefore drawn from 80 constituencies across the ten districts of Lesotho. The original plan was to interview a nationally representative sample of 1,798 citizens of voting age (above the age 18). This sample was designed to accommodate a margin of error below +/-3 percent at 95 percent confidence level.

Registered voters per constituency, distributed by constituency

Constituency	Registered Voters	% of National	Sample	District Total (Sampled)
Mechachane	14,134	1.13%	20	
Hololo	15,049	1.20%	22	
Motete	16,361	1.31%	23	110
Qalo	14,146	1.13%	20	
Butha-Buthe	16,691	1.33%	24	
Maliba-Matso	18,009	1.44%	26	
Mphosong	13,524	1.08%	19	
Thaba-Phatšoa	15,307	1.22%	22	
Mahobong	18,220	1.45%	26	
Pela-Tšoeu	14,748	1.18%	21	
Matlakeng	13,279	1.06%	19	
Leribe	14,178	1.13%	20	305
Hlotse	19,306	1.54%	28	
Tsikoane	16,244	1.30%	23	
Maputsoe	20,912	1.67%	30	
Likhetlane	17,771	1.42%	25	
Peka	15,884	1.27%	23	
Kolonyama	15,285	1.22%	22	
Mosalemane	15,073	1.20%	22	
'Makhorana	13,368	1.07%	19	
Bela-Bela	14,557	1.16%	21	
Malimong	14,302	1.14%	21	
Khafung	14,930	1.19%	21	
Teya-Teyaneng	15,027	1.20%	22	265
Tsoana-Makhulo	14,911	1.19%	21	
Thupa-Kubu	16,672	1.33%	24	
Berea	15,595	1.24%	22	
Khubetsoana	17,614	1.41%	25	
Mabote	14,197	1.13%	20	
Motimposo	18,196	1.45%	26	
Stadium Area	20,896	1.67%	30	453
Maseru	12,214	0.97%	18	
Thetsane	20,850	1.66%	30	

Qoaling	19,930	1.59%		29	
Lithoteng	18,644	1.49%		27	
Lithabaneng	25,568	2.04%		37	
Abia	15,460	1.23%		22	
Thaba-Bosiu	15,877	1.27%		23	
Machache	16,591	1.32%		24	
Thaba-Putsoa	17,024	1.36%		24	
Maama	16,788	1.34%		24	
Koro-Koro	20,161	1.61%		29	
Qeme	14,632	1.17%		21	
Rothe	15,300	1.22%		22	
Matsieng	17,159	1.37%		25	
Makhaleng	15,361	1.23%		22	
'Maletsunyane	15,454	1.23%		22	
Thaba-Phechela	14,143	1.13%		20	
Kolo	14,953	1.19%		21	
Matelile	15,327	1.22%		22	
'Maliepetsane	16,558	1.32%		24	174
Thabana-Morena	13,795	1.10%		20	
Likhoele	16,214	1.29%		23	
Qalabane	15,347	1.22%		22	
Mafeteng	14,785	1.18%		21	
Taung	12,189	0.97%		17	
Qhalasi	11,970	0.95%		17	
Mohale's Hoek	16,017	1.28%		23	
Mekaling	12,477	1.00%		18	155
Qaqatu	11,579	0.92%		17	
Mpharane	13,611	1.09%		20	
Ketane	15,091	1.20%		22	
Hloahloeng	15,037	1.20%		22	
Tele	11,633	0.93%		17	
Moyeni	13,254	1.06%		19	
Sebapala	15,772	1.26%		23	96
Mt. Moorosi	14,517	1.16%		21	
Qhoali	11,781	0.94%		17	
Qacha's Nek	16,369	1.31%		23	
Lebakeng	15,371	1.23%		22	64
Tsoelike	13,069	1.04%		19	
Mantšonyane	16,409	1.31%		24	
Thaba-Moea	15,410	1.23%		22	
Thaba-Tseka	16,268	1.30%		23	117
Semena	17,614	1.41%		25	
Mashai	15,917	1.27%		23	
Malingoaneng	15,456	1.23%		22	
Senqu	15,285	1.22%		22	86
Mokhotlong	14,637	1.17%		21	
Bobatsi	14,286	1.14%		20	

The sampling technique adopted yielded a total of 156 polling stations as our Primary Sampling Units (PSUs).

