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Chapter 1

Introduction: Evaluating Democracy and the 1999 Election in South Africa

YVONNE MUTHIEN

Since South Africa's first democratic election in 1994 the country witnessed a large-scale transformation from a racially exclusive apartheid regime to a democratic system premised on constitutionalism, the rule of law, the protection of individual and civil liberties, institutions of accountability, and the construction of a new state with both a transformation and developmental agenda. These gains can only be sustained and enhanced if elections are held regularly, in a free and fair manner, and within a legitimate electoral and political system. South Africa embarked on the road of sustaining and enhancing its democracy by holding its first follow-up election in 1999. The election also created the opportunity to measure the extent of democratic consolidation to date by gauging public perceptions of and citizen participation in democratic institutions.

Election studies generally elicit a variety of debates on public participation, political socialisation, shifting patterns of political support and the socioeconomic underpinnings of voting behaviour and party performance.¹ These debates produce varying foci on electoral politics, ranging from sociological insights into the nature of party systems, to the socio-psychological explanations of attachment to political parties and the forging of political identities, to economic analyses of democratic stability and economic discontent.

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has since 1994 conducted a series of longitudinal surveys on a bi-annual basis to test shifting patterns of support and perceptions of social issues and democracy. These surveys are conducted on a randomly stratified national representative sample of 2 200 adults. The surveys test public perceptions of national priority issues, government performance, economic policy, service delivery, the state of democratisation, as well as party-political support.

In addition to the longitudinal surveys the HSRC also conducts election studies. The 1999 election presented the HSRC with a number of opportunities; first, to assist the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to ascertain the number of potential voters in possession of a bar-coded identity document for the purposes of election planning (see Chapter 3); second, to measure the shift in public perceptions and support in the run-up to the election; and third, to conduct the first ever exit poll, evaluating the freeness and fairness of the election as well as the efficiency of the electoral machinery (see Chapters 4-7).

This volume draws together the results of all this work. Chapter 2 examines the extent of democratic consolidation on the eve of the election, through the prism of public perceptions. The chapter examines a number of key indicators of democratic consolidation including public support for democracy, public optimism about the future, deracialisation, gender equality and the strength of civil society.

Chapter 3 outlines the research conducted on the electoral machinery. It examines the extent to which the IEC was able to establish itself as a credible institution and the availability of green bar-coded identity documents a year before the 1999 election as well as on the eve of the election. The chapter further explores whether the requirement that each voter should be in possession of a green bar-coded identity document in order to vote would inhibit voter participation in the election.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the first ever exit poll to be conducted in South Africa, as well as critically examining the methodology and constraints of such polls. Exit polls were prohibited during the 1994 election. The HSRC exit poll was conducted at 214 voting stations, distributed across all provinces, stratified by metropolitan, urban and rural location, and yielded 11 140 respondents. The age, gender, race and educational distribution of the sample produced interesting results.

In Chapter 5 the author presents fieldworkers' observations on election day. A total of 211 fieldworkers completed a questionnaire on their impressions which complemented the perspectives

of the voters, because the fieldworkers were stationed at the voting stations for the duration of the day.

Chapter 6 discusses the views of political parties towards various key policy and electoral machinery issues, including voter registration, voter education and state funding for political parties for election campaigning. Senior figures in each political party were interviewed after the election to elicit their views on these issues. A key component of the interviews was their perceptions of and comments on the IEC's role in guiding the country towards election day on 2 June 1999. Besides political parties, IEC personnel at national, provincial and local levels were also interviewed.

In Chapter 7 the author presents the findings of an HSRC election study based on workshops and focus group discussions held throughout South Africa during July 1999. The aim was to assess the voting public's perception of the efficiency of the electoral process, voter education, voter registration as well as voting and vote counting.

In Chapter 8 the author examines the outcome of the election, compares the levels of voter participation in the 1994 and the 1999 elections and discusses the support for each political party. The chapter also explores electoral geography and issue opinion, as well as the party supporter profiles of the 1999 election.

Chapter 9 attempts to outline some strengths and weaknesses of the 1999 election as well as their potential policy implications. It reflects on the processes of voter education, registration, staffing, voting and electoral funding, and proposes nine policy guidelines emanating from the HSRC team study.

In producing this volume the HSRC has attempted to contribute to the literature on elections research in South Africa. We hope that the volume will be useful as it captures a historical moment in South Africa's path to democracy.

Acknowledgements

This product of the HSRC's election research is the result of a sterling team effort. My thanks are extended to the Democracy SA team: Meshack Khosa, Johan Olivier, Stephen Rule, Richard Humphries, Ian Hirschfeld and Michael O'Donovan for their contribution to the success of our elections research projects as well as to this volume. Thanks should also be extended to Heston Phillips, Johan van Zyl, Tony Emmett, Gerard Hagg and Nontando Mvunyiswa for their assistance during field research.

A special note of gratitude must be extended to our support staff, Martie Boesenberg, Berta Wheeler, Ina Stahmer, Annemarie Booyens and Elsa Kruger, for their dedication and capable assistance in preparing this publication. Further thanks are due to Anneke Jordaan, Tim Stewart, Gina Weir-Smith, Monica Peret, Jacques Pietersen, Helene van Wyngaard and Marise Swardt for their technical assistance on the project. A special word of thanks is also due to Ren Yssel of Corporate Communications for her enthusiastic support of the project and professional liaison with the media, as well as our publisher, Renette Keet, for her professional support and assistance with this publication.

The Democracy South Africa research team also extends its gratitude to Steve Godfrey for his commitment and sterling support of the project at a critical stage in the pre-election period. The HSRC wishes to acknowledge the generous support of especially the Department for International Development (DFID – UK) and the CWCI Fund of the European Union, as well as the co-operation of the Independent Electoral Commission in the execution of the exit poll.

Note

- ¹ Crewe, I. 1994; "Voters, Parties and Leaders Thirty Years on: Western Electoral Studies and the New Democracies of Eastern Europe". In: Budge, I. & McKay, D. *Developing Democracy*. London: Sage.

Chapter 2

Democratic Consolidation in South Africa, 1994-1999

YVONNE MUTHIEN

Introduction

Democratic consolidation presupposes the holding of free and fair elections because such elections enable political parties to exercise legitimate authority and citizens to obtain protection by the rule of law. Democratic consolidation also presupposes a robust civil society that recognises the diversity/plurality of interests, the richness of associational life, the protection of individual freedoms and equality before the law.¹

South Africa's fledgling democracy delivered the franchise to the majority, previously disenfranchised citizens. The 1994 democratic election ushered South Africa into an era of democracy that set the following key pillars of democratic consolidation in place:

- a functioning multi-party parliamentary system with election processes that are considered to be procedural and substantially free and fair;
- a prevailing sense of constitutionalism and of the rule of law, supported by institutions that buttress democracy, including the Constitutional Court, the Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality, the Auditor-General, the Public Service Commission and the Public Protector;
- mechanisms of accountability, such as the Open Democracy Act, which enshrine the right to public information, force government to be more transparent and expose acts of corruption among public officials, grounded on a constitution that enshrines the values of good governance and sound administration in public affairs;
- a professional civil service functioning on the basis of constitutional values, including impartiality, dedication to service delivery and fiscal accountability;
- mechanisms for citizen participation, including public hearings of parliamentary committees and public participation in public policy-making processes;
- an integrated and highly developed economic infrastructure with considerable potential for economic prosperity.

The 1999 democratic election took place amid large-scale societal transformation and reform and represented the first major opportunity to measure the extent of democratic consolidation in South Africa.²

This chapter examines key indicators of democratic consolidation as measured in longitudinal studies by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), as a backdrop to the evaluation of the second democratic election in South Africa. These indicators are:

- Support for Democracy
- Race and Democracy
- Engendering Democracy
- Strength of Civil Society

The results presented in the chapter have been derived from the December 1998 and March 1999 public opinion surveys. HSRC public opinion surveys are conducted bi-annually on a randomly stratified, national representative sample of 2 200 adults. Although the results of such surveys

should be approached with caution, they can serve as a *barometer* to policy makers of citizen needs and aspirations when the surveys have been conducted in an *impartial* manner. In addition, the dissemination of the results can assist in creating an *informed public*, which enhances democratic participation.³

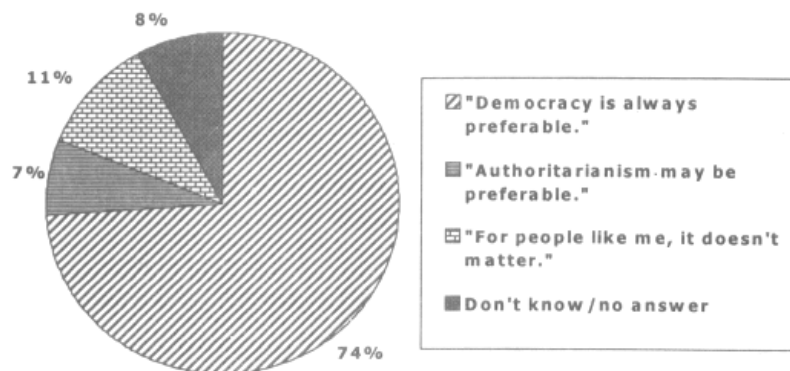
Support for Democracy

The sustainability of democratic systems cannot be taken for granted. Robert Dahl points out that the number of democracies increased from 21 in 1950 to 51 in 1996, with 30 countries achieving democratic status between 1993 and 1996. However, between 1900 and 1985, non-democratic governments replaced democratic governments 52 times.⁴ An estimate of the extent of continued support for democracy can therefore inform decision making in the interest of democratic consolidation.

Institutionalisation of Democracy

The March 1999 HSRC survey indicated that 74% of South Africans supported democracy, while only 7% supported authoritarianism. In addition, it indicated significant support for democratically elected institutions (Figure 2.1). Of the respondents, 48% indicated that they would vote for other representatives as a means to express their dissatisfaction with government and 28% indicated that they would petition the relevant authorities, while only 10% indicated that they would resort to violent means.

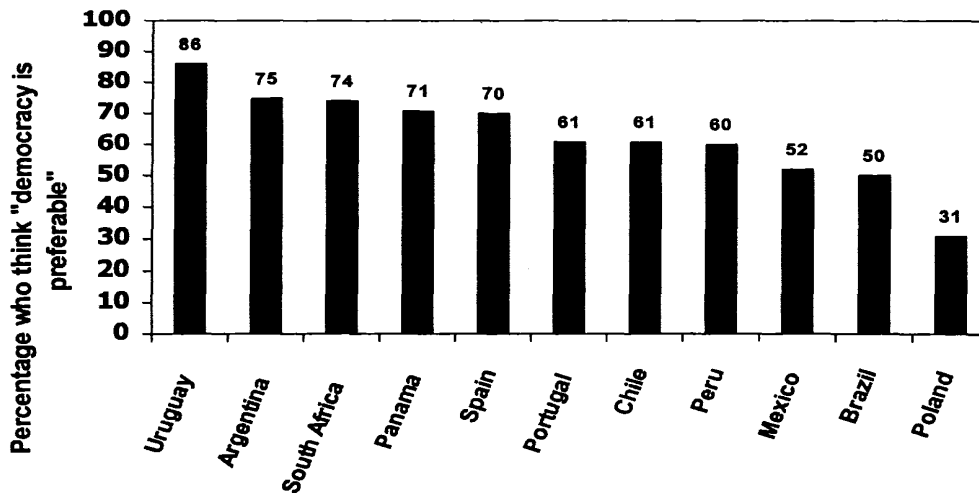
Figure 2.1: Public support for democracy in South Africa, Dec.1998



International Comparison

In comparing support for democracy among middle-income countries that underwent similar democratic transitions, especially since the 1980s, South Africa with its 74% support for democracy ranks the third highest. Uruguay rates first with a significantly high support for democracy of 86%. Brazil, with a socio-economic profile similar to South Africa's, shows only 50% support for democracy, while Poland, a more recently established democracy, shows a low support of 31 % (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Public support far democracy in international perspective



Optimism about Future Democracy

The sustainability of democracy also depends on the degree to which democratic states are perceived to be able to improve the material wellbeing of their citizens.

Public expectations of future economic prospects in South Africa revealed interesting patterns according to HSRC surveys. Public optimism by income group indicated that the richest 20% of the population were pessimistic, while the middle and low-income groups were optimistic. Although the poorest and second poorest groups fell below the poverty line, they remained optimistic. The second poorest group showed the highest level of optimism, at 43%. This group probably benefited most from improved service delivery (Figure 2:3).

Figure 2.3 Public optimism about five-year economic prospects, December 1998



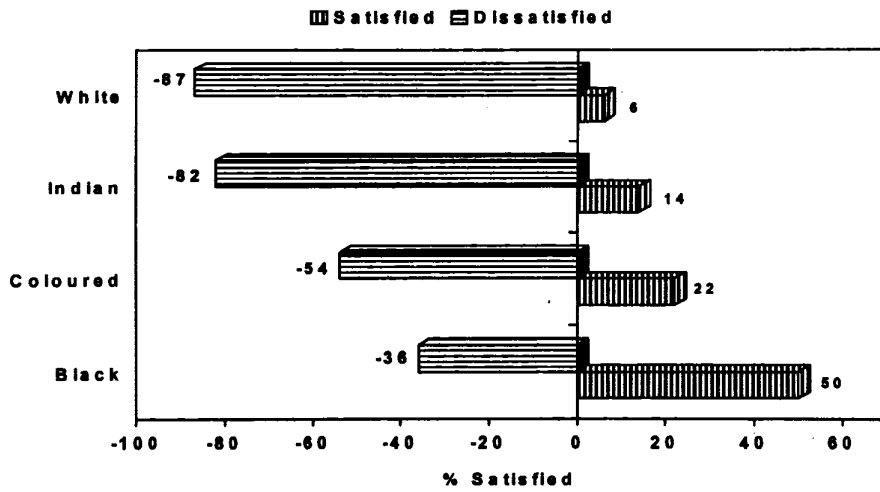
The continuation of inequality and material deprivation in the democratic South Africa prompts one to revisit current debates on state-civil society relations, in particular in respect of economic democracy. The imperatives of development in highly unequal societies demand a strong and extended democratic state that is committed to a clear development trajectory - a notion that rests somewhat uncomfortably with the values of a liberal democracy.⁵

Race and Democracy

South Africa has emerged from a racialised history in which access to material wealth, basic opportunities and services, and degrees of human dignity were defined by one's skin colour/racial classification. The effect of this history is reflected in public attitudes to key national issues.

