



Is South Africa's Public Service "User Friendly"?

While South Africa's government has invested substantial resources into the transformation, training and extension of the country's public service over the past decade, the reported ease with which the country's citizens access and interact with state officials has remained constant over the past four years. While most citizens say it is relatively trouble-free to obtain some public services, such as primary school education for their children or an identity document, many continue to report significant difficulties in other areas, most notably obtaining help from the police.

Moreover, significant – though smaller -- proportions of South Africans reported experienced requests for bribes, favors or gifts over the past year from police and other civil servants in order to receive services.

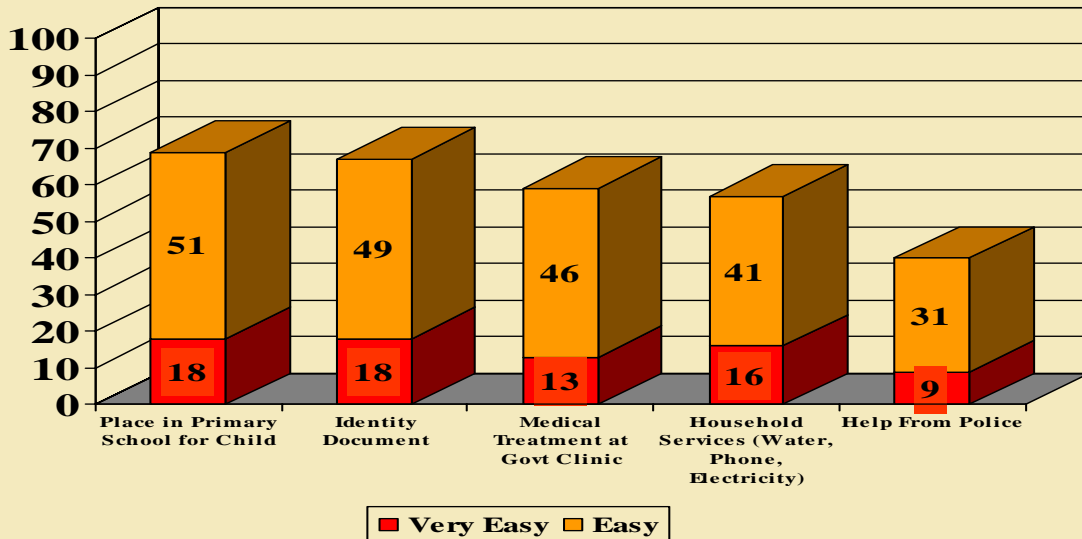
These findings were revealed by the recent Afrobarometer survey of a representative sample of 2,400 South Africans conducted in January and February 2006 by Citizen Surveys.

How Easy Is It to Work With Government Agencies in South Africa?

In order to measure the extent to which citizens can access and interact with the state across varying African contexts, we asked respondents how "easy" or "difficult" it is to obtain goods or services from a range of state agencies. In South Africa:

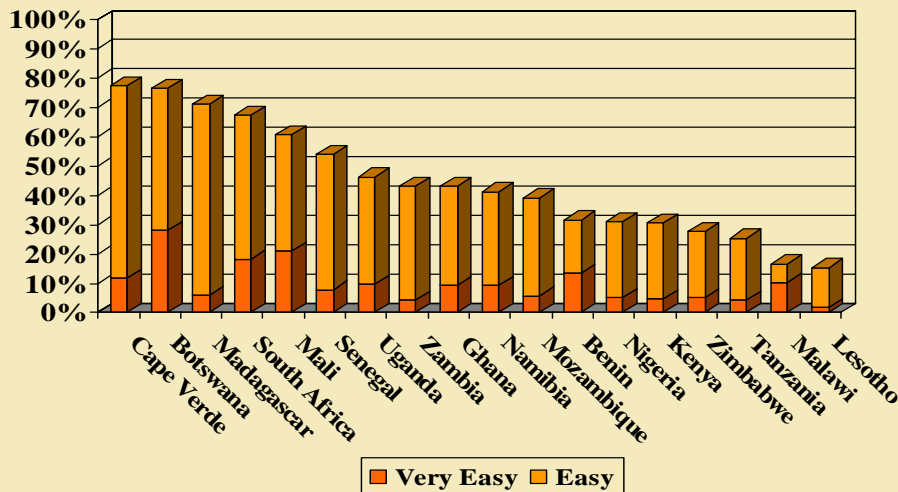
- Seven in ten say it is "easy" or "very easy" to find a **place in school** for their children (69 percent), or obtain an **identity document** (like a driver's license, ID or passport) from a government office (67 percent).
- Six in ten find it easy to get **medical treatment** at a state clinic (59 percent), or get a **household service** (like electricity, water, or phone service) from a government agency (57 percent).
- Yet just 40 percent of all adult South Africans say it easy to get **help from the police** when they need it.
- Rural dwellers were less likely than urban residents to find it easy to get household services (43 percent versus 66 percent), obtain documents (63 percent versus 70 percent) or report efficient interaction with the police (37 percent versus 43 percent). There were no differences with regard to medical treatment or places in primary school.
- Across all question items, respondents in Free State, Western Cape and Limpopo were most likely to have positive experiences with the public service, while respondents in KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape were most likely to have negative experiences.
- Reported ease of working with the police declined 8 percentage points since 2004 (48 percent), and finding a place in school dropped nine points since 2002.