Appendix 2: Polling Station areas where survey data was collected

0105/2- Mechachaneng Primary School	5209/1- Rouling High School
0112/1- Makhoakhoa Community Primary School	5217/1- Mabatla Primary School
0117/2- Ha Majara Moreneng	5303/2- Ha Joase Moreneng
0205/1- Ha Lebetla (Tent)	5309/1- Mohlanapeng Ha Raliemere (Tent)
0210/1- Mutlanyana Primary School	5404/1- Thabana-Tšooana Primary
0306/1- 'Muela Primary School	5410/1- Ha Patsa Moreneng
0313/1- Rampai Clinic	5416/2- Monyalotsa Primary School
0408/1- Qalo Moreneng	5506/1- Matsepe Methodist High School
0503/1- Makopo Moreneng/Butha Buthe High School	5602/4- Ha Moletsane Moreneng
0602/1- Maliba-Matšo L.E.C. Primary School	5605/2- Lehloaneng Primary School
0601/3- Mohlakeng L.E.C.	5606/5- Ha Montšo Moreneng
0608/1- Khopung L.E.C. Primary School	5701/1- Matsatseng Primary School
0603/2- Lejoe-Motho L.E.C. Primary School	5704/1- Maphohloane's Office Moreneng
0604/1- 'Mikia A.C.L Primary School	5707/2- Raphiri Primary School Ha Makhate
0604/2- Mphorosane Moreneng (Tent)	5802/3- St. Stephens High School
0606/2- Makopela R.C. Primary School	5805/2- Ha Sankatana
0607/1- Laghetto R.C. Primary School	5802/2- St. Stephens Primary School
0611/1- Thibeli L.E.C. Primary School (Tent)	5904/3- Tjotjong Primary School
0708/01- Nkoeng R.C.M Primary School	5907/2- Try Hoek Ha Makhaola Moreneng
0711/01- Nkola R.C.M. Primary School	5910/1- Morobong L.E.C. Primary School
0710/1- Potsane Lec Primary School	5912/3- Ha Sello Letlatsa Moreneng (Tent)
0706/1- Sekoaing Moreneng (Tent)	6003/2- Tsebe Primary School
0702/1- Ponts'eng L.E.C Primary School	6016/1- Phamong Primary School
0703/1-Bohlala R.C.M. Primacy School	6017/1- Ha Qacha Moreneng
0707/3-Matlameng Primary School	6101/5- Khanyane Moreneng
0801/1- Mokhachane R.C. Primary School	6103/4- Liphofung Primary School
0809/1- Thaba-Lesoba Primary School	6105/2- Masita Primary School
0906/1- Mofonesoa R.C.M Primary School	6106/5- Ntsirele Ha Letapata
1001/1- St. Felix R.C. Primary School	6110/1- Moseneke L.E.C. Primary School
1012/1- Mate L.E.C. Primary School	6113/1- Thaba - Phiri Primary School
1107/1- Koenaneng Primary School	6204/2- Qhoasing L.E.C. Primary School
1212/1- Litlhoatšneng L.E.C. Primary School	6207/1- Mokoallong R.C. Church
1301/1- Ha Kampa Moreneng (Tent)	6209/1- Nohana Primary School
1303/1- Ha Sebili Moreneng (Tent)	6211/2- Ha Kotsoana Moreneng
1304/1- Joy to The World (Tent)	6215/1- Thabo Matete Primary School
1305/1- Sebothoane D.R.C Primary School	6221/1- Ha Malephane Moreneng

1306/1- Lesaoana Primary School	6302/3- Khilibiting Ha Ralebona Moreneng
1307/1- Methodist Primary School	6306/1- Thaba - Ntšo R.C. Primary School
1308/1- Hlotse L.E.C Primary School	6312/3- Luma-Luma Primary School
1309/1- Lisemeng 1 Moreneng (Tent)	6312/4- Ha Mokotso Moreneng (Tent)
1310/1- Mount Royal Primary School	6401/2- Majakaneng Masitise Moreneng(Tent)
1412/1- Ha Matsoete Moreneng Joala Boholo (Tent)	6407/1- Mtjanyane A.C.L. Primary School
1501/1- Moselinyane Primary School	6501/1- Letsika R.C Primary School
1502/1- Maputsoe Community Primary School	6506/1- Dutch Reform Church
1503/1- St. Luke Primary School	6512/2- Liqala L.E.C Primary School
1504/1- Maputsoe A.C.L. Primary School	6605/1- Potomane L.E.C Primary School
1504/1- Day Star English Medium High School	6614/1- Selomong L.E.C Primary School
1604/2- Ha Lepamo Moreneng (Tent)	6620/1- Thaha R.C. Primary School
1707/1- Ha Tšea Moreneng	6708/1- Tsitsong Ha Matsie Moreneng
1804/1- Tlalinyane L.E.C. Primary School	6716/1- Khakeng Primary School
1912/2- Ramatlali Primary School	6725/1- 'Maseribane High School
2009/1- 1 Mokoallong Moreneng(Tent)	6807/2- Tsekong L.E.C. Primary School (Tent)
2106/1- Bela-Bela L.E.C. Primary School	6815/1- Magdalena R.C. Primary School
2206/1- Tsimatsi Primary School	6901/1- Qacha's Nek United Primary
2217/1- Ha Mateka Moreneng (Tent)	6906/1- Khamokha R.C. Primary School
2304/1- Cana Moreneng	6911/2- Ha Shakhane Moreneng
2308/1- Tsiame Primary School	7002/2- Khongoana-E-T'soeu Primary School
2403/1- T.Y L.E.C. Primary School	7007/1- Lebakeng Primary School
2502/1- Ha Patiriki Moreneng (Tent)	7012/1- Lehata Primary School
2513/1- Zenon High School	7104/1- Tsoelike L.E.C. Primary School
2603/1- Mokoallong L.E.C. Primary School	7111/2- Moshebi Primary School
2612/1- St. Cecilia R.C.M. Primary School	7203/1- Toka Eccd
2703/1- Mokhethoaneng L.E.C. Primary School.	7212/1- Lets'aneng Primary School
2714/1- Marabeng Moreneng	7218/1- Suoane Primary School
2803/5- Leseli Community School	7301/1- Macheseng Primary Sch00l
2901/4- Tšepo Nursery School	7316/1- Lesobeng L.E.C Primary School
3003/2- Motse Mocha Moreneng	7302/1- Mantšonyane Primary School
3107/1- Sefika High School	7405/1- Majara Primay School
3203/1- Ratjomose Primary School	7415/1- Sehaula Primary School
3305/1- Tikoe A.C.L Primary School	7503/1- Ha Soai Co-Op Lesotho
3404/1- Mamoeketsi Primary School	7513/1- Khalanyane Primary School
3501/1- Liraoheleng L.E.C Primary School	7519/1- Nyai Primary School
3601/2- Islamic Centre	7605/1- Bokhoasa Primary School
3704/1- Maranatha Christian School (Tent)	7615/1- St. Theresa Primary School
3805/1- Mahlabatheng P. School	7622/1- Matebeng Primary School
3903/1- Metolong Primary School	7704/3- Tšepong Moreneng
4005/1- Ha Nkoankoa Moreneng (Tent)	7716/1- Meno Primary School
4021/1- Ha Rantelali (Tent)	7806/1- Lechesa Primary School
4112/1- Meshack Primary School	7808/1- Bloodberg Primary School

