

# 5. Neighbourhood

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Are residents of Gauteng satisfied with the neighbourhoods in which they live? The question is important because responses reflect a variety of dimensions of residents' everyday lives and circumstances.

## Satisfaction with neighbourhoods

According to the 2015 Quality of Life (QoL) survey satisfaction rates are generally high. As seen in Figure 1, 72% of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their neighbourhood, whereas 16% said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

These results vary geographically. As Figure 2 shows, some wards have a much higher proportion of respondents who are satisfied with their neighbourhoods than other wards.

- Respondents in relatively affluent areas, especially those dominated by estate or cluster housing, such as Bryanston and Sunninghill, overwhelmingly say they are satisfied with their neighbourhood.
- Township areas have mixed levels of satisfaction, and some are surprisingly high. In Soweto, for example, 72% of respondents are satisfied with their neighbourhood.
- Areas that reported low levels of satisfaction include parts of Boksburg, Bekkersdal, and some sparsely populated peripheral wards.
- There are some stark contrasts, for example between Alexandra, Tembisa and Diepsloot and affluent areas adjacent to them.

Satisfaction with neighbourhood also varies according to the type of dwelling a respondent lives in.

- As Figure 3 shows, 88% of respondents living in a cluster house in a complex or a townhouse say that they are satisfied with their neighbourhood.
- 76% of people living in a house on a separate stand (e.g. a suburban home) are satisfied with their neighbourhood.
- Residents of backyard shacks and of informal settlements are least likely to say that they are satisfied with their neighbourhoods. Interestingly a significant proportion of those in informal settlements (40%) are satisfied with their area, raising questions about expectations and aspirations. More residents of backyard shacks say that they are

satisfied (52%) than dissatisfied (35%) with their neighbourhood. This reflects the locational advantage of those in backyard shacks. Even though they live in an informal dwelling, they benefit from neighbourhoods that have received substantial investment.

As Figure 4 shows, there is a relationship between people's satisfaction with their neighbourhood and their opinion of living in Gauteng province in general. Most residents agree with the statement 'Gauteng is the best province and I'd rather live here than anywhere else' (65%). However, respondents who were dissatisfied with their neighbourhood were less likely to agree that Gauteng is the best province (57%).

## Improvement or deterioration in neighbourhood

Figure 5 highlights that nearly a third (31%) of respondents believe that there has been an improvement in their area or community in the past year. The results differ by municipality. Mogale City had the highest proportion of respondents indicating improvement over the last year, at 37%, followed by the three metropolitan municipalities, each with 32%. Emfuleni had the lowest at 17%, followed by Randfontein at 20%. Lesedi had the highest proportion of respondents (25%) saying that their suburb or community had deteriorated in the last year, followed by Emfuleni at (20%).

Perceptions of improvement in neighbourhoods vary dramatically by type of dwelling, a proxy for the sort of area respondents live in. Compared to the average of 31%, 55% of those living in cluster housing in complexes said that their community/suburb had improved in the last year. Only 11% said there had been deterioration. On the other end of the spectrum only 10% of those in an informal settlement had seen their neighbourhood improve, while 18% indicated deterioration and 72% said there had been no change. Only 29% of those in RDP housing said their newly established suburbs had improved in the last year; 14% said there had been deterioration; and 57% indicated no change.

## Reasons for living in a suburb

Respondents were asked to identify the main reason that they live in the suburb in which they live (Figure 6). The most common response was 'affordability' (26%) followed by 'always lived here' (20%) and 'easy to get to

work' (13%). There are some interesting variations by population group. For example white respondents are least likely to say 'always lived here' (14%), but most likely to identify 'quality of property' (12%) and 'security' (5%) as the most important reason. Neither social homogeneity nor diversity seemed to be primary motivations since relatively few respondents identified the most important reason as either 'neighbours are similar to me' (1%) or that the suburb was 'interesting and diverse' (1%).

#### Biggest problem in community

Respondents were asked to name the biggest problem in their community (Figure 7). The most common response was 'crime', identified as the most important problem by 37% of the respondents. 'Unemployment' features prominently but no longer constitutes the second most commonly cited problem as it did in previous QoL surveys. The second most commonly cited problem is now 'drugs', identified by 16% of the respondents (having risen from 5% in the 2009 and 2011 surveys). The 16%

who identified 'drugs' do not include a further 3% who named 'alcohol abuse' as the biggest problem. Therefore nearly one fifth of the respondents said that substance abuse was the biggest problem facing their community.