Ease of Access to Public Services in SA

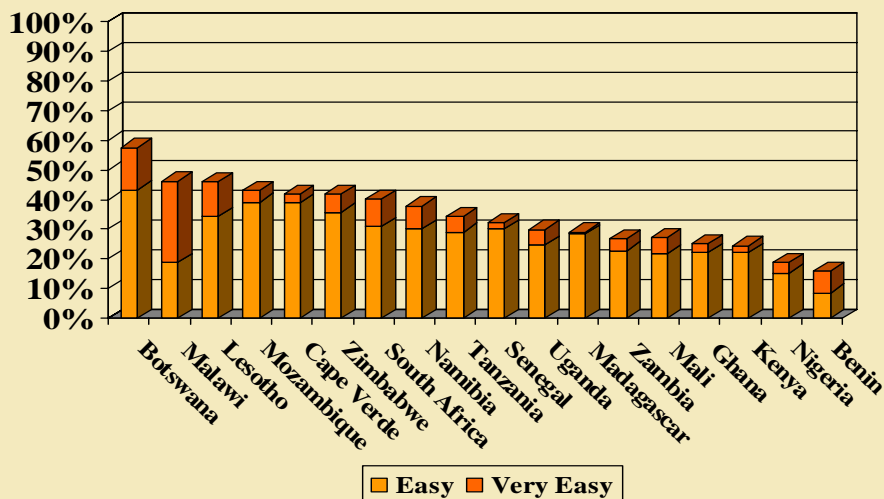


- While South Africa’s public service compares well with other African countries where Afrobarometer surveys are carried out, it does not outperform all of them. For instance, citizens in Cape Verde and Botswana are even more likely to say the can get documents with little hassle. And the police forces in several other countries, like Botswana, Malawi and Lesotho are seen to by their citizens as more user-friendly than the SAPS.

Ease in Obtaining Documents from State Across Africa



Ease in Obtaining Help From Police Across Africa

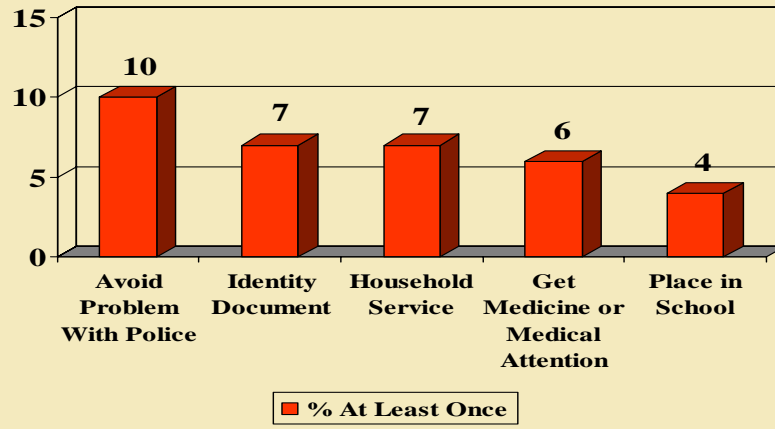


Victimization by State Officials

In a separate series of questions, we asked respondents “how often, if ever,” they “had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or perform some favor” to receive assistance from state officials in order to get what they wanted.