4202/1- St. Joseph Primary School	7812/1- Kanana Primary School
4307/1- Machekoaneng Primary School	7817/2- Masaleng Moreneng
4413/1- Ramorakane Primary School	7904/1- Nazareth Primary School
4507/1- Taele Primary School	7909/2- Moshemong
4604/1- Kubake Primary School	7913/1- Seeiso Primary School
4711/1- Senqunyane Secondary School	8002/3- Matlakeng Primary School
4802/2- Ha Hlalesoa	8007/1- Libibing Primary School
4902/1- Mathebe Primary School	8010/2- Ha Ntsika Moreng
5004/1- Rannakoe Primary School	8012/1- Matjota Primary School
5107/1- Malea-Lea Primary School	
5115/1- Khotla Primary School	

Appendix 3: Study Questionnaire

Low Voter Turnout Study - Final Questionnaire

Record your current location *Accuracy should be 50m at most.* latitude (x.y °)

longitude (x.y °)

_____

altitude (m)

_____

accuracy (m)

_____

Constituency

Lebitso la lebatooa moo u leng teng



_____

Polling station*Setsi sa ho khetha*

_____

Lebitso la motse

1. Ke litho tse kae tsa lelapa lee tse lilemong tsa ho khetha?

_____

_____

2. Pele re qala,ho hlokahala hore ke netefatse hore u lilemong tsa ho khetha. Na u ka ntjoetsa lilemo tsa hau?

- ◯ 18-24
- ◯ 25-34
- ◯ 35-44
- ◯ 45-54
- ◯ 55-64
- ◯ 65-74

75+

* 3. Etsa bonnete ba hore motho enoa o khethela setsing sa lebatoeng la . Haeba a sa ngolisa, etsa bonnete ba hore litho tsa lelapa lena li khethela setsing sa lebatoeng la .

- ◯ OK

Karolo e hlahlamang ke *Part 1: Electoral Participation*

Part 1: Electoral Participation

4. Na u no so fihletse lilemo tse 18 ha ho t'soaroa likhetho tse akaretsang(tsa paramente) tsa la 03 June 2017?

- ◯ Che
- ◯ E
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW (DNR)

5. Na u ile oa vouta likhethong tse akaretsang tsa la 03 Phuptjane/June 2017

◯ CHE

◯ E

◯ REFUSED [DNR]

◯ DON'T KNOW (DNR)

6. Ke polelo efe ho tse latelang e hlalosang lebaka la mantlha le u sitisitseng ho khetha likhethong tse akaretsang tsa la 03 Phuptjane/June 2017?

◯ U nu sa ingolisetsa ho khetha

◯ U nu sa tsebe na u lokela ho khethela kae

◯ U ne u sa batle ho khetha

◯ Ha u ua ka ua fumana nako ea ho ingolisetsa ho khetha

◯ Lebitso la hau le ne le sa hlahe lenaneng la bakhethi

◯ U ile ua haneloa/thibeloa ho ngolisa

◯ U ne u le lilemo li tlaase hore u no ka ngolisa

◯ U ne u sitoa ho ngolisa ka mabaka a mang

◯ U ne u le sieo ka hara

◯ naha U khathetse ke ho

◯ khetha other

◯ REFUSED [DNR]

◯ DON'T KNOW / CAN'T REMEMBER [DNR]

Please specify

7. Ke lebaka le fe la mantlha le u susumelitseng ho khetha likhethong tse akaretsang tsa la 03 Phuptjane/June 2017?

- ◯ Ke boikarabello ba ka ho khetha
- ◯ Ke ne ke lakatsa ho tlisa liphethoho
- ◯ Ke ne ke batla ho tšhehetsa mokha oa/lekhotla la heso
- ◯ Ke ne ke batla ho fetola mokha/lekhotla le busang
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW (DNR)

8. Na u ile oa vouta likhethong tsa puso ea libaka tsa Mphalane/ October 2017?

- ◯ CHE
- ◯ E
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW (DNR)

9. Ke lebaka kapa mabaka afe a mantlha a u sitisitseng ho khetha likhethong tsa puso ea Libaka tsa Mphalane/october 2017?

[TICK ALL THAT APPLY]

- ☐ U nu sa ingolisetsa ho khetha
- ☐ U nu sa tsebe na u lokela ho khethela kae
- ☐ U ne u sa batle ho khetha
- ☐ Likhetho tsa puso ea libaka ha li bohlokoa
- ☐ Ha u ua ka ua fumana sebaka sa ho ingolisetsa ho khetha
- ☐ Lebitso la hau le ne le sa hlahe lenaneng la bakhethi
- ☐ U ile ua haneloa/thibeloa ho ngolisa
- ☐ U ne u le lilemo li nyane hore u no ka ngolisa
- ☐ U ne u sitoa ho ngolisa ka mabaka a mang
- ☐ U ne u le sieo ka hara naha
- ☐ U khathetse ke ho khetha
- ☐ Other
- ☐ REFUSED [DNR]

DON'T KNOW (DNR)

Please specify

_____

10. Ke lebaka lefe la bohlokoa-hlokoa le entseng hore u khethe likhethong tsa Puso ea Libaka tsa Mphalane/October 2017?

- ◯ Ke boikarabello ba ka ho khetha
- ◯ Ke ne ke lakatsa ho tlisa liphethoho
- ◯ Ke ne ke batla ho tšhehetsa mokha/lekhotla la heso
- ◯ Ke ne ke batla ho fetola mokha/lekhotla le busang
- ◯ Ke boikarabello ba ka ho khetha
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]

DON'T KNOW (DNR)

11. Ntle le likhetho tsa haufinyane tsaPhuptjane and le Mphalane 2017, ke likhethong li feng ho tse latelang tseo u Voted Didn't vote
REFUSED[DNR] DON'TKNOW
(DNR)

ileng oa vouta?