The March 1999 HSRC survey indicated that small proportions of the minority groups (the Indians, coloureds and whites) were satisfied with government performance, while 50% of blacks were satisfied (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Satisfaction with the way SA is governed, by population group



Trust in government was similarly divided along racial lines. The proportions of the minority groups that had trust in the government were much smaller than the comparable proportion of blacks (60%) (Figure 2.5).

The traditional support base of various political parties also revealed historical racial patterns. For example, the African National Congress support came overwhelmingly from black respondents, while the Democratic Party largely drew support from white respondents (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.5 Trust in the national government, by population group

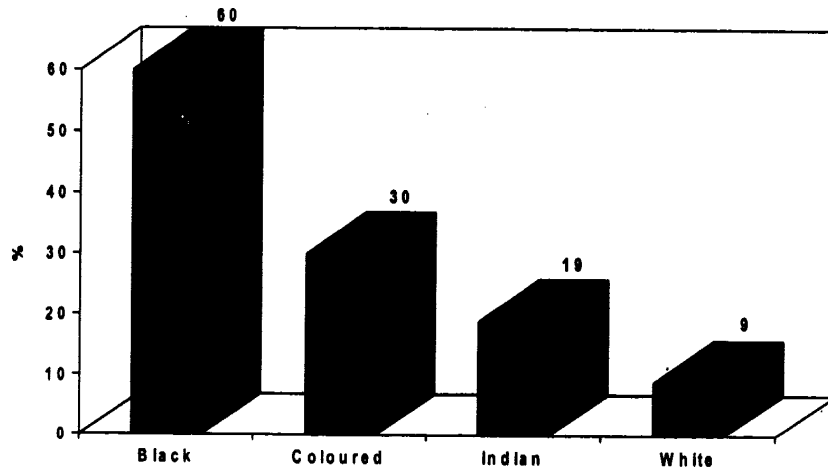
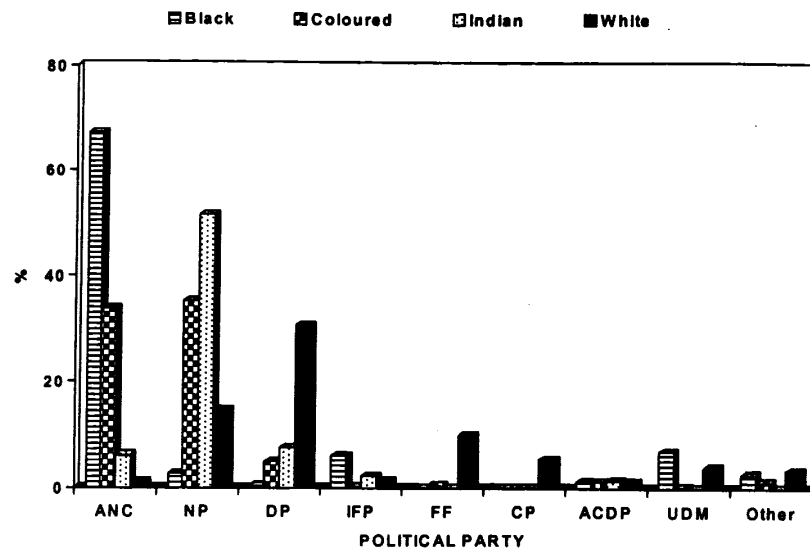


Figure 2.6: Party support, by population group



However, interesting shifts occurred since 1994. In the case of the New National Party, coloured support eclipsed the traditional white Afrikaner support in the 1994 election, and Indian support in turn eclipsed coloured support in the 1999 election. In the 1999 election coloured support was roughly equally divided between the African National congress and the New National Party. Thus the traditional racial support base of political parties has begun to shift.

Further interesting shifts were revealed in the social identity and social movement studies conducted by the HSRC. These studies revealed that class factors or socio-economic status was an increasingly important determinant of satisfaction with living standards, employment, housing, citizen safety, health care delivery and government performance. A composite score of satisfaction levels indicated that, as living standards increased, levels of dissatisfaction declined, irrespective of race.

According to Habermas,⁶ democracy requires the co-ordination of divergent interests in society and the creation of solidarity among citizens. Although all identities are complex, multiple and heterogeneous by nature, historical patterns of polarisation around race, language, etc. can solidify group identities. A democratic culture thus has to symbolise politics of difference, recognition and inclusion.

Given the continued racial inequality in access to opportunities and material well being, the poverty and destitution of the black majority of the population constitute the single greatest threat to democracy. Consequently the critical challenge is to deracialise our society in material terms, to alter the traditional patterns of racial identification, and to create a society where merit, human capacity and equality of opportunity, rather than skin colour, mirror the human dignity of the individual. For as long as race coincides with inequality, democracy cannot flourish. Against this background the 1999 election presented a fundamental challenge to all political parties not to reproduce racial stereotypes and fan racial fears and hatred in order, to pocket a few cheap votes. Meeting this challenge would indeed attest to democratic maturity.

Engendering democracy

A vast body of feminist literature⁷ has examined the construction of nationalism and democracy and has found them to be inherently gendered when considering the naturalised roles of women as the biological producers of the nation, women's roles in the cultural and civil construction of nationhood, as well as the construction of citizenship. Because the notions of nationalism and the nation-state are socially constructed, differential access to power, material wellbeing, resources and public institutions becomes the central question in the analysis of the gendered nature of democracy.

Given that women constitute the majority of the registered voting population in South Africa, their votes are clearly sought after. But do political parties know what women want? The results of the March 1999 HSRC opinion survey indicated that women strongly emphasised equality and representation by women. Women's priorities in order of preference were (Figure 2.7):

- equality in decision making
- family welfare
- education
- women's rights
- job opportunities
- personal safety

When men were asked what they thought women's priorities were, most men cited the following (Figure 2.7);

- equality in decision making
- family welfare
- crime prevention

Women's demands for education and job opportunities received a lower priority amongst men than women, and most men did not regard women's concerns about personal safety as a priority at the time of the survey.⁸

In testing the support for greater representation by women, the HSRC survey produced interesting results. The majority of blacks supported the institution of quotas for men and women in parliament. The vast majority of Indians supported this, but only a minority of whites did. A gender breakdown revealed that more Indian men (82%) than Indian women (74%) supported quotas, while only a minority of white males (18%) did so (Figure 2.8).⁹

The results of this survey clearly have implications for decision making in government and policy institutions. The demand for gender equality has not declined, notwithstanding the gains made through the achievement of formal constitutional rights to gender equality and the establishment of gender advocacy institutions, such as the Commission for Gender Equality, the Office for the Status of Women in the President's Office and the parliamentary Joint Monitoring Committee on Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women.

Figure 2.7: The most important priorities for women, by gender

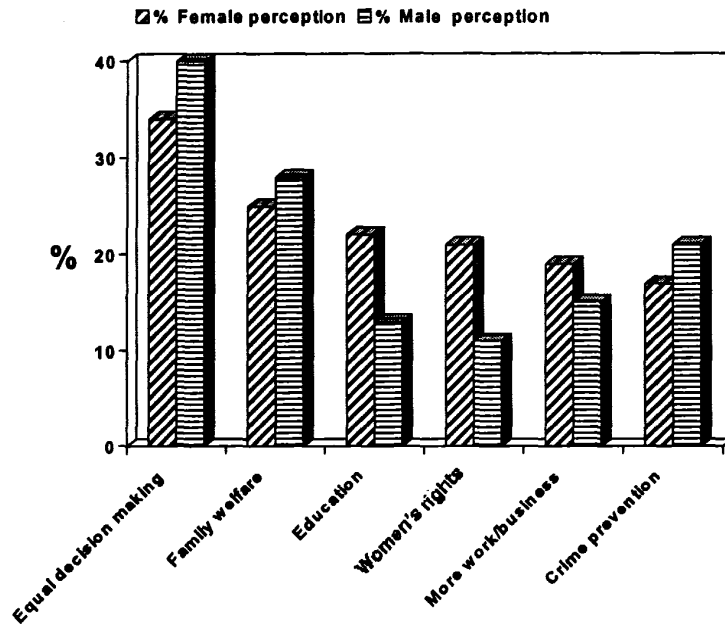
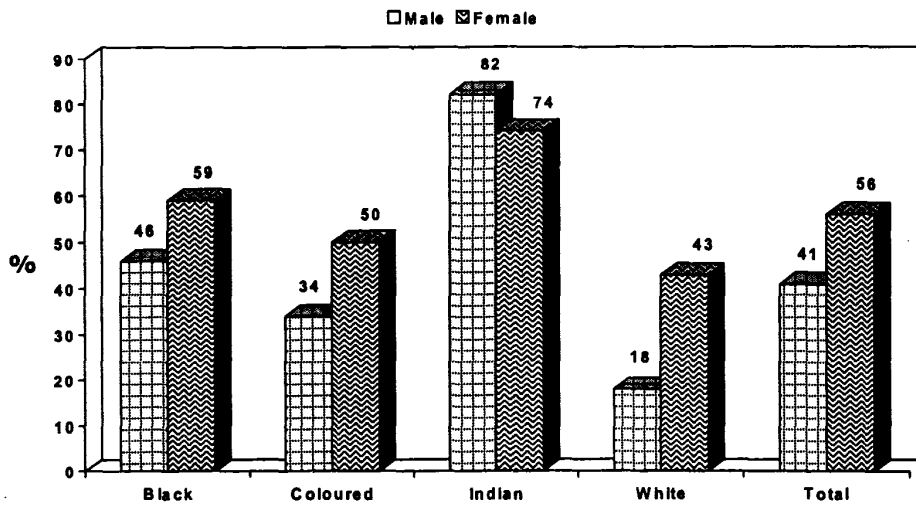


Figure 2.8: Quota for women on party lists, by gender and pop. Group



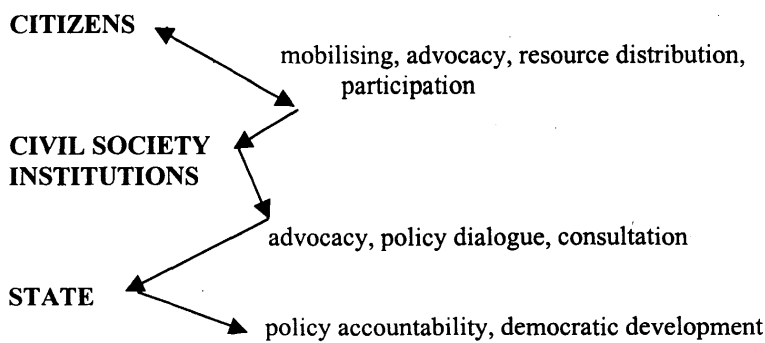
Feminist analyses have centred gender relations in social policy making by examining patterns of social provision in the sphere of state-market-family relations, gender differentiation in access to employment and service or benefit opportunities, as well as women's ability to generate income and thereby secure the material wellbeing of their households.¹⁰ The results of these analyses and the priorities identified by women respondents to the HSRC survey thus serve as pointers in setting national priorities.

Strength of Civil Society

The debates on civil society and the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) over the last decade have elicited polar, at times antagonistic, relations between the state and civil society. Emanating from the neo-Gramscian literature of the 1980s, the state was perceived as a 'hegemony protected by the armour of coercion', and civil society as the bearer of democratisation and the

agent of setting limits on state power. As such, a robust civil society constitutes an essential pillar of a mature liberal democracy. In addition, as the agents of civil society, NGOs are viewed as the representatives of diverse and sectoral interest groups that enhance access to and public participation in public institutions and processes.¹¹

Current debates stress the importance of robust institutions of civil society in generating good governance and economic growth. The social constructionist view asks not only about the nature of the state, but also about class, development and societal context, as well as the fabric of civic culture and state-civil society relations.¹² The nexus of state-civil society relations can be graphically demonstrated as follows:

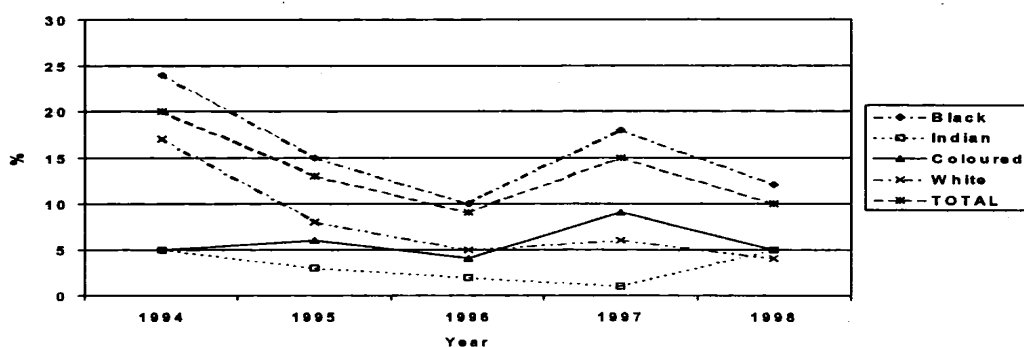


The election to power of South Africa's first democratic government in 1994 had significant implications not only for state-civil society relations, but also for civil society itself. Informed by the social movement literature, the expectation was that civil society would enter a period of demobilisation. Because the goal of establishing a democracy was attained, so the argument went, there was no need for the high levels of mobilisation that characterised much of civil society during the 1980s and early 1990s.