In another question, respondents were asked 'If there is a problem in the area where you live, who do you talk to first to sort it out?' (Figure 8). 37% said they would call the 'police' while a further 9% said they would use 'private security'. 14% of the residents could not identify anyone they would approach.

#### Levels of trust in community

Figure 9 indicates that levels of trust at neighbourhood level are low. Only 14% of respondents agreed with the statement 'most people can be trusted' while 77% of respondents agreed with the statement 'you need to be very careful'. Levels of trust in communities have deteriorated marginally since the first QoL survey in 2009.

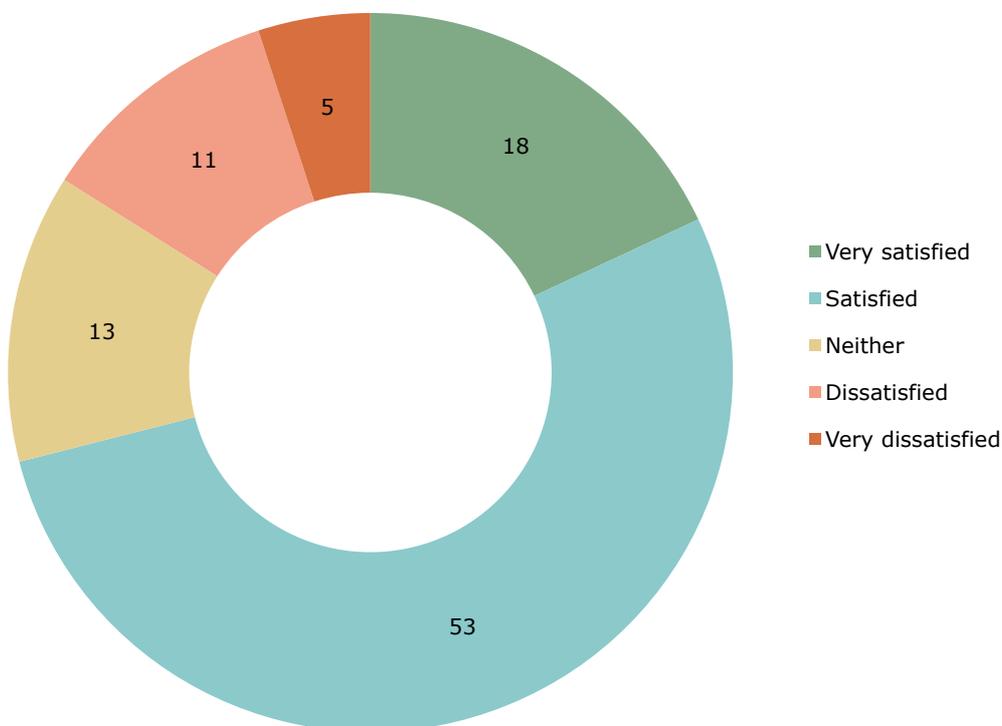


Figure 1: Levels of satisfaction with the area or neighbourhood where respondents live.