2015

2012

2011 (Tsa puso ea libaka)

2007

2005 (Tsa puso ea libaka)

2002

1998

1993

Before 1993

12. Likhethong tse fetileng tsa la 03

Phuptjane/ June 2017

a. Na moemeli oa mokha oa lipolotiki o kilea u ferehela ho khetha mokha oa habo ka nako eo mekha e iketelang likhetho?

○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○

CHE	EREFUSED	[DNR]
	DON'TKNOW [DN R]	
○	○	○	○

b. Na u kile oa ea sebokeng sa mokha oa ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯lipolotiki?

13. Na u ingoliselitse ho vouta likhethong tse hlahlamang?

◯ CHE

◯ E

◯ REFUSE[DNR]

◯ DON'T KNOW[DNR]

14. U ikemeselitse ho vouta likhethong tse hlahlamang?

◯ CHE

◯ E

◯ Ha ke so etse qeto

◯ REFUSE[DNR]

◯ DON'T KNOW[DNR]

15. Ke eng eo u nahanang e tla u sitisa/ema pele ho khetha? [VERBATIM]

---

16. Lipakeng tsa likhetho tsa puso ea libaka le tse akaretsang (tsa paramente), ke life tse u nang le thahasello e matla hotsona?

- ◯ Tsa Puso ea libaka
- ◯ Tse akaretsang (tsa paramente)
- ◯ Ha ke na thahasello ho tsona bobeli
- ◯ Ke na le thahasello ho tsona bobeli
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW (DNR)

17. Ha u sheba likhetho tsa naha tsa 2017, u ka re tlholisano (competition) ea mekha ea lipolotiki ene e le joang?	Ene e le matla haholo	Ene e le matla	Ene e ntse tsoana	Ene e fokola	Ene e fokola haholo	REFUSED[DNR]	DON'TKNOW (DNR)
Lebatooeng la heno	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Naha ka bophara	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

18. Tlholisano (competition) ea mekha ea lipolotiking likhethong tsa 2017 ene le joang papisong le likhethong tsa 2015?	Ene e le matla haholo	Ene e le matla	Ene e ntse tsoana	Ene e fokola	Ene e fokola haholo	REFUSED[DNR]	DON'TKNOW (DNR)
Lebatooeng la heno	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Naha ka bophara	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

19. Likhethong tse fetileng tsa 2017, na u ile oa fumana leseli ka tsela ea ho khetha ho tsoa ho se seng sa litsi tse latelang?	CHE	E	REFUSED[DNR]	DON'TKNOW [DNR]

Mokhatho o ikemetseng	◯	◯	◯	◯
Komisi e ikemetse ea likhetho	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mokha/lekhotla la lipolotiki	◯	◯	◯	◯

Karolo e hlahlamang ke *Part 2: Political Participation*

Part 2: Political Participation

20. U na le thahasello e kae litabeng tsa lipolotiki? [READ OPTIONS]

◯ Ke li thahasella haholo

◯ Ke ea li thahasella

◯ Ha ke li thahaselle hakalo – kalo

◯ Ha ke li thahaselle

◯ Ha ke na thahasello hohang

◯ REFUSED [DNR]

DON'T KNOW (DNR)

21. Papisong le lilemo tse leshome tse fetileng, u ka re thahasello ea hao litabeng tsa lipolotiki e joang? [READ OPTIONS]

- ◯ E eketsehile haholo
- ◯ E eketsehile
- ◯ E ntse tshoana le pele
- ◯ E fokotsehile
- ◯ E fokotsehile haholo
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW (DNR)

22. Ekaba lebaka la mantlha la phetoho thahasellong ea hau litabeng tsa lipolotiki ke lefe?

Karolo e hlahlamang ke *Part 3: Civic Participation*

Part 3: Civic Participation

23. Ke efe ea mekhatlo e latelang eo u le setho se sehlahlo ho eona? (registered MEMBER, at least one activity per month, or pay subscription)?(TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- [ ] Mokhatlo oa Basebetsi
- [ ] Stokvel
- [ ] Mokha/Lekhotla la lipolotiki
- [ ] Mahokela
- [ ] Mekhatlo ea Kereke
- [ ] Other

Please specify

---

24. Ke tlo u balla lethathamo la lintho tseo Basotho ba bang ba eeng ba li etse e le baahi ba naha. Ke kopa u mpolelle hore na u kile oa kenya letsoho ho lifeng ho tsona likhoeling tse 12 tse fetileng.	CHE	E	REFUSED[DNR]	DON'T KNOW(DNR)
Ua ea pitsong ea motse	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ua kopana le batho ba bang ba motse ho hlahisa maikutlo a lona	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ua kenela mokoloko oa boipelaetso	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ua letsetsa lenaneong la seea-le-moea ho hlahisa maikutlo	◯	◯	◯	◯

Ua saena lengolo la boipelaetso (petition)

Ua kenya letsoho puisanong ea litaba tsa naha marang-ranng?