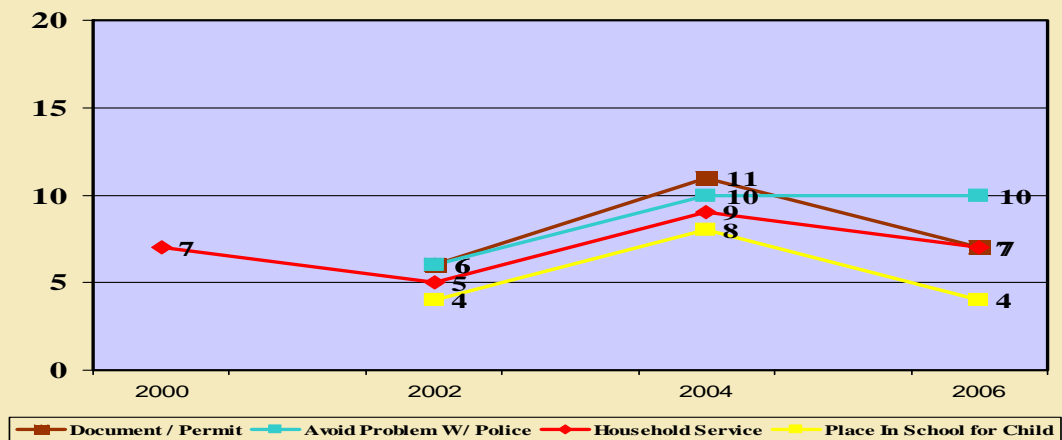
- One in ten South African (10 percent) say they were thus victimized at least once in the past year in order to **avoid a problem with the police**, like avoiding a fine or arrest.
- Seven percent report similar problems in obtaining an **identity document** or **household services**; 6 percent say they had to pay bribes or do favors to get **medical attention**, and 4 percent encountered these obstacles when trying to find **place in a school** for their child.
- The survey also shows that citizens are not only approached for bribes or favors by state officials. Five percent of respondents told us that they had been **offered food or a gift by a candidate or party** officials during the 2004 campaign in return for their vote.
- Respondents in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo were most likely to have been victimized in the past year, while those living in Free State, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape were least likely.

Victimization by State Officials



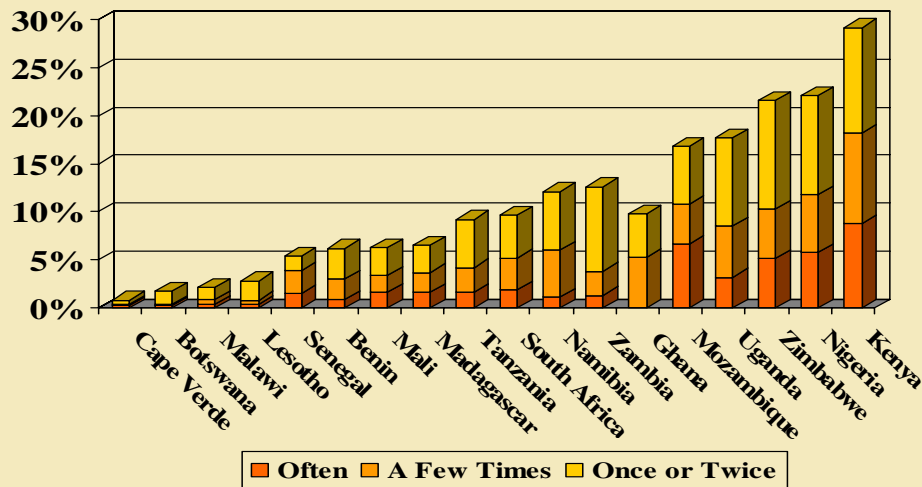
- There appear to have been significant decreases over the past two years in reported levels of victimization obtaining documents (11 percent to 7 percent) and placement in schools (8 percent to 4 percent): the four point decreases on both counts are just at the limit of our margin or error (plus or minus two percentage points for either survey, or four points between two surveys).

Victimization in South Africa



- As with ease of access, South Africans are victimized by state officials far less often than their counterparts in countries like Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Nigeria or Kenya. At the same time, Africans in Cape Verde, Botswana, Malawi or Lesotho report being victimized even less often than South Africans, suggesting that there is substantial room for improvement in the extent and quality of both the training of civil servants training as well as anti-corruption programs with the public service.

Victimization by Corruption Across Africa (Avoiding Problems With Police)



The Survey

Face to face interviews were conducted in the eleven official languages with a nationally representative, area probability sample of 2400 respondents across all nine provinces in January and February 2006. In the first stage of sampling, 600 Census Enumerator Areas (EAs) were randomly selected from a frame of all EAs, stratified by province and race, with the probability of selection proportionate to population size based on the most recent Statistics SA midyear 2005 population estimates. This ensures that every eligible adult has an equal and know chance of being selected. The realized sample was weighted by age, gender, race and province to ensure it matched current population estimates. In the second stage of sampling, four households were randomly selected within each EA. In the third and final stage, one South African citizen over the age of 18 was randomly from a list of all household members to be interviewed. The final sample size of 2,400 supports estimates to the national population of all adults that is accurate to within a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points at a confidence level of 95 percent.

Fieldwork for this survey was conducted by Citizen Surveys. For more information about Citizen Surveys, see www.citizensurvey.com or email them at info@citizensurvey.com.

Afrobarometer

The Afrobarometer is produced collaboratively by social scientists from 18 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and Michigan State University. For more information, see: www.afrobarometer.org.

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