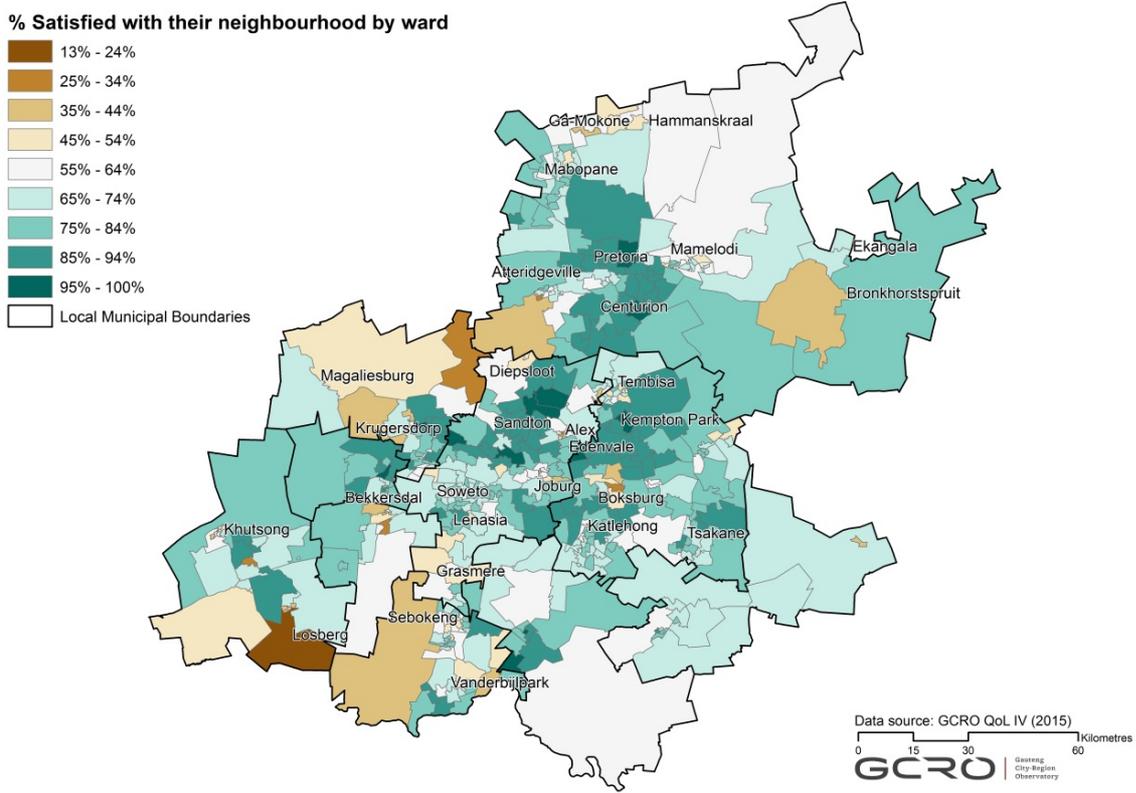


Figure 2: Satisfaction with respondents' own neighbourhood (by ward).

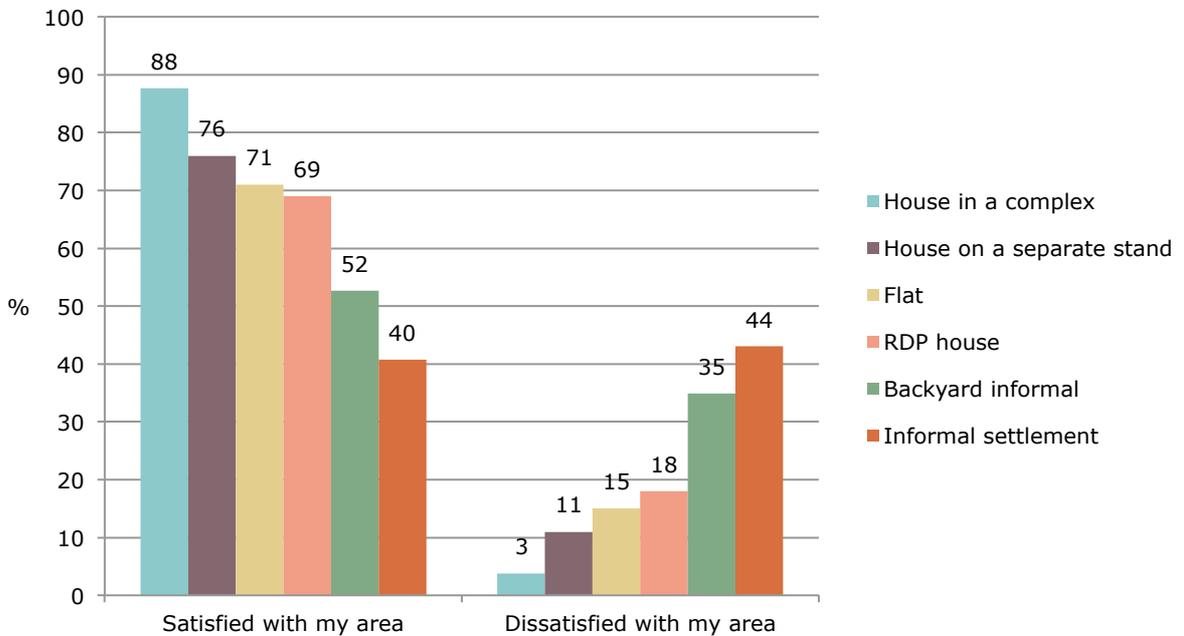
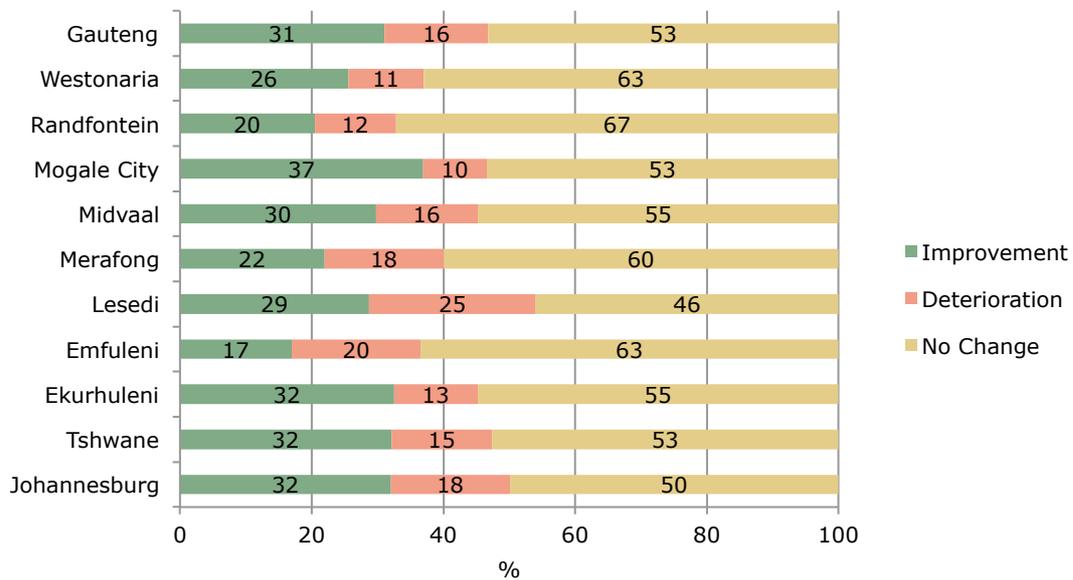