In order to trace trends in organisational involvement in boosting democracy, the HSRC's research programme on social movements conducted annual surveys since March 1994. The five surveys to date were conducted at the same time of the year among a countrywide sample of about 2 200 respondents.¹³

Membership of political parties, civics, unions, women's organisations and stokvels¹⁴ was investigated. The results are reported in Figure 2.9. The percentages indicate the level of active membership and/or official leadership in these organisations. A number of trends are evident.

Figure 2.9: Active membership of political parties since 1994



Membership of political parties decreased significantly since 1994. About one in five of the respondents were active members of a political party shortly before the founding 1994 election.

This proportion decreased overall to one in ten in March 1998. The high level of engagement in the run-up to the 1994 election explains much of this. Active membership of political parties was highest among African respondents (24%), followed by whites (17%), and then coloureds and Indians (about 5% each) (Figure 2.9)

The downward trend clearly suggests that South Africans are disengaging from active party political membership. This is most evident among white South Africans whose active membership decreased from 17% in 1994 to 4% in 1998. Active membership among black respondents decreased from its high of 24% in 1994 to 13% in 1998 (Figure 2.9). It is clear that white South Africans have disengaged much more from active party politics than other South Africans. This trend could be explained by their loss of political power as a group and the lack of a strong opposition.

The new democracy depleted the leadership of civil society organisations.. Nevertheless, participation in women's, youth and civic organisations. increased. Moreover, stokvels/savings societies showed a significant increase in participation, which reveals a revival of the entrepreneurial spirit in black communities (Figure 2.10).

Membership of those organisations. most active during the struggle for democracy, i.e. unions and civics, remained fairly constant between 1994 and 1998. This clearly suggests that overall there has been little demobilisation in South African civil society since 1994.

The extent to which supporters of political parties, unions and civics were prepared to engage in protest activities to advance their concerns was also analysed. Two interesting dynamics emerged. First, supporters of political parties and unions were less prepared to engage in protest activities than supporters of, for example, civics. Second, active members of these organisations. were much more prepared than passive or non-members to engage in protest activities.¹⁵ Overall, organisational involvement seems to have become an important mobiliser of protest against pressing social problems.

An important indicator of democratic consolidation is the measure of trust in civil society institutions. The HSRC surveys revealed that trust in civil society institutions was generally high. Labour unions and political parties were the exceptions. Interestingly, trust in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) exceeded trust in the police and the courts (Table 2.1).

Generally, trust in the Independent Electoral Commission to deliver free and fair elections was also quite high - 63%(see Chapter 3).

Figure 2.10: Organisational involvement:1994-1998

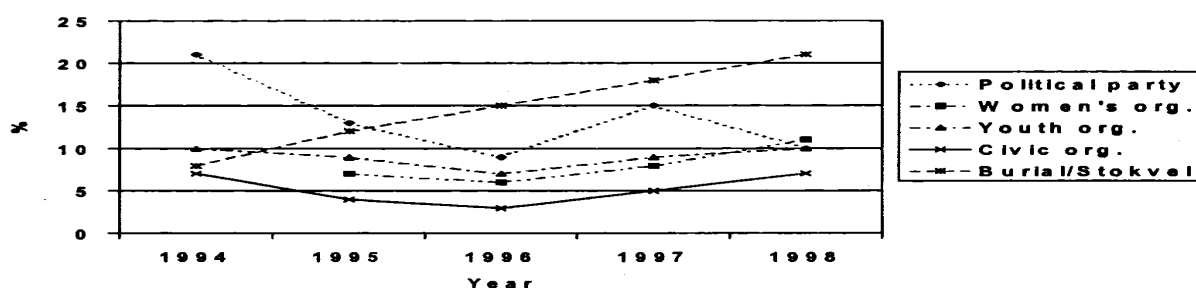


Table 2.1: Trust in civil society institutions

organisations./Institutions	Trust	Distrust
Media	59	21
Business	54	25
Churches	73	9
Labour unions	28	39
Political parties	29	51
Courts	40	44
Police	41	44
Defence Force	46	35

CONCLUSION

The potential threats to the second democratic election were racial politicking and reproducing racial stereotypes, fanning racial hatred, and fear and intolerance, especially through subliminal advertising; reproducing the deep divisions of the past through violence and intimidation; and irregularities at the ballot box. The positive indicators that augured well for the election included the existence of a robust civil society; high levels of participation in the electoral system through high levels of voter registration and voter turnout; greater realism about the pace of delivery and change; and confidence in the electoral machinery to ensure a free and fair election.

Given the scale of operations, the tight time frames and lack of experience, the first democratic election was an extraordinary feat of human resolve, dedication and bold spirit, borne out of the passion to deliver freedom, justice and democracy to the entire nation.

The second democratic election took place after five years of momentous changes in South Africa, of bold experimentation in transformation and of profound dealing with the atrocities of the past, all with the hope of accelerating the restoration of human dignity, respect for human rights and tolerance of diversity.

South Africa has a legacy of brutal repression and institutionalised state violence, systematic impoverishment and social deprivation, alongside a fierce and victorious passion for justice, equality and democracy, borne out of the longest liberation struggle in the world. Thus the new state contains both the seeds of repression and the seeds of democratic maturity. The key pillars of a formal democracy, embedded in the twin imperatives of transformation and development, are in place, but the sustainability of democratic behaviour is not guaranteed. South Africa has made a good start.

Notes

- 1 Budge, I. & McKay, D. 1994. *Developing Democracy*. London: Sage; Dahl, R. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Linz, J. & Stepan, A. 1996. "Toward Consolidated Democracies". *Journal of Democracy*, 2(7), April.

- 2 Johnson, R. & Schlemmer, L.A. 1996. *Launching Democracy in South Africa: The First Open Election, April 1994*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Southall, R. 1999. "The 1999 Elections: Consolidating Democracy or Foreshadowing Decline?". *Indicator*, 16(1).
- 3 Rule, S. 1999. Democracy SA: Public Opinion on National Priority Issues. *Election '99*. Pretoria: HSRC.
- 4 Dahl, R. 1998. *On Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Benhabib, S. 1996. *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 5 Glassman J. & Samatar, A. 1999. "Development Geography and the Third World State", *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(2); White, G. 1995. "Towards a Democratic Development State", *IDS Bulletin*, 26(2).
- 6 Habermas, J. 1996. "Three Normative Models of Democracy". In: Benhabib, S. *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 7 Benhabib, S. 1996. *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Shanley, M. & Narayan, U. 1997. *Restructuring Political Theory: Feminist Perspectives*, Oxford: Polity Press; Yuval-Davis, N. 1997. *Gender & Nation*. London: Sage.
- 8 Given the accomplishment of instituting a democracy in South Africa, it remains an indictment on our society that women and children are increasingly preyed upon and their personal safety and dignity violated. Therefore, in order to achieve democratic maturity in this country, society will have to accept responsibility for restoring the human dignity of women and children.
- 9 The African National Congress pursues a quota policy of 30% representation by women in parliament, but opposition parties have not followed suit.
- 10 Muthien, Y. 1999. "Race and Gender Inequalities in Public Administration." In: Wessels, J. & Pauw, J. *Reflective Public Administration*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- 11 Muthien, Y. & Olivier, J. 2000. "The State and Civil Society; Implications for Democracy in South Africa", *S A Review*, 8, Pretoria: HSRC; Markoff, T. 1997. "Really Existing Democracy: Learning from Latin America in the late 1990s", *New Left Review*, no. 223, May/June; Sagasti, F. et al. 1997. "Democratisation, Modernisation, and Legitimation: The Case of Peru", *UNISA Latin America Report*, 13(1), Jan-June; Liebenberg, I. 1997. "Consolidation of Democracy in Africa: Inhibitors on Civil Society", *African Security Review*, 6(4).
- 12 Putnam, R. 1993. *Making Democracy: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Evans, P. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States & Industrial Transformation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press; Tendler, J. 1997. *Good Government in the Tropics*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press; Samatar, A. 1999. *An African Miracle: State and Class Leadership and Colonial legacy in Botswana Development*, Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- 13 Muthien, Y. & Olivier, J. 2000. "The State and Civil Society: Implications for Democracy in South Africa", *S A Review* 8, Pretoria: HSRC.
- 14 Stokvels are savings clubs where members rotate access to the money among its members on say a monthly basis (see for example White, C. 1998. Democratic Societies? Voluntary Association and Democratic Culture in a South African Township, *Transformation*, 36:1-36; Muthien, Y. & Olivier, J. 1999, The State and Civil Society: Implications for Democracy in South Africa, *S A Review* 8, Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- 15 Roefs, J., Klandermans, B. & Olivier, J. 1998. "Demobilisation of the Movement: Transition from Authoritarian Rule to Democracy". Paper presented at the Workshop on Social Movements in South Africa, November, Pretoria: HSRC.

Chapter 3

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC): The Quest for Free and Fair Elections

JOHAN OLIVIER

Introduction

With the founding election of April 1994 South Africans took the first but all-important step towards establishing democratic rule in South Africa. While elections in themselves do not guarantee democracy, they remain one of the key requirements for this system of government. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) - responsible for the administration of the 1994 election - was a temporary body that came into being about six months before the election was scheduled to take place. This was the first time that elections in South Africa were administered by an "independent" body.

Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) makes provision for the establishment of a number of independent and permanent bodies responsible for overseeing key democratic activities. The Independent Electoral Commission is one such body and has been entrusted with the legal responsibility of giving effect to the following provisions in the bill of rights: "Every citizen has the right to free, fair, and regular elections for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution" and "Every adult citizen has the right ... to vote in elections for any legislative body established in terms of the Constitution ..." (Sections 19(2) & 3(a)).

The IEC, established under the abovementioned constitutional provisions, began operating during the middle of 1998 - about a year before South Africa's second democratic election. During this period the IEC had to establish itself as a credible institution and to put in place a range of mechanisms to ensure a free and fair election. One such mechanism was South Africa's first common voters' roll.

The drafters of the Electoral Act (No. 73 of 1998) considered the requirement that all voters should be in possession of a green bar-coded South African identity document (ID) in order to register as voters. Since there was uncertainty about the number of potential voters who were in possession of this document at the time, the IEC and the Department of Home Affairs requested the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) towards the middle of May 1998 to conduct a study into the matter. The study had to determine the extent to which potential voters were in possession of the various forms of South African identity documents. The results would then influence a final decision on the matter.

To what extent was the IEC able to establish itself as a credible independent institution? What was the extent of possession of green bar-coded IDs one year before the 1999 election and how did this situation change shortly before the election? Was the requirement that every voter should be in possession of a green bar-coded ID in order to vote ultimately a factor that inhibited voter participation in the election? These are the questions we will attempt to answer in this chapter.

We begin the chapter with a review of the survey results on IDs, and then turn our attention to public perceptions of the IEC. In the concluding section we consider whether the requirement for a green bar-coded ID inhibited voter participation.

Enabling Document

This section provides some of the key results of the HSRC's survey on the extent of possession of various IDs in July 1998. We will also refer to the results of a similar survey, albeit based on a smaller sample, conducted by the HSRC during February-March 1999. The more recent survey provided an update on the situation three months before the election.

Research Methodology

The type of information requested by the IEC called for a countrywide quantitative survey involving face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of respondents. This procedure required the development of a questionnaire as a measuring instrument.

The more or less 40 000 enumerator areas (EAs), demarcated by the Central Statistical Service for the 1996 census, served as the primary sampling units. In total, 926 EAs were sampled. Some 891 of the 926 sampled EAs were surveyed during the study. Thirty-five enumerator areas could thus not be accessed. This was due to refusals, inadequate information on the location of the EA or inaccessibility of the area.

Within each EA, ten visiting points were randomly selected in a systematic way. Every person 17 years and older, irrespective of the number of households at a visiting point, had to be interviewed. In total, 9 859 households were visited and 23 577 individuals 17 years and older interviewed. The results were subsequently weighted to make them nationally representative.

Results

Voting intention

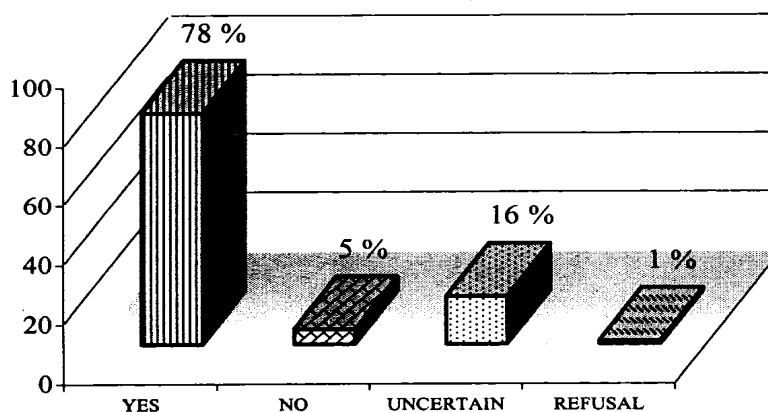
To obtain an indication of the number of voters who would require identity documents for voting purposes, the respondents were asked whether they had been born in South Africa. The vast majority of respondents (98%) answered in the affirmative. Among the subset of approximately two per cent of the respondents who had not been born in South Africa, the majority (84%) indicated that they were South African citizens.

Before we discuss the actual number and type of identity documents in the possession of the sample population, we need to look at the intention to vote among this group of individuals. All the respondents, irrespective of whether or not they had IDs, were asked to indicate whether they intended to vote in the 1999 election. The responses were noteworthy - firstly because of the relatively low level of refusals to answer (0,8%), and secondly because roughly three-quarters (78%) of the respondents clearly intended voting in the election, while five per cent intended not voting. Approximately 16% of the respondents were uncertain (see Figure 3.1).