Karolo e hlahlamang ke *Part 4: Media Consumption and Information Influences*

Part 4: Media Consumption and Information Influences

Ke hakae ka beke u etsang tse latelang?	Hohang	Hanngoe ka beke	Makhetloa 'maloa a beke	Letsatsi le leng le le leng	REFUSED [DNR]	DON'T KNOW [DNR]
25. U fumanang litaba seea-le-moeeng lethelefishining [READ OPTIONS]						◯
26. U fumanang litaba ka mokhoa oamarang-rang [READ OPTIONS]						◯
27. U buang ka litaba tsa naha ka marang-rang [READ OPTIONS]						◯

28. Na likhethong tse fetileng tsa 2017 u ile oa utloa kapa oa bona papatso malebana le tse latelang:	CHE	E	REFUSED[DNR]	DON'T KNOW [DNR]
Bohlokoa ba ho ngolisetsa ho khetha	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bohlokoa ba ho nka karolo likhethong	◯	◯	◯	◯

Karolo e hlahlamang ke *Part 5: Opinions and Attitudes towards Governance*

Part 5: Opinions and Attitudes towards Governance

29. Basotho ba bangata ba bonahala ba se ba sa kenye letsoho ka matla likhethong tsa naha tse akaretsang. Se e be sebakoa ke eng [DO NOT READ OUT; TICK ALL THAT APPLY]

- ☐ Basotho ba khathetse ke ho khetha
- ☐ Bapolotiki ba ichebile bo bona
- ☐ Basotho ha ba sa rata puso ea Sechaba ka Sechaba
- ☐ Basotho ba hloile mokhoa ona oa ho khetha oa khekhethane
- ☐ Batho ba eleletsoe hore ho khetha ha ho etse phaphang
- ☐ REFUSED [DNR]

[DON'T KNOW [DNR]

30. Ke kopa u k'u mpolelle hore na u CHE E REFUSED[DNR] DON'T KNOW lumellana kapa u hanana le lipolelo tse

[

DNR] latelang mabapi le ho kenya letsoho likhethong?

Likhetho ke monyetla oa sechaba ho kenya letsoho maanomg a mmuso	◯	◯	◯	◯
Likhetho ke monyetla oa sechaba ho khetha pakeng tsa mekha ea lipolotiki	◯	◯	◯	◯
Likhetho ke monyetla oa sechaba ho khetha pakeng tsa baiketi ba fapaneng	◯	◯	◯	◯
Likhetho ke monyetla oa sechaba ho t'soaea 'muso liphoso	◯	◯	◯	◯

31. U ka re ho etsoe molao o tlamang Mosotho e mong le e mong a lilemo li 18 ho ea holimo hore a khethe?

- ◯ CHE
- ◯ E
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW [DNR]

32. U ka khothaletsa hore likolo li rute ka litaba tse amanang le puso ea Sechaba ka Sechaba le ho khetha?

- ◯ CHE
- ◯ E
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW [DNR]

33. U lumellana kapa u hanana le polelo ee: "Mofuta oa likhetho oa masiasiane a kopantseng le khekhethane /MMP kemolleloa"? [DO NOT READ OPTIONS]

- ◯ Ke lumellana le eona
- ◯ Ke hanana le eona
- ◯ Ha kena maikutlo
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW [DNR]

34. Ka kakaretso u khotsofetse ha kae ke tse latelang? [READ OPTIONS]	Ke khotsofetse tse haholo	Ke khotsofetse tse	Ha kena maikutlo	Ha ke ea khotsofala	Ha ke ea khotsofala hohang	REFUSED [DNR]	DON'T KNOW [DNR]
Sephetho sa likhetho tsa akaretsang(tsa paramente)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Sekhahla sa naha sa ho ts'oara likhetho tsa naha tse akaretsang	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ts'ebetso ea paramente	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ts'ebetso ea Komisi ea likhetho e ikemetseng (IEC)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Lenane/Palo ea mekha ea lipolotiki ka hara naha	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ts'ebetso ea 'muso	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ts'ebetso ea mokhethoa oa lebatooa la hau	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ts'sebetso ea puso ea libaka ka kakaretso	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ts'ebetso ea mok'hanselara oa haeno	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

35. Ka kakaretso, o lebeletse hore likhetho tsa naha tsa kamoso li be joang mabapi le liketso tse latelang:	Ho se be joalo	Ho be joalo	REFUSED [DNR]	DON'T KNOW

Ho nonosa bakhethi limpho nakong ea likhetho	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bapolotiki ho se sebelise puo e hlohlont'sang litsebe	◯	◯	◯	◯
Balateli ba mekha ea lipolotiki ho se sebelise puo e hlohlontshang litsebe	◯	◯	◯	◯
Likhohlano le likarohano tse ka hare ho mekha ea lipolotiki	◯	◯	◯	◯
Li sireletsehile hore Basotho ba khethe ka bolokolohi				
Bophatlalatsi ba 'muso bo phutholohe ho bua ka tsona	◯	◯	◯	◯
Bophatlalatsi bo ikemetseng bo phutholohe ho bua ka tsona	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mekha ea lipolotiki e amohela sephetho sa tsona	◯	◯	◯	◯
Li tsoale 'muso o tsitsitseng				

36. Ha u hetla morao, u ka lekanyetsa boemo ba moruo oa naha joang papisong le likhoeling tse 12 tse fetileng? [READ OPTIONS]

◯ Bo betere haholo

◯ Bo betere

◯ Bo ntse bo ts'oana

◯ Bo bobe

◯ Bo bobe haholo

◯ REFUSED [DNR]

◯ DON'T KNOW [DNR]