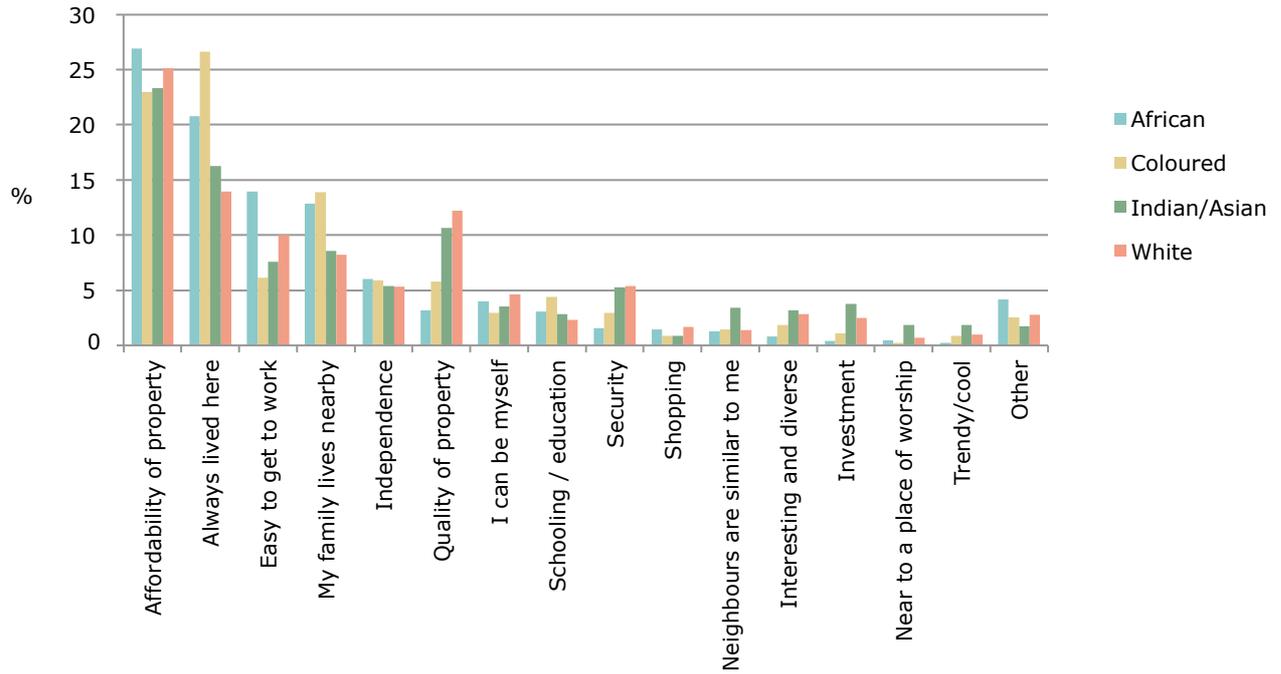
Figure 3: How does the kind of dwelling that I live in relate to my level of satisfaction with my neighbourhood?