A substantial majority of all the respondents, irrespective of their possession of IDs, intended participating in the next year's election. The challenge for democratic

participation lies in ensuring that all citizens who have the constitutional right to vote are in possession of the necessary documentation enabling them to exercise this right.

Figure 3.1: Intention to vote in the 1999 election



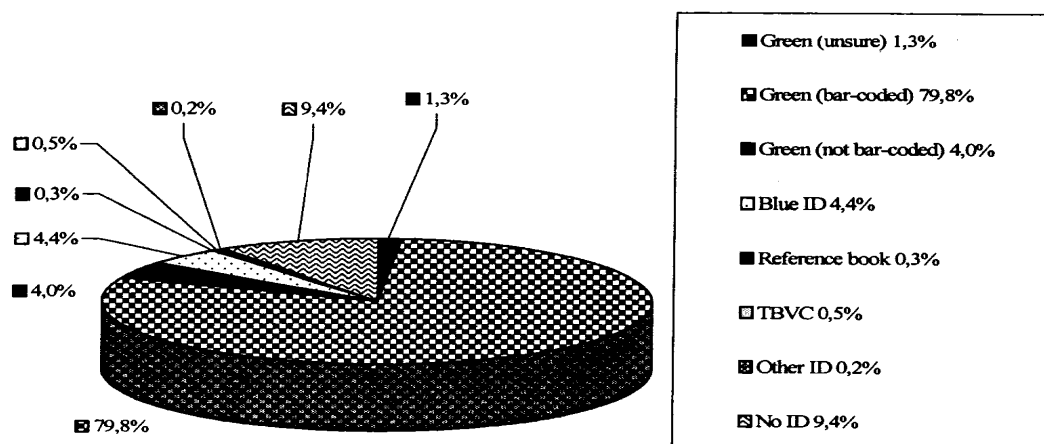
Possession of South African IDs

Perhaps the most important finding of the survey was that slightly more than nine per cent (9,4%) of all the respondents (i.e. those citizens 17 years and older) had no form of ID) whatsoever (Table 3.1 and Figure 3.2). In many ways these individuals represented the core of the problem - those who would be disenfranchised if **any** form of identity document were required in order to vote.

Table 3.1: Proportion of voting population in possession of IDs (17 years and older)

ID type	Per cent of voting population
Green ID but unsure whether bar-coded	1,3
Green bar-coded	79,8
Green but no bar code	4,0
Blue ID	4,4
Reference book	0,3
Transkei ID	0,3
Bophuthatswana ID	0,1
Venda ID	0,2
Ciskei ID	0
Other	0,2
No ID at all	9,4
Total	100,0

Figure 3.2: Possession of IDs (17 years and older)



More than two-thirds (70%) of the respondents without any ID fell into the age group 17 to 21. This age group comprised those individuals who would be first-time voters in the 1999 election. This fact alone highlights the need for well-targeted voter education programmes and the timeous issue of IDs.

Types of documents in circulation

Those respondents (90,3%) who had a South African ID at the time of the survey could have had any of a number of identification documents. Apart from a green bar-coded ID they could have had

- a green ID without a bar code (issued before July 1986);
- the old blue ID;
- an ID issued by one of the former TBVC states;
- a reference book issued to Africans by the previous administration.

Given the dates on which these other documents were issued, the respondents with documents other than the green bar-coded ID tended to fall in the older age groups.

In order to determine the prevalence of IDs with bar codes, the respondents were asked to show (or declare) their documents. This revealed that 86% of those individuals who did have an ID, had a green bar-coded one.

Although specific measures were taken to verify the status of IDs, it was not always possible to inspect the documents. Even if the respondents could not produce their IDs for verification, they were usually able to describe what type of ID they had. Unfortunately, recalling whether or not their green ID had a bar code proved difficult for some respondents. Such difficulties affected 3,4% of those with IDs. However, more than half (56%) of these documents were known to be green IDs issued after July 1986. If the date of issue is used to determine the type of the green ID, then the "unsure" category can be reduced to approximately one per cent.

Reasons given for being unable to produce IDs mainly (68%) involved keeping the document elsewhere. "Document kept elsewhere" generally referred to the document being in safekeeping or in a vehicle.

However, a number of the respondents also said that moneylenders had retained their IDs pending repayment of loans.

The distribution of IDs is shown in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.2. Here the values are based on the population potentially eligible to vote in the 1999 election. As such they are a better reflection of the possession of different types of IDs.

Potential voters in urban areas are far more likely to have some form of ID (91%) than their rural counterparts (84%). However, urban residents are more likely to have some form of ID other than the green bar-coded ID. About 16% of the respondents with IDs in urban areas had an ID other than a bar-coded one. The comparable figure for the respondents in rural areas was nine per cent. Despite the lower prevalence of IDs in rural areas, the higher incidence of non-bar-coded IDs in urban areas gave rise to an equal proportion of bar-coded IDs in both areas.

Application for new IDs and waiting time

Of those respondents without any form of ID or an identity document other than a green bar-coded one, about one in five (21,4%) of the respondents replied that they had applied for a new ID. This would suggest that there had been limited incentive for people to apply for a new bar-coded ID.

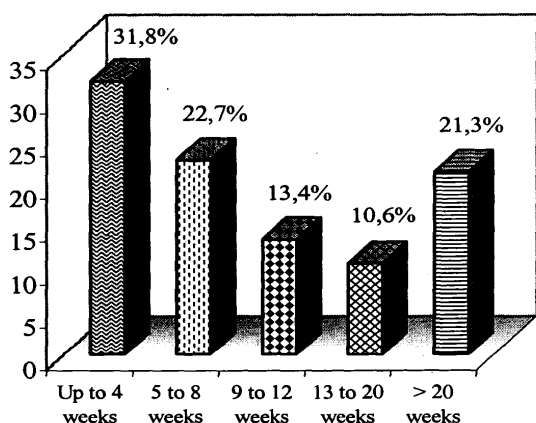
The respondents who had applied for a new ID were subsequently asked how long they had been waiting for a new document. The results are shown in Figure 3.3.

About 32% (31,9%) of the respondents who had applied for a new ID had been waiting for more than 12 weeks. Twenty-one per cent (21,3%) of the respondents indicated that they had been

waiting for more than 20 weeks, which may indicate that the Department of Home Affairs was experiencing problems in processing applications for new documents.

Those respondents without a bar-coded document, were asked whether they intended applying for a new ID. Only about 13% of these respondents replied that they did not intend applying for a new ID. This suggested that, together with the increased awareness that could be expected with the approach of the forthcoming election, applications for IDs would increase significantly in the coming months.

Figure 3.3: Waiting period for a new ID



Awareness of the need to have an ID to vote

One objective of the survey was to gauge the level of awareness among the general public that a bar-coded ID was required for a person to vote in the next general election. Although the interviewers were trained not to stress the requirement for bar-coded IDs during the interviews, the respondents were asked a range of questions about IDs. One can assume that there was a "learning effect" and that the respondents might have inferred the "correct" answer to this question. Nonetheless, 60% of the respondents replied that they were unaware at the time of the need to have a new ID to vote in any future election. This suggests that a large proportion of those expecting to vote would not be able to vote if a bar-coded ID were required.

The Great Debate

The discussion up to now has provided a brief overview of the situation pertaining to identity documents nine months before the election. The release of the HSRC report led to considerable public debate on what should be done to prevent the disenfranchisement of potential voters.

The Department of Home Affairs gave an undertaking that it would do whatever was necessary to ensure that all potential voters were issued with bar-coded IDs in time for the election. The government accordingly decided that only bar-coded IDs would be allowed as enabling documents for the 1999 election. A key argument behind this decision was that it would ensure the integrity of the voting process since multiple documents would increase the possibility of some people attempting to vote more than once. The Electoral Act was duly passed by parliament stipulating that only bar-coded IDs could be used by voters to identify themselves.

This decision was not accepted by some opposition political parties. The New National Party and the Democratic Party instituted legal proceedings in an attempt to allow older IDs as a form of identification. The argument in both court cases was essentially that a significant number of voters would be disenfranchised by the decision as reflected in the Electoral Act. The Department of Home

Affairs' capacity to deliver the new IDs in time was also questioned.

How did the situation change just prior to the election? Had the department been able to process all the applications for bar-coded IDs in the relatively short period of time at its disposal? The HSRC conducted a follow up survey among a national sample of 2 200 respondents in February-March 1999 to measure changes in the extent to which potential voters were in possession of the required bar-coded IDs.

The results suggest a significant improvement in the situation. About 95% of potential voters were in possession of bar-coded IDs by March 1999. This represented a 15% improvement compared to the situation eight months earlier. Only two per cent of potential voters were not in possession of any ID in March 1999 (compared to about ten per cent in July 1998).

These findings suggest firstly that the Department of Home Affairs and the IEC had been successful in raising awareness about the need to have a bar-coded ID in order to participate in the election. The extensive media coverage that followed the release of the HSRC's July 1998 findings, as well as the ensuing public debate, certainly assisted in raising public awareness. The media campaigns of the department and the IEC significantly also increased awareness. Secondly, the results suggest that the department was indeed able to process the numerous applications in the available time. The detailed results in the HSRC's report undoubtedly assisted the department to target its operations.

Public Perceptions of the IEC

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that the IEC, as an independent body responsible for the management of elections in South Africa, began its work about one year before the 1999 election. This gave the IEC a relatively short period of time to establish itself as a credible institution. To what extent did the IEC succeed in establishing itself as an institution fit to deliver credible election results? In order to gauge public perceptions on this issue, the HSRC conducted a survey among a sample of 2 200 respondents (see discussion in Chapter 9). Here we will deal with the responses to three questions: Firstly, "To what extent do you trust the IEC?", secondly, "To what extent do you perceive the IEC to be a neutral body or does it support a particular political party?" and thirdly, "How positively or negatively do you view the IEC?"

Nearly two-thirds of those interviewed (63%) indicated that they trusted the IEC. Less than one in five of the respondents (15%) indicated that they distrusted the IEC at the time. About 17% of the respondents were ambivalent about this issue and an additional five per cent did not have an opinion on the matter.

This positive perception of the IEC was also reflected in the responses to the second question. About two-thirds (67%) of all the respondents indicated that they had a positive view of the IEC. Only ten per cent indicated that they had a negative perception of the IEC. The positive perception was more pronounced among those individuals who had registered to vote at the time of the survey. Seventy per cent of them had a positive view of the IEC. A negative view was held by less than one in ten (8%) of the registered voters.

Seven out of every ten (70%) individuals interviewed, indicated that they considered the IEC to be a neutral body. Less than one in five (16%) were of the opinion that the IEC supported a particular political party, while an additional 14% were unsure. This belief in the neutrality of the IEC was also prevalent among those respondents who had not registered to vote. About six out of every ten (58%) unregistered respondents believed that the EEC was neutral, while about 18% were of the opinion that the EEC supported a particular political party. A significant proportion (24%) of the unregistered respondents indicated that they were unsure of this.

An issue that impacts significantly on the credibility of any elections is the extent to which voters believe the ballot is secret. This in many ways cuts to the core of what free and fair elections in modern democracies have come to mean. This in essence represents the extent to which the IEC was able to develop and institute a voting process whose integrity was not compromised.

About 85% of potential voters in the HSRC's March 1999 survey believed that their vote would be secret. Only one in ten (10%) believed this would not be the case, with an additional five per cent unsure (see also the discussion of the results of the exit poll conducted on election day in Chapter

4). This was a remarkable achievement for the IEC. This did not only suggest a belief in the secrecy of the ballot as such, but also signals the extent to which South Africans as a whole have bought into elections as an important activity in a democratic state.

All in all, these results suggest that the IEC had been able to establish its credibility among a broad cross-section of the South African population. This was remarkable given the short period in which this was accomplished. The success of the 1999 election, measured by the relatively high voter turnout despite the more onerous registration procedures, and the positive evaluation of voters of the voting process, reinforces this finding.

Conclusions

The results reported in this chapter show how the debate on IDs was successful in raising public awareness of the need to have a bar-coded ID in order to participate in the 1999 election. Secondly, the results show the extent to which the IEC was able to establish itself as a credible organisation for managing the election.

The HSRC study on IDs highlighted four key realities about the extent to which IDs were available to potential voters by mid-1998 - about nine months before the election. Firstly, about one in five potential voters were not in possession of a green bar-coded ID. This translated into between 4,7 million and 5,3 million potential voters. Secondly, about nine per cent of potential voters did not have an ID of any kind. This translated into between 2,2 million and 2,4 million voters. The third reality was that there were distinct regional differences in the extent to which IDs were possessed by South Africans. The fourth and last reality was that the vast majority of potential voters who did not have valid IDs were first-time voters - that is, individuals in the 17-21 year age group.

These results underscored the extent of the challenge that faced the IEC and the Department of Home Affairs in compiling a credible voters' roll and in delivering a free and fair election. The significant improvement in the degree to which bar-coded IDs were in the possession of individuals 18 years and older in March 1999, demonstrated the extent to which the IEC and the Department of Home Affairs had been able to raise the required awareness. In addition, the department was also able to ensure that a large proportion of potential voters actually acquired the new ID. This was the key to a successful election.

Did the requirement of a bar-coded ID inhibit voters' participation in the 1999 election? The results of a HSRC survey conducted in March 1999 showed that more than 60% of individuals who did not register for the election were in possession of a bar-coded ID at the time. This finding suggests that other factors impacted on whether voters registered or not for the election and that possession or not of a bar-coded ID was not a significant factor.

The strong belief in the secrecy of the ballot among the voting population was another factor that led to a high voter turnout. Any doubt about this crucial aspect of the electoral process would also have impacted negatively on the registration process and the comprehensiveness of South Africa's first common voters' roll.