Karolo e hlahlamang ke *Part 6: Political Knowledge and Awareness*

Part 6: Political Knowledge and Awareness

37. U utloisisa mokhoa oo oa ho khetha oa masiasiane a kopaneng le khekhethane?

◯ Che

◯ E

38. A ku hlalose [VERBATIM]

---

39. Ke kopa u mpolelle mabitso a batho ba maemomong a latelang ha joale. [Do not read options]

	Correct	Wrong	REFUSED [DNR]	DON'T KNOW [DNR]

Mookameli oa Sepolesa sa Lesotho	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mookameli oa Lekhotla le phahameng	◯	◯	◯	◯
Moetapele oa bohanyetsi paramenteng	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mokhethoa oa lebatooa la hau paramenteng	◯	◯	◯	◯
Komishinara ea Komisi e ikemetseng ea likhetho (IEC)[any of the three]	◯	◯	◯	◯

40. Ke kopa u mpolelle mabitso a batho ba maemong a latelang a machabeng.	Correct	Wrong	REFUSED [DNR]	DON'T KNOW [DNR]
President ea Afrika-Boroa	◯	◯	◯	◯
President ea Amerika	◯	◯	◯	◯
President ea Nigeria	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mongoli-kakaretso oa United Nations	◯	◯	◯	◯
Mongoli-kakaretso oa SADC	◯	◯	◯	◯

Karolo e hlahlamang ke *Part 7: Bio-Demographics*

Part 7: Bio-Demographics

41. Sex of respondent [Do not ask unless you can't determine]

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

42. Boemo ba lenyalo [Do not read options]

- ◯ Nyetse/Nyetsoe
- ◯ Mohlolo/Mohlolohali
- ◯ Hlalile/hlaliloe
- ◯ Ha ke so nyale
- ◯ Other
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- ◯ DON'T KNOW [DNR]

43. Boemo ba thuto [Do not read options] *Select the highest*

- ◯ No formal education
- ◯ Some primary (incomplete)
- ◯ Primary
- ◯ Some secondary(or High School)
- ◯ Completed secondary (or High School)
- ◯ College/university certificate
- ◯ Diploma
- ◯ Bachelors
- ◯ Master or above
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- DON'T KNOW [DNR]

44. Boemo ba hau ba mosebetsi. [Do not read options]

- ◯ Kea its'ebetsa
- ◯ Ha ke sebetse
- ◯ Ke hiriloe
- ◯ Mesebetsi ea nakoana (piece jobs)
- ◯ Ke phomolong
- ◯ REFUSED [DNR]
- DON'T KNOW [DNR]

Ke leboha haholo ka nako ea hau

Record your current location *Accuracy should be 50m at most.* latitude (x.y °)

longitude (x.y °)

_____

altitude (m)

_____

accuracy (m)

_____

_____



Karolo e hlahlamang ke *INTERVIEWER'S NOTES*

INTERVIEWER'S NOTES

45. Do you think your sex/age had any impact on your reception/response from interviewee?	No	Yes
Sex	◯	◯
Age	◯	◯

46. How was the respondent during the interview?	No	Yes
Friendly	◯	◯
Interested	◯	◯
Cooperative	◯	◯
Patient	◯	◯
Comfortable	◯	◯
Honest	◯	◯

47. What proportion of the questions did respondent find difficult?

as a percentage

_____

48. Which specific section/s?Part 1: Electoral Participation

- [ ] Part 2: Political Participation
- [ ] Part 3: Civic Participation
- [ ] Part 4: Media Consumption and Information Influences
- [ ] Part 5: Opinions Attitudes towards Governance
- [ ] Part 6: Political Knowledge and Awareness
- [ ] Part 7: Bio-Demographics

49. How many people were in the room (excluding the interviewee and you) as the interview progressed?

_____

50. Did respondent refer to others in answering?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes

51. Do you think this affected the responses?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes

52. In what type of shelter does the respondent live?

- ◯ Non-traditional / formal house
- ◯ Traditional house / hut
- ◯ Temporary structure / shack
- ◯ Duplex
- ◯ Malaene
- ◯ Single room in a larger dwelling structure or backyard
- ◯ Other (Please specify)