	Gauteng is the best province and I'd rather live here than anywhere else (%)		
	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Satisfied with neighbourhood	69	15	17
Neither	51	30	19
Dissatisfied with neighbourhood	57	16	28
All	65	17	19

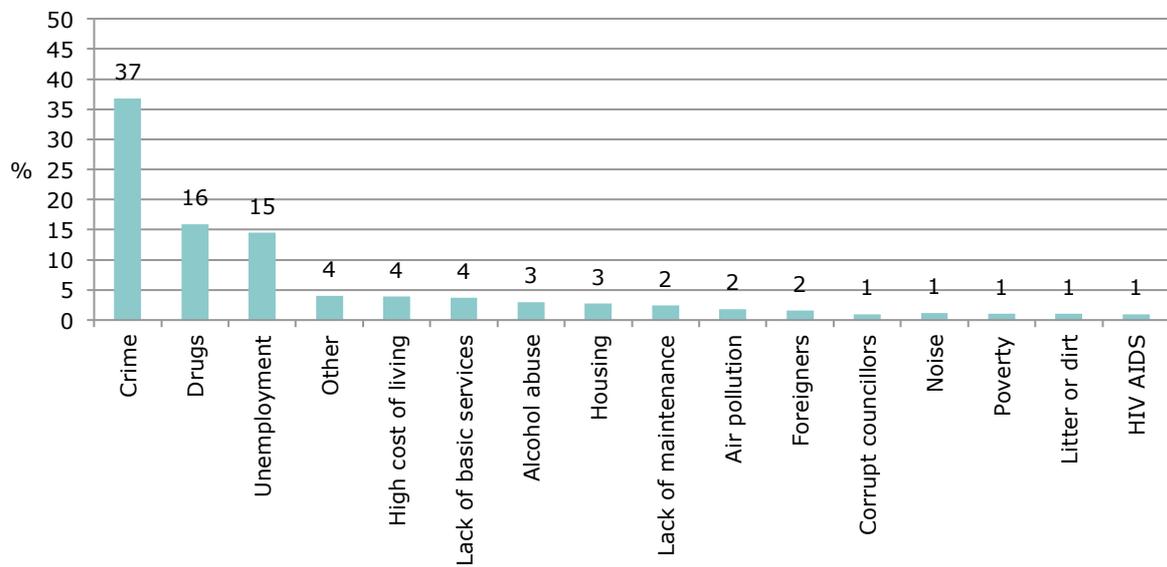
**Figure 4: The relationship between satisfaction with neighbourhood and opinion of living in the province.** Respondents who are dissatisfied with their neighbourhood are more likely to disagree with the statement 'Gauteng is the best province and I'd rather live here than anywhere else'.



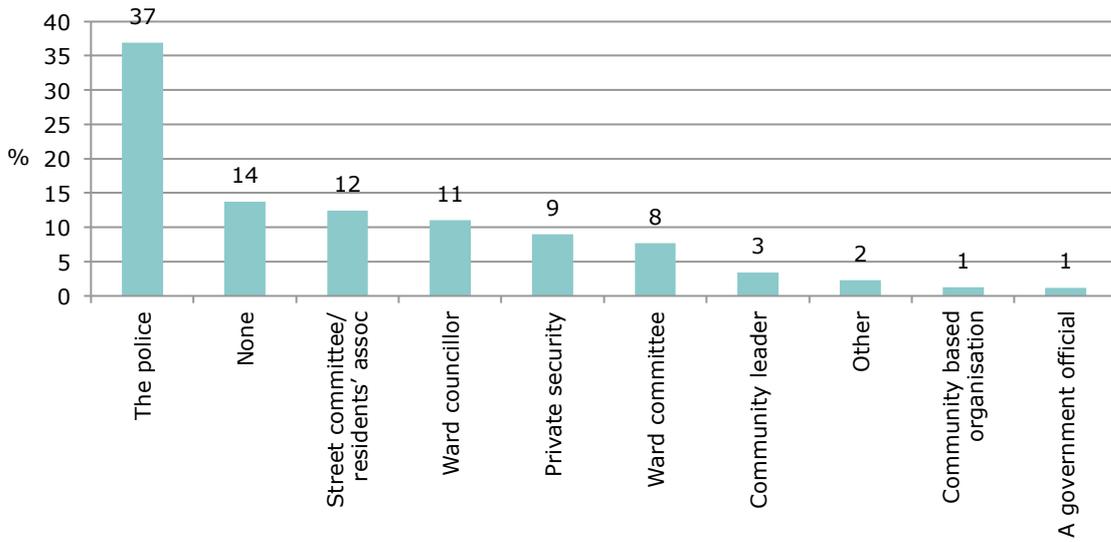
**Figure 5: Perceived improvement or deterioration in suburb / community in the past 12 months (by municipality).**