To conclude, the extent to which the IEC was able to establish itself as a credible institution and the belief in the secrecy of the voting process were important variables that influenced the success of the 1999 election. The broad base of positive support for the IEC among the voting population translated into a relatively high voter turnout on 2 June 1999. While some isolated administrative problems were recorded on election day, South African voters enjoyed, by all accounts, a free and fair election.

Chapter 4

Election Day Exit Poll

MICHAEL O'DONOVAN

Introduction

The Human Sciences Research Council's involvement with the 1999 general election was extensive. It included:

- (1) the focussing of its regular opinion polls on political attitudes and individuals' voting intentions;
- (2) a survey commissioned by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Department of Home Affairs to independently determine how widespread the use of bar-coded identity documents was; and
- (3) an independently¹ commissioned study of the election. This study was focussed on the performance of the electoral machinery and made use of a variety of instruments. These instruments included in depth interviews with individuals involved in the election process, focus group interviews with organisations central to the electoral process, and an exit poll among voters.

This section focusses on the last of these activities - the exit poll conducted among voters.

The intention of the exit poll was to ascertain the degree to which voters felt that the poll had been conducted in a manner free and fair to all voters and political parties. Although a "free-and-fair" poll would depend on how the IEC and its representatives conducted themselves throughout the electoral process, the perception of the voters in this regard would be more important. Any perception among a substantive part of the voters that the election process was anything less than free and fair would easily deprive the election of its legitimacy.

Survey Methodology

Research Instrument

The exit poll consisted of a short questionnaire administered to voters selected at regular intervals from a number of voting stations. These voting stations were themselves selected at random.

Unusual for an exit poll, respondents were not asked for whom they voted. A question to this effect could have compromised the responses. The following issues were covered:

- Knowledge of the election process prior to voting
- Neutrality of election institutions and officials
- Time spent waiting to vote
- Distance travelled to voting station
- Clarity on process to be followed inside voting station
- Presence of political party influences
- Knowledge of voting procedure
- Perception of undue pressure or intimidation
- Perception of impartiality of officials
- Voting decision (optional)
- Biographical data relating to the respondent

Sampling

The sample was stratified according to province and to metropolitan, urban and rural location. The number of stations surveyed in each province ranged from 30 in the larger provinces to 18 in the less populated and more homogeneous (in terms of level of urbanisation) provinces. At each station approximately 50 voters were interviewed after they had cast their votes and left the voting booths.

The biographical data reveal that the respondents were broadly representative of South Africa's demographic profile: slightly fewer male than female respondents (49% versus 51%) urban respondents and 40% rural respondents. The geographical, age and educational status details of the respondents are given below.

Table 4.1: Number of surveyed voting stations and respondents, by province

Province	Voting stations	Respondents
Eastern Cape	29	1526
Free State	20	1047
Gauteng	30	1547
KwaZulu-Natal	30	1617
Mpumalanga	18	910
Northern Cape	20	1 001
Northern Province	22	1 159
North West	20	939
Western Cape	25	1 395
TOTAL	214	11 140

Table 4.2: Age distribution of respondents

Age group	Per cent
18-22 yrs	13
23-29 yrs	24
30-44 yrs	34
45-59 yrs	20
60 + yrs	9

Table 4.3: Educational distribution of respondents

Educational status	Per cent
None	10
Primary	16
Standard 6-9	32
Standard 10	25
Post-matric	18

Table 4.4: Times at which the interviews were conducted

Times of interviews	Per cent
07h00-10h30	25
10h31-14h00	32
14h01-17h30	25
17h31-21h00	18

Results of the Poll

Free and Fair

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (96%) were of the opinion that the election was conducted freely and fairly on 2 June 1999. Moreover, this perception emerged among respondents in all nine provinces and of all population groups.

Table 4.5: Freeness and fairness, by province

Province	Per cent
Eastern Cape	96
Free State	99
Gauteng	96
KwaZulu-Natal	97
Mpumalanga	96
Northern Cape	97
Northern Province	98
North West	93
Western Cape	95
Total	96

Table 4.6: Freeness and fairness, by population group

Population group	Per cent
Black	97
White	93
Coloured	95
Indian	94

Among the three per cent of respondents who did not think that the election had been free and fair, the main reasons given were that other citizens had been excluded from voting, that a single party dominated the election and that there had been intimidation of voters and undue influence by officials.

Secrecy of the Vote

The majority of the respondents believed that their vote was secret. Asked whether they believed anyone would know for which party they voted in the election, 85% indicated that they believed that their vote was secret. Twelve per cent did not believe that their vote was secret and three per cent were "uncertain". Reservations about the sanctity of the ballot nevertheless did not deter the latter two groups from voting.

Perceptions of the secrecy of the vote differed by province. The provinces with the highest proportions of respondents who believed that their vote was secret were the Free State (92%), Gauteng and the Western Cape (89%). The provinces with the lowest (though still high) levels of confidence in the secrecy of the vote were the

Northern Cape (72%) and the Northern Province (70%). In KwaZulu-Natal (87%) and the Western Cape (89%), where there were concerns about the potential for violence, the majority of the respondents believed in the secrecy of their votes.

Table 4.7: Secrecy of the vote, by province

Province	Yes
Eastern Cape	77%
Free State	92%
Gauteng	89%
KwaZulu-Natal	87%
Mpumalanga	80%
Northern Cape	72%
Northern Province	70%
North West	88%
Western Cape	89%

Ease of Understanding the Voting Procedures

The vast majority of the respondents (96%) reported that the voting procedures were easy to understand. In every province more than 90% of the respondents classified the process as "easy to understand". Although there was a tendency for better educated respondents to be more at ease with the procedures, (93%) of the least educated (those respondents who classified themselves as having no formal education) nevertheless classified the procedures as "easy to understand". There were no noticeable differences in understanding the procedures by gender or population group, indicating that comprehension of the procedures was fairly uniform, both socially and geographically.

Force and Intimidation

The survey also explored whether voters felt that they could exercise their voting choice free of any duress. The overwhelming majority of the respondents nationally (99%) confirmed that they had not been "forced" to support a particular political party, and more than 97% of the respondents in all the provinces indicated the same. There was no meaningful distinction between the respondents by population group or gender. In excess of 98% of the male and female respondents of all the population groups considered their voting choice to be free of any intimidation.

Table 4.8: Percentage not intimidated by province

Province	Per cent
Eastern Cape	100
Free State	99
Gauteng	100
KwaZulu-Natal	98
Mpumalanga	98
Northern Cape	98
Northern Province	99
North West	98
Western Cape	98

Among the 1,2% of respondents who reported being forced or intimidated to vote for a party, most reported that this occurred prior to going to vote. Only 0,3% of the respondents said that they were subjected to such influence while waiting to vote. Most respondents who reported being "forced" to vote for a particular party identified "family and friends" as the antagonists (59%). Another one-quarter indicated party workers as the antagonists. The levels of undue influence seems to have been higher in rural than in urban areas.

Problems Experienced

More than two-thirds (68%) of the respondents indicated that they did not discern any problem with the 1999 election. Among the identified problems, the most frequently mentioned were long queues (6%), the need to register (5%), delays at the Department of Home Affairs (3%), perceived inefficiencies during the registration process (2%), and the omission of names from the voters' roll (2%).

Six out of every ten respondents who complained about the omission of their names from the voters' roll came from the Eastern Cape.

Table 4.9: Problems experienced, by province

Province	Long queues	Need to register	Home Affairs delays	Inefficient registration process	Name not on list
Eastern Cape	2%	7%	32%	6%	60%
Free State	3%	4%	1%	4%	7%
Gauteng	30%	18%	5%	27%	5%
KwaZulu-Natal	18%	38%	23%	4%	22%
Mpumalanga	10%	8%	6%	2%	2%
Northern Cape	1%	2%	1%	0,3%	0,3%
Northern Province	10%	11%	17%	38%	2%
North West	17%	4%	7%	11%	0,2%
Western Cape	9%	18%	8%	7%	2%

It is clear that African voters were much more inclined to have experienced problems than members of the other population groups. For example, 74% of these respondents who complained about long queues were black, as were 96% of those who complained about the omission of their names.

The exit poll showed that 79% of the respondents were able to reach their polling station in less than 30 minutes. Thirteen per cent had to travel between 30 and 60 minutes to reach their polling station, while only seven per cent had to travel more than one hour. Polling stations in urban areas were more accessible in terms of travel time than those in rural areas, Nevertheless, the placement of the polling stations generally enabled the respondents to cast their votes without undue inconvenience.

Table 4.10: Problems experienced, by population group

Population group	Long queues	Need to register	Home Affairs delays	Inefficient registration process	Name not on list
Black	74%	71%	78%	66%	96%
White	18%	17%	16%	25%	2%
Coloured	6%	8%	6%	8%	1%
Indian	2%	4%	04%	0,3%	1%

Table 4.11: Time taken to reach voting station

Time	Per cent
Less than 30 minutes	79
Between 30 and 60 minutes	13
More than 1 hour	7

The respondents were asked how long they had had to queue before casting their votes. Just over half of them said they had waited in the voting queue for less than 30 minutes; 13% said they had waited for between 30 and 60 minutes; and a further 14% had waited for between one and two hours. One in five respondents reported that they had had to wait for more than two hours before casting their ballot.

The HSRC exit poll revealed some clear provincial variations in this respect. Voting queues moved fastest in the Western Cape, where almost 80% (79%) of the respondents said they had waited for less than 30 minutes, followed by the Northern Cape where 65% of the respondents said they voted within half an hour. Just over half of the respondents in KwaZulu-Natal (56%), the Northern Province (53%) and the Eastern Cape (52%) waited for less than 30 minutes.

The slowest queues were found in the Free State and North West where, respectively, only 40% and 36% waited for less than 30 minutes. In the latter two provinces just over one-third (34%) of the respondents waited for longer than two hours before being able to vote.

Comparing the 1994 and the 1999 Elections

The exit poll also probed the attitudes of the respondents to the organisational efficiency of South Africa's two democratic elections. The poll showed that the overwhelming majority of the respondents (84%) believed that the 1999 election was better organised than the 1994 election. Just under ten per cent of the respondents believed that the hastily arranged 1994 election was better organised. Six per cent indicated they did not know whether there was a difference while one per cent indicated that there was no difference.

Table 4.12: Queuing time, by province

Province	< 30 minutes	34-60 minutes	1-2 hours	> 2 hours
Eastern Cape	52°/0	12%	14%	22%
Free State	40%	14%	12%	34%
Gauteng	43%	14%	17%	26%
KwaZulu-Natal	56%	13%	13%	18%
Mpumalanga	56%	10%	21%	12%
Northern Cape	65%	18%	9%	8%
Northern Province	53%	14%	20%	14%
North West	36%	15%	15%	34%
Western Cape	79%	10%	4%	7%

The 1999 election (unlike the 1994 election) involved a far more cumbersome procedure in terms of registration, verification, and proof of identity and citizenship. Given this and the difficulties surrounding the reliance on volunteers and late changes to the voting regulations, the favourable perception of this election is somewhat surprising.

Implications of the Exit Poll

Exit Poll and Measuring "free and fair"

The limitations of this (the first) exit poll in the new South Africa need to be explored if the results are to be adequately understood. First, as it was an exit poll,² people who did not vote were excluded from the poll. They included those who were excluded because they failed to register as voters, those who preferred not to vote because they regarded the process as biased or otherwise fundamentally flawed, and those who became so frustrated with, for example, the length of the queues that they left the voting station without voting. These self-exclusive groups probably included the people most disenchanted with the election.

Because an exit poll records the reservations of those surveyed (i.e. those who persevered despite the difficulties), the root causes of the alienation of those who did not vote could, at least in part, be derived from the responses of those who did vote. Obviously this possibility applies more to issues of principle. The upshot is that exit polls tend to reflect on elections somewhat generously, i.e. the findings tend to err in favour of a positive judgement.

Ninety-six per cent of the respondents indicated that in their opinion the poll had been "free and fair". Despite the preponderance of this opinion one cannot summarily pronounce the poll as in fact "free and fair". The ability to measure the impact of the self exclusion mentioned above and the reasons for beliefs that the election had not been "free and fair" should be taken into account. That four per cent of the respondents denied that the election was "free and fair" could be interpreted as a substantial indictment of the process. Such an interpretation would gain credibility if there was a consistent bias in the reasons for the dissatisfaction of the four per cent minority or if they represented a particular sector in society.

However, analysis of the election results showed that there were few significant differences in the response patterns of those who thought the election was "free and fair" and those who did not by age, gender, population group and education.

Neither was there any significant difference between their responses regarding the wider election process falling under the jurisdiction of the IEC. For example, the two groups gave substantially similar responses as to where they learnt most about voting procedures, the display of party political posters in the (prohibited) election area, and the length of time spent queuing to vote.

This suggests that no major socio-economic groups or political party groupings were unduly affected by the election process, at least as far as a "free and fair" **voting** process is concerned. Only minor differences were evident between the two groups with respect to being influenced as to whom to vote for, the ease with which the voting process could be understood, and the rate at which members of the two groups changed their minds while waiting to vote.

Perceptions that the election was not "free and fair" seem to have had various origins. These include feeling pressured to vote for a particular party and difficulty to understand the process. Those who felt the election had not been "free and fair" were slightly more inclined to regard the election process as difficult to understand (ten per cent, versus three per cent of those who regarded the election to be "free and fair"). A more serious factor is that those who felt that the election was not "free and fair" tended to cite being (unfairly) influenced as to whom they should vote for. However the vast majority of those who felt pressured to vote for a certain party identified "friends and family" as the main culprits.

Nevertheless those who claimed the election had not been "free and fair" did not point to issues suggesting a systematic bias. This is indicated by the fact that 92% of those who felt the election had not been "free and fair" had not changed their intended vote while waiting. The eight per cent who changed their vote can be compared to the four per cent of respondents who were of the opinion that the election had been "free and fair" and also decided to change their party preference while waiting to vote.