Specify the type of house

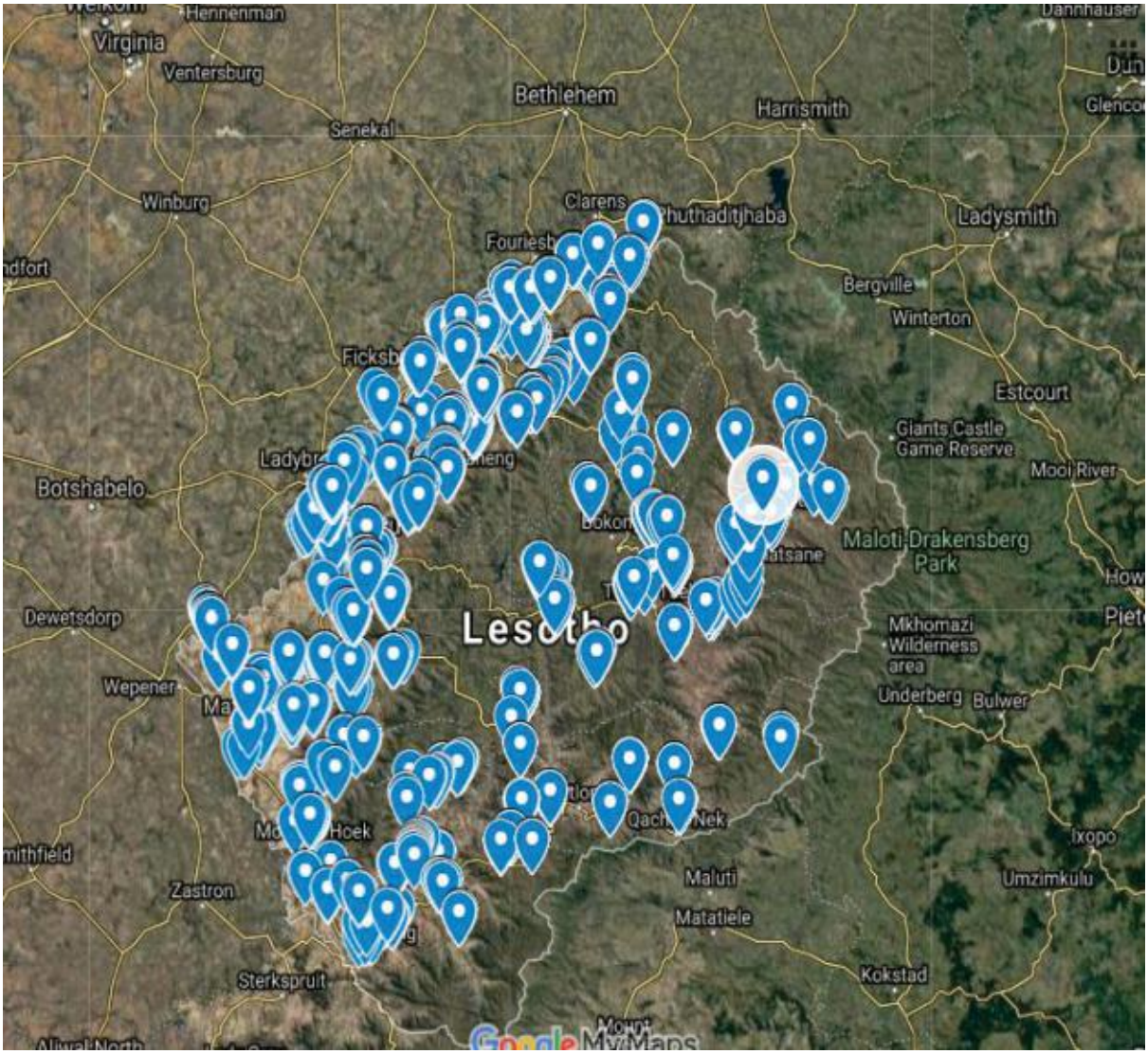
_____

53. Any other observations/comments

(optional)

_____

Appendix 4: GPS Map of Survey Data Collection Coverage



Appendix 5: List of Interviewed Expert/Key Informants

	EXPERT/KEY INFORMANT	EXPERTISE/POSITION	ORGANISATION	INTERVIEW DATE
1	Advocate Sekara Mafisa,	Former Chair & Commissioner	IEC	22/07/2019
2	Dr. Fako Likoti	Former Commissioner	IEC	18/07/2019
3	Ms. Limakatso Mokhothu	Former Chair & Commissioner	IEC	12/07/2019
4	Advocate Mamosebi Pholo	Commissioner	IEC	03/06/2019
5	Dr. Letholetseng Ntsike	Director of Elections	IEC	30/05/2019
6	Mr. Mphasa Mokhochane	Deputy Director of Elections (Former)	IEC	31/05/2019
7	Ms. Mamatlere Pontso Matete	Manager Electoral Operations	IEC	11/07/2019
8	Ms. Lydia Macheli	C & VE Manager	IEC	24/06/2019
9	Mr. Tuoe Hantši	PRO	IEC	11/06/2019
10	Mr. Motlohi Sekoala	Logistics Manager (a.i.)	IEC	06/06/2019
11	Mr. Lebohang Bulane	Head of IT & Acting Director, IEC	IEC	18/07/2019
12	Mr. Motlohi Sekoala	Acting Logistic Officer	IEC	06/06/2019
13	Mrs Lerato Lali	Finance Manager	IEC	16/07/2019
14	Limpho Monese	Asst. Finance Manager	IEC	16/07/2019
15	Dr. Khabele Matlosa,	Political Scientist	AU	24/06/2019
16	Dr. Victor Shale	Political Scientist	Shalestone	24/06/2029
17	Professor Kopano Makoa	Political Scientist	Independent Consultant	28/06/2019
18	Assoc. Prof. Motlamelle Kapa	Political Scientist	NUL	14 June 2019
19	Ms. Manteboheng Mabetha	Country Manager-Lesotho	Gender Links -	6/06/2019
20	Mr. Tsebo Matšasa	Executive Director, MISA Lesotho (Former)	Consultant	14/06/2019
22	Mr. Pelele Letsoela	Political Leader	BDNP	03/06/2019
23	Mr. Lehlohonolo Tšehlana	Political Party Leader	Sankatana Party	22/06/2019
24	Hon. Thabang Kholumo	MP (PR) & Political Party Deputy Leader	PFD Party	11/07/2019

