



HAPPINESS ON ELECTION DAY

This is the sixth note in our series about South Africa's happiness. The other notes can be found [here](#).

As explained in the previous notes, Prof Talita Greyling and Dr Stephanié Rossouw developed the "Happiness Index (GNH)" based on sentiment analysis of the daily Tweets of South Africans, which they then apply to a sentiment balance algorithm to get a happiness score. Dawie Roodt, one of the leading economists in the country, assists in interpreting this data daily to understand the "mood" of the country and how it influences the economy.

Now that election day is over, we can tentatively report on the national happiness on election day. Here is what the GNH revealed about your happiness levels during election day.

Happiness at 08:00

You woke up refreshed and happy! Usually, the happy hour that is around 06:00 in the morning started much earlier and happiness levels were already surging at 03:00. We had an all-time high happiness level of 7.5 at 06:00 and you stayed very happy until 8:00, which was higher compared to the same time during all the previous days. This is wonderful news and by tonight we will know whether the international theory, happier people are more likely to vote, is indeed true for South Africa as well. By the way, as the happiness levels increase the rand's value follows.

Happiness at 11:00

The first dip of the day! After the high at 08:00, happiness started decreasing. We found this dip throughout the week as well. However, the initial surge in happiness seen early this morning lasted much longer than on a normal day and the happiness scores per hour were at a higher level than any time during the last week. So far, we are seeing higher levels of happiness compared hourly to previous days. Believe it or not, the rand has also been slipping somewhat, the same as happiness, during this time period! Coincidence? We think not. Although anecdotal at this point, we are starting to think that happiness levels in a country is a leading indicator, signalling what is to come in the economic indicators. As we keep on measuring the affected happiness daily, we will be able to test this relationship scientifically.

Happiness at 15:00

Happiness levels decreased somewhat further from 11:00 to a score of 6.42 at 13:00, the lowest for the day, but fortunately started to pick up again. At 15:00 the score was 6.91. Yeah! We gained significant ground again and this is also higher than compared to all the previous days during the same time. We have an early "happy hour" today! Fingers crossed; South Africans can keep this up through to the late afternoon...

Happiness at 21:00

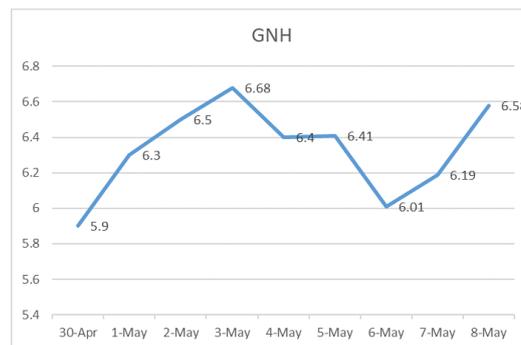
Alas, it was not meant to be... South Africans are experiencing a rollercoaster of emotions today. Happiness dropped off again at around 17:00 to a new low score of 6.04. This is also lower compared to other days. Here we go again! Fortunately, there is an unexpected, but welcomed, turnaround and your happiness increased to 6.5 by 20:00. This is also higher compared to previous days and the high held until just before 22:00. Then the energy of the day took its toll and happiness dropped to 5.34, lower than other days!



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Well done South Africa! You got there in the end. Even though election day is unique and invokes a rollercoaster of emotions, when you were happy, you were happier than any other day and you stayed much happier for much longer.

To help you put your “election day happiness” into perspective, the following graph shows you how South Africa’s happiness level has changed since 30 April. Election day was for sure a happier day than the days leading up to it.



What can explain this rollercoaster of emotions?

Well, not everything has gone as planned. Vuwani in Limpopo experienced voting disruptions late afternoon as residents clashed with police.

A deputy presiding officer at a voting station in Benoni, Johannesburg, was removed following an investigation into the transfer of special votes. A video showing a party agent assisting with the transfer of the special votes went viral on Monday, 6 May. And we all know that the handling of the electoral material by any party agent is prohibited.

The Western Cape was plagued by not enough voting ballots for people choosing to vote at voting stations where they were not registered, and the rain was primarily blamed for this situation.

Five hours into election day, the IEC announced that five voting stations were yet to open in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape due to community unrest. In the Eastern Cape, one voting station in Buffalo City and one in Ntabankulu, remained closed. While in KwaZulu-Natal, the IEC had been unable to open three voting stations in the Inkosi LangaLalibalele municipality, in the uThukela District. In Nelson Mandela Bay, 15 temporary stations had to be relocated due to inclement weather.

No surprise people’s happiness turned into frustration early morning and late afternoon again!

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On any technical queries related to the GNH, please contact Prof Talita Greyling.

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