The high rate of approval of the election process and the lack of any systematic trend among those who disapproved augur well for the freeness and fairness of the election. However the question of self-exclusion is potentially serious and should receive consideration. One of the most widely voiced concerns about the election was the length of time it took to vote at some stations. A slow voting process, long queues, tired staff, etc. can lead to disenchantment with the process. If those problems occurred in the 1999 election in a way that systematically prejudiced any social sector or political party, the election could be considered flawed and perhaps not "free and fair". These problems are explored below in the section on the effect of voting station size on the election process.

Impact of Poll Station Size

An extrapolation of the exit poll findings to the total number of voters indicates that some eight million voters had to queue for longer than 30 minutes to vote. Of these, almost half (3,8 million) had to queue in excess of two hours.

If this time were added to the time the voters spent travelling to the polling booths, the total time taken up by voting in some cases was substantial and may have deterred people from voting. Just under ten per cent of the respondents (about 1,4 million voters) indicated that it took them over two hours to travel to the polling station and to queue and cast their ballots.

The main factor in the need to extend the time required to vote beyond a reasonable maximum was the number of people waiting to vote. The lack of supplies, unskilled staff and logistical problems affected only a small minority of the stations - and then these factors tended to be of importance only at the start of election day. However, having to vote together with several hundred or even several thousand other voters had a decidedly negative effect on the speed with which individuals could cast their votes.

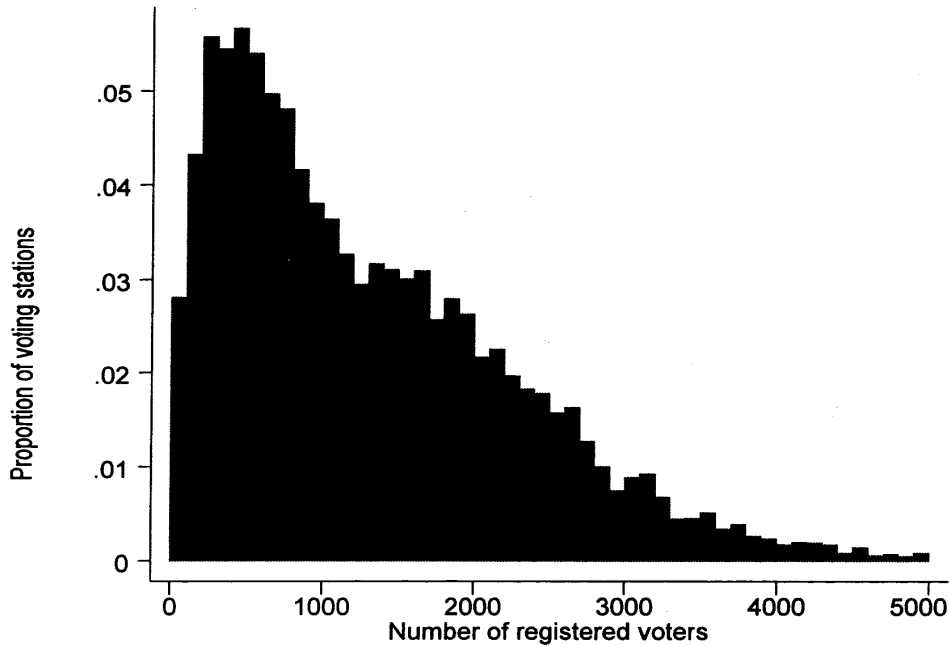
The IEC allocated staff to voting stations on what was in effect a sliding scale. The smaller voting districts were allocated a smaller complement of election officials than larger districts. However the doubling of the number of voters registered at a station did not result in the doubling of the staff allocation. This means (excluding practical difficulties such as the number of access points) that less efficient service to voters correlated with increased station size.

Effect of Voting Station Size

On election day over 16 million votes were cast in approximately 14 000 voting stations. On average each voting station had to accommodate about 1 140 votes or one vote every 45 seconds. However the voting stations did not all carry an equal burden in terms of the number of registered voters in that voting district.³ Some stations were characterised by queues that waited into the night long after the official closing time; others were marked by the speed with which the voting process was completed (see examples in Chapter 5). The differences can be attributed primarily to the number of people attempting to cast their votes at each station and the speed with which individuals were able to cast their votes.

For the vast majority of the voting stations the number of voters was well within the norms established by the IEC. The distribution of voting on sizes (in terms of the number of votes cast) is shown in Figure 4.1 below. The graph shows a concentration of the voting stations on its left-hand side, indicating that any one voting station was likely to be small. Most voting stations had fewer voters than the national average. The most intense concentration of voting stations was in the 500-1000 voter range.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of voters by voting station



The peculiarity of so many voting stations having fewer registered voters than the national average can be explained by the small number of voting stations that had voter numbers well in excess of the norm, i.e. in excess of 3 000 (or even 5 000) voters.

In recognition of differential literacy levels and population densities the IEC went out of its way to cater for the increased demands on rural voting stations. According to the delimitation manual issued by the IEC,

a voting district should comprise approximately 1 200 voters in rural areas and approximately 3 000 voters in urban areas⁴

The realised distribution for the two types of areas is presented graphically in Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

Figure 4.2: Urban voting stations

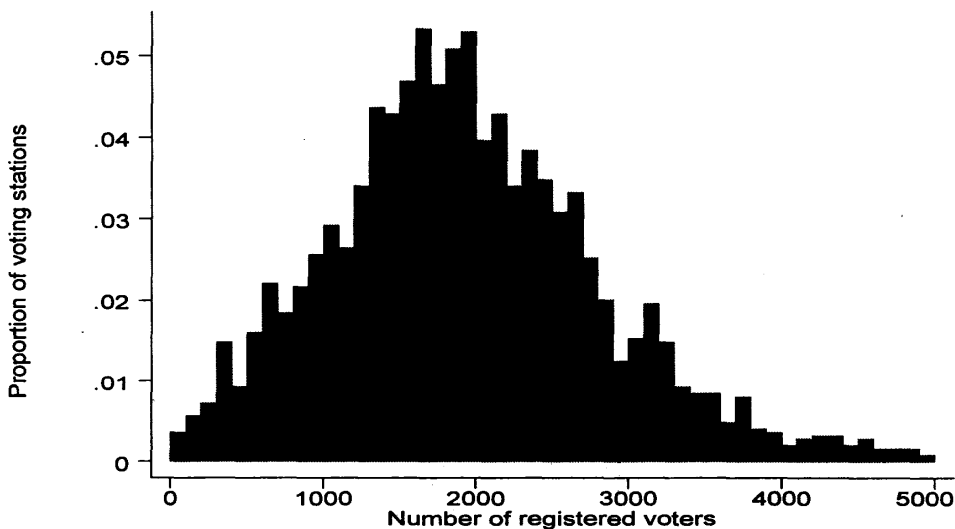
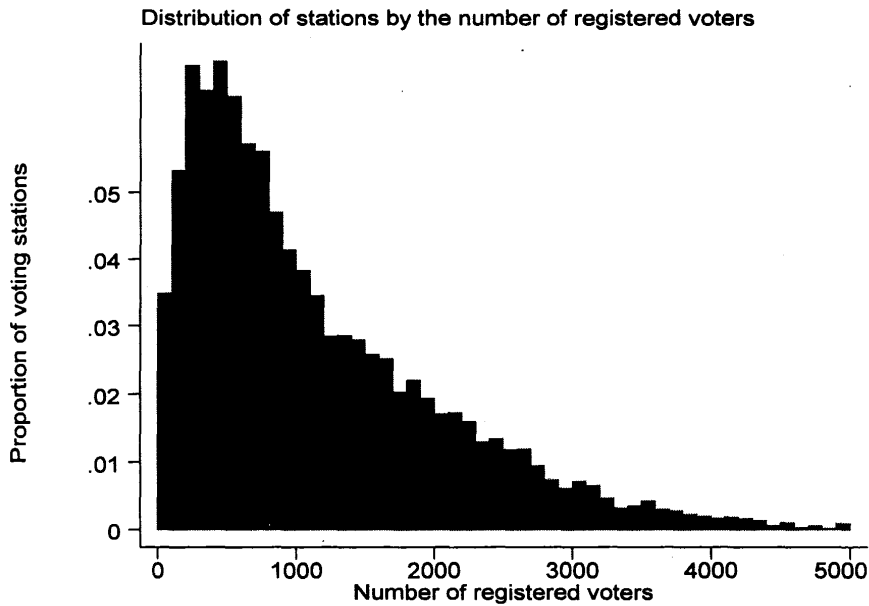


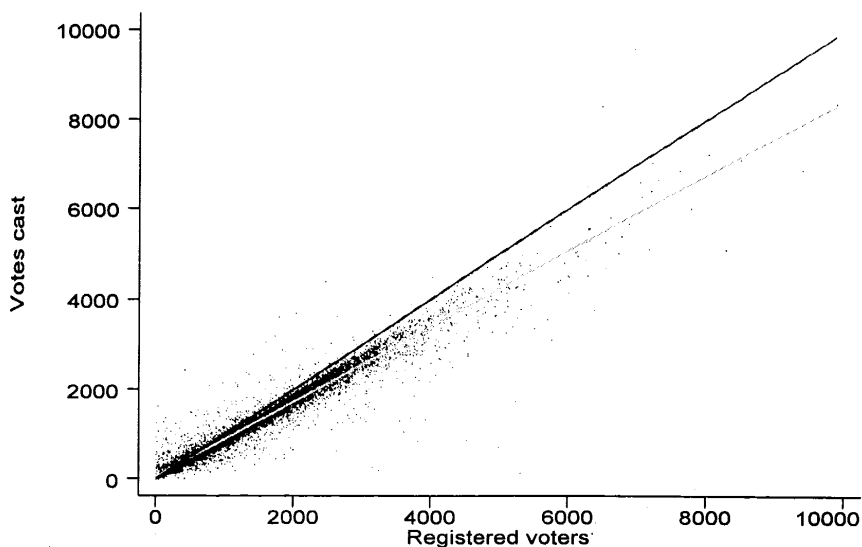
Figure 4.3: Rural voting stations



Although the rural voting stations tended to be substantially smaller than the urban voting stations, they were marked by a wider range in size. For example, more rural voting stations had over 5 000 voters than did urban voting stations. The size of a voting station is pertinent insofar as it determines the ability (or inclination) of voters to register and vote. It is also an important factor if it is assumed that large stations are more likely to have longer queues, more stressed staff and greater logistical problems. Larger voting stations would therefore be associated with a higher rate of spoilt ballots and a higher proportion of registered voters not casting their votes.

The relationship between station size and the number of valid votes cast is represented in Figure 4.4. Had all registered voters cast their votes the scattered points would concentrate about the line of "equality" (the steeper gradient line). The points however scatter about the more gentle gradient line, indicating that as the size of the station (measured now by the number of registered voters) doubled, the number of valid votes cast increased by about 80% only.

Fig.4.4. Relationship between station size and votes cast



This trend was consistent regardless of the size of the voting stations. The smaller voting stations, like the larger ones, had an approximately 80% turnout. This indicates that costs in terms of spoiled votes or votes not cast were approximately the same for the small as for the large stations.⁵ There is thus little *prima facie* evidence that the size of the voting districts prejudiced the voters, at least in respect of turnout rates and spoiled ballots.

This raises the question as to the effect of voting station size on the self exclusion of voters prior to election day, i.e. did the size of the voting districts affect the registration of potential voters?

Registration Effect

Voters were required to register at their voting stations during stipulated periods prior to the election. The same factors that militated against registered voters casting their votes in the larger voting stations could also have dissuaded them from registering in the first place. If this was in fact the case, the exit poll would have missed a potentially important aspect of the freeness and fairness of the election.

The correlation between the number of people of voting age in each voting district and the number of people who registered indicates that the larger voting stations tended to have lower registration rates. This relationship is represented in the scattergram (Figure 4.5).

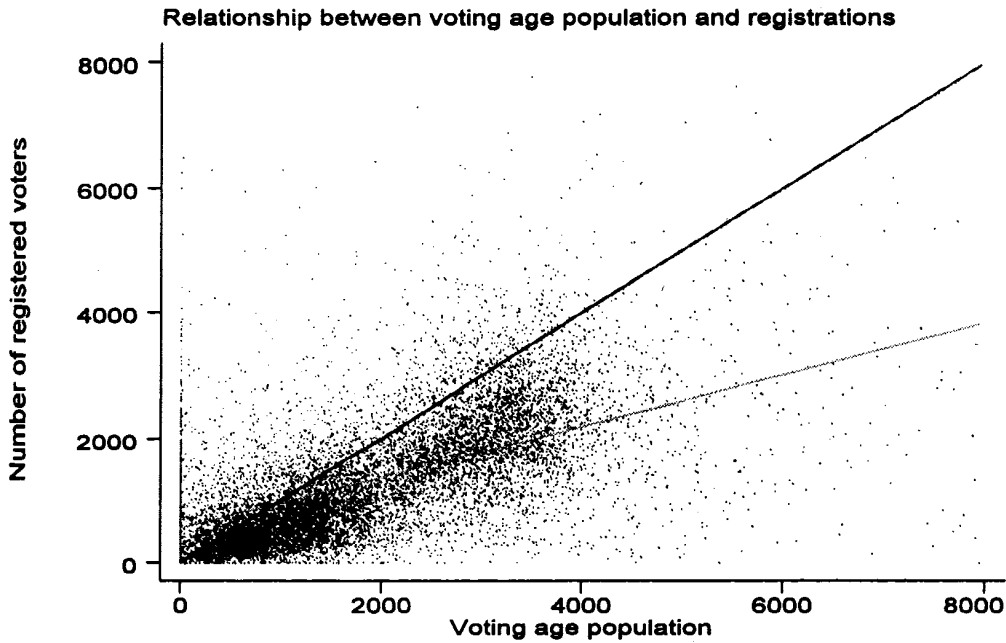
If there were no "cost" to having large voting stations, then anyone residing in a large voting district would be as likely to have registered as anyone living in a small district. However, a comparison of the number of people registered in each district and the population within the voting age in that district shows that as district size increased, the proportion of the population who registered to vote declined.