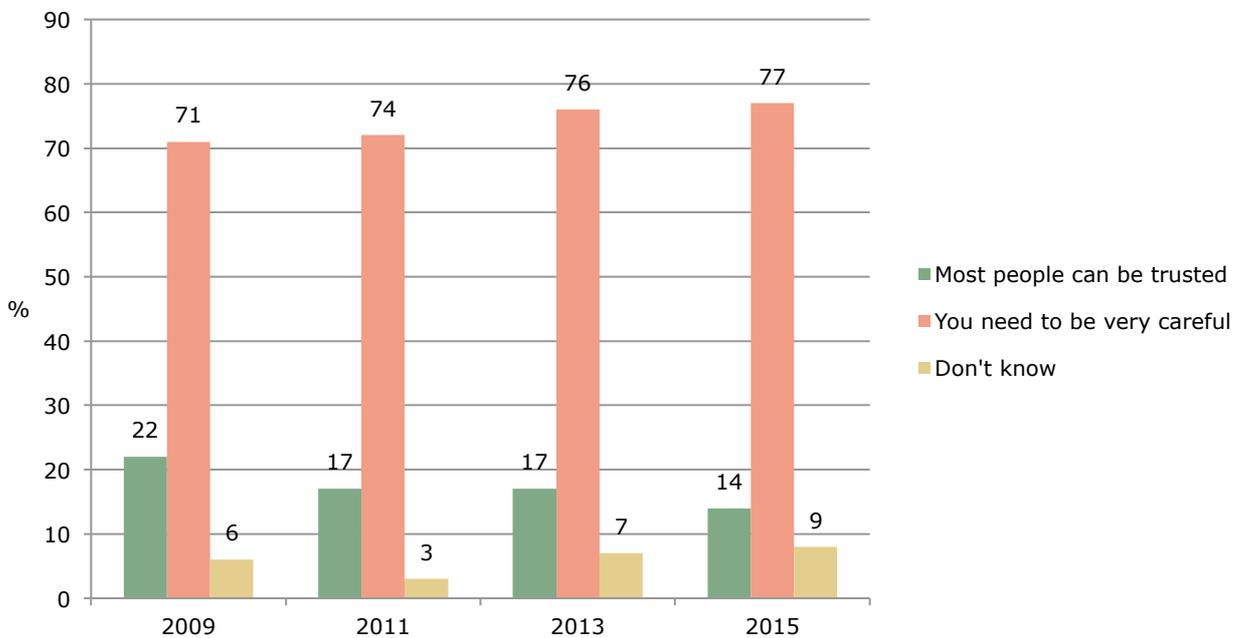
**Figure 6: What is the most important reason why you live in your suburb.** Across racial categories, 26% identified ‘affordability of property’. 20% said ‘always lived here’. 13% said ‘easy to get to work’. 12% said ‘my family lives nearby’. 6% named ‘independence’.



**Figure 7: What is the biggest problem facing your community?** For the first time ‘drugs’ features as the second most commonly cited problem. The ‘other’ column contains a variety of responses including ‘electricity’. Problems such as ‘child abuse’, ‘domestic violence’ and ‘vandalism’ were mentioned, but not commonly cited.



**Figure 8: If there is a problem in the area where you live, who do you talk to first to sort it out?** Very few respondents would first talk to the following groups to deal with problems: 'traditional leader/nduna', 'a political party', 'faith based organisation', 'the media', 'sangoma'.



**Figure 9: Levels of trust in community over time.**

#### OTHER RECENT RESEARCH IN THIS THEME:

- Clusters of dissatisfaction with local government performance (January 2016) by Koech Cheruiyot, GCRO Map of the Month
- Gauteng's changing urban footprint 1990-2013 (December 2015) by Dr Richard Ballard et al., GCRO Map of the Month
- Social isolation in the GCR (February 2015) by Guy Trangoš et al., GCRO Map of the Month
- What is the biggest problem facing your community (August 2015) by Kerry Bobbins, GCRO Map of the Month
- The location of planned mega housing projects in context (May 2015) by Dr Richard Ballard et al., GCRO Map of the Month

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