25	Hon. Selibe Mochoroane	MP-Thabana Morena Const. & Political Party Leader	NEC Party	13/06/2019
26	Hon. Sotlehang Sekhamane	MP-Maputsoe Const.	ABC Party	01/07/2019
27	Hon. Manthabiseng Phohleli	MP (PR). & Women's League President	AD Party	22/07/2019
28	Tjeka Letuka	Chief	Ha-Matau	20/07/2019
29	'Mabohlokoa Ramohanoe	Chief	Popopo	20/07/2019
30	Makara Nyenye	Chief	Ha- Nyenye	24/07/2019
31	Mahlathe Tjokosela	Chief	Ha-Leronti	10/07/2019
32	Khohlane Joane	Assist.to chief Matekane	Ha-Ntsokoane	10/07/2019
33	Seleborane Marakabei	Chief	Ha-Khama	18/07/2019
34	Dr. Eric Alexander	Programme Manager	GIZ-PISA	07/06/2019
35	Ms. Lifuo Molapo	Assist. Prog. Manager	GIZ-PISA	07/06/2019
36	Adv. Nkhasi Sefuthi	Executive Director	LANFOD	19/07/2019
37	Ms. Mzondase Tsepane	Radio Lesotho	Radio Les.	03/07/2019
38	Mr. Thapelo Mabote	TV Presenter	LTV	03/07/2019
39	Mr. Caleb Sello	Governance Expert	Consultant	18/07/2019
40	Mr. Thabo Mosouenyane	Head, Governance Unit,	UNDP	28/06/2019
41	Jerky Torny	Senior Political Advisor	EU Rep.	10/07/2019
42	Mr. Motlalentoa Letsosa	Secretary General	D C Party	05/07/2019
43	Mr. Nokhaya Tyhali	Local chief	Mjanyani	27/07/2019
44	Ms. Fundiswa Mateisi	Local Chief	Ntozimnandi	27/07/2019
45	Masempe Posholi Seaka	Chief	Braakfontein	24/07/2019
46	Karabo Lerotholi	Chief	Seaka	24/07/2019
47	Matholang Bomela	Local Councillor	Mjanyani	27/07/2019
48	Nobulelani Mzamo	Local Councillor	Mjanyani	27/07/2019

Appendix 6: Key Informants/Experts Interview Guide

Time of interview	Morning / Midday / Afternoon	Interviewer ID	
Date of Interview		Place of Interview	
Start time		End time	

Format: The following are indicative questions to guide our discussion. They will be further elaborated and complemented with more probing questions for clarification, or debate based some or all of the following

1. Theories and debates on voter turnout
2. Observed specific dynamics in Lesotho
3. our findings (preliminary analysis of survey data)
4. the specific experience of the Expert

You will also be asked to recommend solutions: measures that could be taken (including best practices from your experience) to help (IEC in particular) improve voter turnout.

Discussion Points

A. General

1. Would you consider that low voter turnout is a problem for Lesotho?

2. How do you think we compare with others (especially emerging democracies, SADC/Africa)*?*

3. What is the effect of this phenomenon generally?

B. Explanations and Debates

1 Please comment/discuss Voter turnout reporting paradox: Eurobarometer report (2018) puts VTO for Lesotho at 72-74% -contrasted with the actual turnout of 48-50% in the 2017 national Assembly poll; but close to ongoing IEC Survey results which put it at 72.11%

2. Comment on Effectiveness of voter education. -

a) Content (standardization, language, coverage, etc.),

b) *Timing* of the campaigns,

c) the qualification and effectiveness of the organizations doing it (how equipped are they (both IEC and its partner NGOS).

d)*Context* (voter education vs. civic education) and *coverage*

3. Your opinion on the following as some of the factors that have been identified as contributing to BOTH low and declining voter turnout:

a. *Trust of institutions* (that voters do not trust the institutions of state in general, and those trusted with elections in particular)
b. *Understanding/knowledge of the electoral process*, rules, and/or some of their implications (for example of MMP)
c. *Support for democracy* as a system
d. *Access to information* (voting stations, requirements for voting, etc)
e. *Political activism and membership* (that people are already NOT active citizens, and this reflects in low voting)
f. *Specific personal (economic and other) interests* (people will vote/not vote ONLY when they can relate the exercise to direct personal benefits or threats to livelihoods: instrumental voting –bana ba tla kengoa likolo, tenders, business will thrive, *fato-fato* employment, etc.)
g. *Peer influences* (that some voters do/not vote because of the influences of those around them: when friends, family, community votes/not, they will also follow the same pattern)
h. *Slate of candidates*
i. *Issues in the election*
j. *Frequency of polls* (voter fatigue/too many polls: separation of local/national elections, political instability, fixed terms, etc.)
k. *Competitiveness of elections* (choice of candidates/parties, range, number –the hotter the poll, the more people turn up to vote? Or could it be the reverse?)
l. *Age difference explanation* (youth vs. elderly specifically: it appears from all studies that the youth are the most vocal and visible members of many parties (rallies, *ho hoanta, ho haila,* etc) BUT when voting day comes, it is the elderly who actually turn up.
m. What do you think makes for this difference in the two age groups?
n. What impact do you think has/this makes in the voter turnout?
o. What difference do you think it makes in the perception of voter turnout as a problem?

1. *Role of media* (newspapers, radio/television, and social media): please assess the role of media in influencing voter turnout (whether for the better or worse)

2. Please assess *the role of YOUR constituency/profession*

3. *Solutions*: having discussed the issues of voter turnout (what it looks like in Lesotho, what the causes are, who is involved), we should also seek to find solutions. Please identify i) *what* could be done ii) *by whom* iii) *how* iv) *with whom*, to increase voter turnout, including
   a. Marrying/coordinating civic education and voter education
   b. Strengthening the institutions for voter education
   c. Addressing specific social groups of voters (e.g., youth, diaspora, women, etc.)
   d. Strengthening the electoral process in general
   e. Strengthening the IEC's "turnout-stimulation" function (capacity, approach, strategy)
   f. Strengthening the media's role
   g. Strengthening the role of your constituency/profession





IEC Head Office
2nd and 3rd Floor MGC Park
Corner Pope John Paul II & Mpilo Boulevard
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Tel: +266 2231 4991 Fax: +266 22310398
Website:www.iec.org.ls