Figure 4.5 shows that once the voting station size exceeded about 1000 people the actual registration rate (line with gentle gradient) increasingly lagged below the "expected" registration rate (line with steep gradient).⁶ If station size did not affect the likelihood of registration the two lines would have coincided.

This points to evidence of a systematic bias in the election process. The electorate in the larger voting districts may have been prejudiced by the registration process, yet not by the voting process.

Following heated debates and court action, much has been written about the impact of the registration process on particular interest groups. An HSRC survey on identity documents revealed that two social sectors stood to be most prejudiced by the registration process: 1) older whites, "coloureds" and Indians, and 2) younger Africans.

Figure 4.5: Relationship between voting age population and number of registered voters



An analysis of

inter alia the registration effect⁷ on the election outcome indicated that these two groups at the time of the election had divergent party political support profiles which largely cancelled out the registration effect. The registration effect was unlikely to have changed the election outcome, i.e. the actual poll results were largely what they would have been had all citizens of voting age voted.

Conclusion

The exit poll showed that at the time of the poll there was substantial consensus on the election being "free and fair". The dissenting views did not point to significant consensus among dissenters as to why the election was not "free and fair" nor did they offer evidence of a systematic bias prejudicing any substantial social group. Evidence from interviews, media reports and the like pointed to large voting stations as being the "fly in the ointment" as far as an apparently smooth process was concerned.

There was little evidence that large voting station sizes correlated with higher rates of spoilt ballots or lower turnout rates. However, there was evidence that larger voting district sizes correlated with lower registration rates. This "registration effect" nevertheless did not significantly skew the election results. The inordinate size of some voting districts remains an issue of concern through, and possibly offers the IEC a strong focus for future improvements.

Notes

- 1 The finders included the Department for International Development (UK) and the CWCI Fund of the European Union.
- 2 An exit poll involves interviewing respondents after they have exited the voting booths.
- 3 The term "ward" was avoided, as under the voting system candidates were not elected to represent that location. The implicit trusteeship was thus irrelevant.
- 4 The regions were classified as "rural" or "urban" on the basis of census descriptions of their population in 1996. Between 1996 and 1999 some regions, by virtue of housing development or in-migration, can now be described as "urban". However, as the IEC - on the basis of the 1996 data - would have treated these areas as "rural" (initially at least), we do the same for the purposes of this paper.

- 5 The actual valid votes were in excess of 90% of the number of registered voters. The flatter regression line is used to highlight gross trends..
- 6 A log scale has been used on the x-axis. Although this allows the impact of increasing station size to be easily visualised, it appears to accentuate the difference between the rates.
- 7 Alence, R. & O'Donovan, M. 1999. *If South Africa's Second Democratic Election had been held in March 1999 ... A simulation of Participation and Party Support Patterns*. Pretoria: HSRC.

Chapter 5

Eyes on the Ground: Fieldworker Observations

STEPHEN RULE

Introduction

The survey of voters on election day (Chapter 4) involved the deployment of fieldworkers to 214 voting stations throughout the country. The fieldworkers¹ themselves were obviously well placed to make first-hand observations of the election process and were therefore asked to complete a short questionnaire during the course of the day. A total of 211 of the fieldworkers completed the questionnaire. The considered responses given throughout the day complement the more transitory perspectives of the voters who were at voting stations for much shorter periods.

Accessibility of Voting Stations

More than half (57%) of the voting stations surveyed were located at schools. A further one-quarter (25%) were situated in halls (Table 5.1). In terms of accessibility, three-quarters (76%) of the fieldworkers indicated that their voting stations had been easy to find and more than nine out of ten (92%) said that the voting station had been "clearly marked as a voting station". The most problematic province appears to have been Mpumalanga, where ten of the 16 fieldworkers deployed indicated that the voting stations had not been easy to find and five (31%) said that they had not been clearly marked. In contrast, only one of the voting stations surveyed in the Northern Cape and one in the Western Cape had been perceived to be difficult to find. Every one of those surveyed in the Northern Cape and the Northern Province had been clearly marked as a voting station. Although the voters themselves may have been familiar with the territory, it is also important that the observers should have been able to locate voting stations with ease. Clarity and accessibility are factors that can only enhance the effectiveness of an election. The IEC appears to have succeeded in this respect in most cases.

The fieldworkers were asked, "What are conditions like inside the voting station?" Seven out of ten (71%) said that conditions were "pleasant". One-quarter (26%) indicated that it had been "too cold", an unsurprising finding given the time of year, and the remaining six (3%) felt that it had been "too hot" inside the voting station. Cold conditions at some stations may thus have impacted on the performance of electoral officials confined to the voting station for the duration of voting, as well as the counting period thereafter. More attention should accordingly be given to the physical comfort of electoral officials during future elections in order to promote a high standard of service to the voting public. The use of tents should be avoided, because of the risk of cold or rainy weather and the effect this might have on voter comfort and administrative efficiency. A milder time of the year such as during the months of April or October would therefore be more suitable for elections.

Opening and Closing Times at Voting Stations

The prescribed duration of voting on election day was the 14-hour period from 07:00 to 21:00. In addition, officials were permitted to accept all the votes of people who were still in the queues at 21:00. At the voting stations surveyed, three-quarters (76%) opened at the official opening time of 07:00. Five per cent opened before 07:00, one in the Northern Province as early as 05:30, and three in other provinces at 06:00. In Mpumalanga, only nine (56%) of the stations surveyed opened on time in comparison with more than 80% in the Eastern Cape, the Western Cape, North West and the Northern Cape. The other stations opened their doors at some time between 07:00 and 10:30, with the exception of one Mpumalanga station that opened for voting only at 20:00.

Eighty-four per cent of the voting stations closed at the prescribed time of 21:00. Eleven per cent closed after 21:00, one in Gauteng as late as 22:30. Of more concern are the five per cent that closed before 21:00, six of these as early as 19:00 or earlier. It needs to be stressed to electoral officials that even in the event of no queues, it remains the right of the voter to turn up to vote at any time before the official closing time. If the voting station closes prior to this, the voter is effectively disenfranchised.

Table 5.1. Buildings or structures used at the voting stations surveyed, by province

Province		School	Hall	Tent	Farm	Mobile	Church	Clinic	Other	Total
EC	n	19	4	0	0	1	2	0	3	29
FS	n	10	2	1	3	0	1	0	3	20
GT	n	19	4	5	0	0	0	0	2	30
KZN	n	18	6	0	0	1	0	0	3	28
MP	n	10	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	16
NC	n	2	13	1	3	2	0	1	0	22
NP	n	19	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
NW	n	16	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
WC	n	8	13	1	1	0	0	0	2	25
Total	n	121	52	8	7	5	4	1	13	211
	%	57	25	4	3	2	2	1	6	100

Length of Voting Queues

The length of queues of people waiting to cast their votes varied widely between voting stations. The fieldworkers were asked to estimate the number of people waiting to vote at various times on election day.

At 09:00, 23 of the 211 stations for which data were collected had nobody waiting in queues to vote (Table 5.2). At the other extreme, two stations in Gauteng (Sandown Hall and Barnato Park High School) had more than 1000 people waiting in queues. One in the Northern Cape (Kuruman: Wrenchville Community Centre) had almost 1 000 people waiting. The national average at that time was 206 voters.

The average gradually decreased throughout the day from 212 at 11:00 to 128 at 15:00 and 76 at 19:00. By 19:00 on the evening of election day, 92 (43%) of the sampled voting stations had no voters queuing to vote, indicative of the successful processing of voters during the course of the day (Table 5.3). A further 80 (38%) had 50 or fewer people waiting in queues. There appeared to be a problem at five of the stations, however, where more than 400 people were still waiting. At one Free State station (Botshabelo Section L), there were still 1 980 people waiting to vote at 19:00, and at the official closing time there were 1985 people still in the queue despite the coldness of the winter night.

The two major causes of lengthy queues were the allocation of too many voters to a particular voting station and inefficient vote processing by electoral officials. Some voters had the misfortune to encounter both of these factors and, short of resigning themselves to a wait of many hours, could not be blamed for forsaking their opportunity to vote.

Weather

At more than half (56%) of the voting stations surveyed, the fieldworkers described the temperature conditions outside the station as "cold". Since it was mid-winter, this was not surprising, as indicated above. This was the case at most if not all stations in the Northern Province, North West, Gauteng and the Free State. Conversely, all stations in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape experienced "hot" weather conditions.

Table 5.2: Average number of people in voting station queue at 09:00, by province

Province	0	1-50	51-100	101-200	201-400	401-600	601-800	>800	Total	Average
EC	2	11	4	4	7	0	1	0	29	133
FS	2	4	2	4	4	2	2	0	20	219
GT	3	0	3	3	13	5	1	2	30	404
KZN	2	5	4	5	9	1	2	0	28	203
MP	4	3	1	3	4	1	0	0	16	146
NC	4	9	1	3	4	0	0	1	22	152
NP	2	3	3	8	4	1	0	1	22	180
NW	2	2	3	5	4	2	0	1	19	216
WC	2	12	3	4	3	1	0	0	25	105
Total	23	49	24	39	52	13	6	5	211	206

Table 5.3: Average number of people in voting station queue at 19:00, by province

Province	0	1-50	51-100	101-200	201-400	401-600	>600	Total	Average
EC	11	14	1	2	0	1	0	29	40
FS	11	5	2	0	1	0	1	20	124
GT	11	7	6	3	2	1	0	30	66
KZN	13	10	2	2	0	0	1	28	57
MP	12	1	1	2	0	0	0	16	25
NC	9	10	1	2	0	0	0	22	19
NP	9	12	1	0	0	0	0	22	11
NW	4	11	2	0	1	1	0	19	58
WC	12	10	1	1	1	0	0	25	27
Total	92	80	17	12	5	3	2	211	49

The verdict in the other three provinces (Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga) was approximately equally divided between "hot" and "cold" voting stations. No rain was reported at any of the stations during the course of the day. The fact that it was a relatively mild winter day boasted voter turnout, but such weather cannot be expected to occur throughout the winter.

Security Arrangements

Arrangements for the deployment of voting queue marshals, police and army personnel and other security officials were made throughout the country. fieldworkers were asked to count these officials at their particular voting stations at 15:00 on election day.

At 194 stations (92%) there was at least one police official on duty, and at 19 stations (9%) at least one army official was observed. It should be borne in mind that not all such personnel would have been readily visible, some having been assigned to the "outer perimeter" areas of the voting stations. In addition, "other" security personnel were observed to be on duty at 15:00 at 34 stations.

Queue marshals, deployed by the IEC to regulate voter queues and to conduct prechecks on identity documents, were far more prevalent, although obviously less so in mid-afternoon, when some stations had already processed the majority of those who were going to vote that day. At 150 voting stations (71%) there was at least one queue marshal on duty and at 46 (22%) there were four or more marshals in attendance.

Language Distribution of Voters

The fieldworkers were asked to identify the main languages spoken by voters at the voting stations they had been deployed at. By this was meant the languages they heard most frequently spoken by voters. At many stations, more than one language was prevalent.

The pattern that emerged replicated the expected distribution in terms of previous census information. Afrikaans was the most widely spoken language, at almost one-third (31%) of the 211 surveyed stations. At a quarter or just less of the stations, either isiXhosa or isiZulu was spoken. The next most widespread languages were Setswana, Sesotho and English. Most provinces had one language that occurred at nearly every voting station in the province, such as isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape, isiZulu in KwaZulu-Natal, Setswana in North West and Sesotho in the Free State. In other provinces, including Mpumalanga and the Northern Province, no single language was dominant. The policy implication is clearly that officials deployed at any voting station need, between them, to be conversant with the main languages of the region.

Turnout of Ineligible Voters

At four out of five stations (79%) surveyed, the fieldworkers noted that some people were not permitted to vote. Whereas most of the fieldworkers estimated that fewer than 40 people were turned away, in ten per cent of cases more than 40 people had not been allowed to cast their votes. In six instances at least 100 people were turned away. The most serious case was at a voting station in the Eastern Cape (Funulwazi Primary School, Mdantsane) where the fieldworker estimated that approximately 600 people had not been allowed to vote. Pre-election surveys clearly indicated that significant numbers of potential voters had not registered, and the subsequent arrival of ineligible voters was anticipated. In future elections underregistration should be avoided at all costs.

Behaviour at Voting Stations

In order to determine the incidence of disruptive activities at voting stations, the fieldworkers were asked to describe any disturbances they had noticed on election day. Only 16 (8%) said they had observed anything that could be classified as a "disturbance". About half of these fieldworkers mentioned some aspect of the queue such as its length, the impatience of queuers, queue jumping and resentment at elderly and disabled voters being given preference. Inadequate provision of

special votes for such categories of voters should be rectified to avoid this problem in the future. Several fieldworkers mentioned the inefficiency and slowness of electoral officials in doing their work. In a few cases there was a shortage of ballot papers. Another factor mentioned by several fieldworkers was that unregistered voters had attempted to vote and had made a fuss about being prevented from voting.

Table 5.4: Number of voting stations at which each language was dominant, by Province

Language	EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	Total	%
Afrikaans	5	5	8	1	4	19	0	3	21	66	31
isiXhosa	26	5	5	6	0	3	0	1	6	52	25
isiZulu	0	2	16	25	4	2	0	0	0	49	23
Setswana	0	3	8	0	2	3	1	18	0	35	17
Sesotho	0	14	8	0	1	0	5	1	0	29	14
English	1	0	7	3	2	1	0	1	10	25	12
Sepedi	0	0	5	0	1	0	6	0	0	12	6
isiNdebele	0	0	2	0	5	0	0	1	0	8	4
SiSwati	0	0	1	0	5	0	1	0	0	7	3
Xitsonga	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	0	7	3
Tshivenda	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	2
Other	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1

Occasionally, members of political parties had talked loudly or shouted from passing vehicles, thereby intimidating some voters. One fieldworker referred to objections to ink being painted onto the thumbnails of voters. It appears that all of these complaints could be dealt with satisfactorily by better operationalisation of electoral procedures on election day.

When asked what the "biggest problem" experienced at the voting station (Table 5.5) had been, 74 (35%) of the fieldworkers said there had been "no problem", and 23 (11%) did not respond. Among the rest, the most frequently mentioned problems were a shortage of voting materials or facilities (11%) and the arrival of ineligible individuals wanting to vote (11%) (ineligible either because their names were not on the voters' roll at that station or because they had not registered at all). A further seven per cent complained about the length of the voting queues at the stations where they had been deployed. Others mentioned the inefficiency, ignorance and rudeness of the electoral officials (5%) and the ignorance of voters about voting procedures (5%). This was ascribed to the lack of information available to the voting public (4%).

Table 5.5: Problems experienced, by voting stations

Problem	Number	%
No problem	74	35
Inadequate voting materials or facilities	24	11
Unregistered voters or arrival at wrong voting stations	24	11
Queue was too long/too slow/inefficient	15	7
Ignorance/inefficiency/poor behaviour of electoral officials	11	5
Ignorance of voters about procedures	10	5
Lack of information	8	4
Inadequate assistance for elderly/disabled	4	2
Other problems	18	9
No response	23	11
Total	211	100

The fieldworkers were also asked what most voters did "once they had finished voting". Half (52%) said the voters "left the voting station area", and a further 45% said the voters "waited for their friends or family and then left". Less than three per cent of the fieldworkers said the voters "gathered in groups".

Party and Media Representatives at Voting Stations

The presence of political party and media representatives at voting stations during the course of election day was not as widespread as might have been expected. Even the ANC, the largest political organisation in South Africa, was represented at less than half (43%) of the 211 sampled voting stations. Among the other parties, only the NNP, UDM, DP and IFP sent agents to at most ten per cent of the voting stations. The smaller parties had even less representation. This reflects a lack of resources in political parties, a factor that could reduce the effectiveness of the new South African democratic system. The issue of funding smaller extraparliamentary parties needs to be examined with this in mind.

In addition, some form of media (radio, television and newspaper) representation was observed during the course of the day at only 15% of the voting stations surveyed. This has serious implications for the monitoring of any partisan behaviour on the part of electoral officials. In the absence of party agents or representatives of several different parties, local election officers (LEOs) are more open to the temptation of engineering the election results in favour of a particular party.

The fieldworkers were also asked whether they saw "any political party activities" at the voting stations during the course of election day. An affirmative response to this question would imply a contravention of the Electoral Act, in terms of which parties have to maintain a low profile. Nine per cent of the fieldworkers said they had observed political party activities, two-thirds of these being in the Western Cape. Two fieldworkers (1%) indicated that political party posters had been displayed **inside** the voting area at the stations where they had been deployed, a blatant infringement of the law.

Table 5.6: Party political presence, by voting stations

Party	EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	Total	%
ACDP	0	0	4	1	2	2	0	0	3	12	6
ANC	6	11	23	9	9	14	2	5	11	90	43
AZAPO	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	6	3
DP	1	2	7	1	1	5	0	1	6	24	11
FA	0	0	4	0	3	1	0	0	0	8	4
FF	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	5	2
IFP	0	1	8	8	2	0	1	1	0	21	10
NNP	2	4	13	3	5	13	2	0	12	54	26
PAC	2	3	6	2	2	2	0	1	0	18	9
UCDP	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	6	1	12	6
UDM	6	3	14	1	3	2	2	1	2	34	16
Other	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1

Evaluation of Freeness and Fairness

In the eyes of almost all (96%) the fieldworkers the "election procedures were free and fair" at the voting stations where they spent election day. This was the same level of positive response as that of the voters themselves (Chapter 4). Of the few fieldworkers who gave a negative verdict in this regard, there was no concentration in any particular province. Reasons for pronouncing the negative verdict included the observation that some voters had not registered, that one voting station had been moved without prior notice and that some party workers had "helped" illiterate people to vote for parties not necessarily of their choice. Others said that ballot papers had run out or that farm workers had been nervous in the presence of electoral officials at some voting stations.

Implications

Although the election appears to have been largely free and fair, three key policy implications emerged from the survey of fieldworkers' observations.

First, an equitable distribution of voters in voting districts is needed to reduce lengthy queues and voter frustration on the day of an election. In particular, greater care needs to be taken in the demarcation of voting districts in densely populated areas.

Second, unambiguous information about the location of registration and voting stations needs to be widely publicised at the local level to avoid confusion and lack of motivation among the electorate. This is of particular importance in remote rural areas, where accessibility and levels of literacy are more likely to be poor. Local newspapers and radio stations could be utilised more effectively for this purpose, and information posters could be displayed prominently at shopping centres and other public places.

Third, more comprehensive training of local electoral officials, well in advance of an election, is essential to enable them to cope effectively with enquiries and logistical hiccups on election day. Clearly, regulations and procedures should be finalised several months before an election - logistical preparations, appointments and training should not be delayed until the last minute.

Note

- 1 The HSRC commissioned the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (C A S E) to co-ordinate and supervise the fieldwork logistics.

Chapter 6

Assessing the 1999 Election Machinery: Views of Political Parties and Other Stakeholders

RICHARD Humphries

Introduction

Throughout much of the election campaign, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was never far removed from public controversy over a range of key electoral administration issues. Political parties consistently queried its decisions on issues as diverse as registration requirements, staffing procedures, voter education or the funding of election campaigns. On one controversy - that over the necessity for bar-coded identity documents - the IEC even had to defend its decision before the Constitutional Court, which decision was upheld.

This chapter explores the views of political parties on the IEC and on some characteristic aspects of electoral administration during the 1999 election. Senior officials in a wide range of parties were interviewed on the role of the IEC; they were also asked to consider possible new procedures on key issues, with a view to adapting current procedures and regulations for the 2004 general election. These respondents generally represented their parties on the National Liaison Committee created by the IEC to form a link between the IEC and the political parties. This structure debated key electoral and organisational issues around the 1999 election.

Party Electoral Objectives and the IEC

Given the many controversies around the IEC, political parties were asked to state their objectives in contesting the election and, then, to account for the differences between their objectives and their eventual performance. In many cases, these accounts were couched in terms of the adverse effects of specific decisions by the IEC that, so the parties claimed, affected their performance at the ballot box.

The ANC indicated that it had aimed to improve on its results in 1994, when it obtained 62,65% of the votes on the national ballot, and to restrict the main opposition parties in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape to less than 50% of votes cast. Both objectives were achieved. However, some ANC officials argued that even though the IEC allowed slow-moving polling booths in the Western Cape to remain open until all voters in the queues had voted, the slow-moving township stations had cost the party crucial votes in the tightly fought provincial election.

The DP had aimed to take over as the largest opposition party and to achieve at least 10% of votes cast. Its goals were "98% achieved"; the primary cause of the shortfall was that many of its supporters had "found it difficult to register" given the requirement for a bar-coded identity document.

The ACDP had aimed to become one of the "top three parties" and to prepare its constituency for the 2000 local government and the 2004 national elections. The first aim was not achieved, owing to alleged "intimidation on the ground". The party did however manage to attract three times as many votes as in 1994, even though 3,5 million fewer voters participated in the election.

In the case of the FA, the aim had been to achieve 7% of the vote. The party acknowledged that this had not been a realistic expectation because the FA had only been formed five months before the election. It nevertheless had two candidates elected to parliament and one to the Gauteng legislature. It claimed to have "done well in some areas".

AZAPO did not achieve its primary goal - that of winning the election. This was attributed to a gross lack of funding, especially relative to the large parties.

The MF achieved its goals "to a certain extent" because, in its view, a great deal of "hard work had been put in". It had aimed at capturing three-quarters of the votes in the Chatsworth-Phoenix area and claimed to have captured 51% of these votes.

SOPA had aimed at making parliament more representative of national sentiment. Despite failing to win a single seat it felt that it had reached its objective of increasing the electorate's awareness of the party and its socialist message. It attributed its failure to make a greater impact to funding difficulties as well as the IEC's failure to settle disputes efficiently.¹

The UCDP contested the election at national level and in the North West, Gauteng, Northern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces. It won seats in the national assembly and in North West. While largely satisfied with its performance in the election it felt it had been prejudiced by state legal action against its party leader, Lucas Mangope, and by alleged prejudicial treatment from the IEC.

The PAC had hoped to win between 21% and 35% of the vote, thereby becoming the "official black opposition" with about 100 seats in parliament. Its main target provinces were, in order of priority, the Northern Province, North West and the Eastern Cape, followed by Gauteng. It expected to win control of the Northern Province legislature, based on its rapidly expanding membership there. Many chiefs apparently joined the party, pledging the support of their subjects. The party's performance in the 1999 election was however worse than in 1994 and it has only three representatives in the national parliament.

In an attempt to understand the failure to meet its goals, the PAC obtained the services of a policy research company to conduct an organisational audit of the party. A senior party official said many PAC members blamed the IEC for its poor performance, but candidly accepted that there was a need to examine internal party issues.

The NNP entered the election with two goals. The first was to be returned to parliament as the biggest opposition party, maintaining the 20% share of the vote it achieved in 1994; the second was to win more than 50% of the votes in the Western Cape, ensuring outright control of the provincial government. It attributed its failure to meet either of these goals to three factors, none of which concerned the IEC in any way.

The first was the perception amongst its traditional support group that the NNP was responsible for the "negative elements in the new South Africa". The NNP was, so this perception holds, responsible for "selling us out at CODESA"; this perception contrasted strongly with the positive message that the NNP used to contest the election, namely "Make South Africa Work". The second factor relates to the impact of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the NNP's traditional support base. An NNP spokesperson noted that the party underestimated the TRC's impact on the credibility of the party, further adding to the "perceptions of betrayal".

The third factor identified by the respondent was a feeling among "well-off whites" that the NNP "no longer looks after us". Accordingly, many former NNP voters switched to supporting the DP, attracted by its "Fight Back" slogan. However, increasing Afrikaner support for the DP did not mean the political liberalisation of Afrikaners, but a tactical decision about how best to oppose the ANC government.

Critical Issues in the 1999 Election

Against the background above, party officials were asked for their views and opinions on critical electoral administration issues with a view to informing IEC policy in future elections. The critical issues were the following: IEC functioning in general, IEC staff recruitment, discretion of electoral officers, voter registration, voting district demarcation, voter education, and political party funding. The views of the party officials on these issues are complemented by the perspectives of selected other interviewees, including some IEC officials at local and provincial level, on the same issues.

IEC Functioning in General

During much of the election campaign, various aspects of the IEC's performance were constantly addressed in the media or commented upon by political parties. The general thrust of evaluations of

the IEC by respondents from political parties was highly positive. Thus the MF said the EEC had done "their very best to see that the entire process went well"; the FA said that the IEC had "done a splendid job" and "tried to keep abreast" of all developments; and the ANC said the EEC had been "disadvantaged from the beginning by the tight time frames" around particular components of the election schedule. For its part, the NNP felt IEC officials, at a national level, were "very approachable". In general, the 1999 election was much more free and fair although "logistically, exponentially more difficult to run" than the 1994 election, according to the DP. Many respondents from the different political parties repeated this theme.

The response of a senior Gauteng NNP official, who was also involved in the 1994 election, is pertinent. He said he concentrated on setting procedures in place to prevent a recurrence of the estimated three million fraudulent votes the NNP believed had been cast in 1994. Various procedures were therefore agreed upon with fellow opposition parties in Gauteng but little evidence could be found to suggest that vote rigging had occurred on a systematic basis during the 1999 election. If any did, they were isolated incidents.

However, two factors - that of the independence of the IEC, both at a national level and amongst its staff, and communication within the IEC - emerged in many interviews as problematic. Most parties seemed to suggest that while they were generally happy with the way the EEC conducted the election at a national, provincial and local level, interaction between these levels and between these levels and political parties caused concern.

The issue of the IEC's independence emphasised two aspects: its almost corporate nature and its employment of staff. The EEC's corporate nature was cited by parties mainly with respect to its budget and its relationship with the Department of Home Affairs.

AZAPO, for example, suggested that the EEC should receive its funding directly from parliament - and not from the Department of Finance/State Expenditure, through parliament, as is the case with government departments. This would ensure that the IEC is not subject to the management of any government department. It would also facilitate an independent and critical approach to the election process. This view was supported by the PAC, which argued that "elections were a constitutional matter and not a policy issue". This was especially so given that democracy in the country was in its infancy - "it needs nourishment, like a baby". The PAC also argued that the IEC commissioners were "party-political appointees under the guise of government appointees". The party proposed that they be appointed by the Constitutional Court and not by the president.

The second aspect that was emphasised in respect of independence was the appointment of IEC functionaries. Virtually all parties complained that they could detect a partisanship among some IEC officials. The ANC, for example, complained of a former IFP mayor being appointed as a local electoral officer (LEO) and another IFP "strongman" who said that he would "not accept any party agents" at a particular voting station. Only after intervention by senior ANC officials did the person back down. The UDM also pointed to cases where LEOs "wanted their own way" on election day but were stopped by party agents or higher IEC structures.

Similarly, AZAPO complained that the EEC had sought volunteers from ANC-aligned structures such as SADTU and was thus biased in favour of the ruling party. The FA indicated that some IEC officials in the Northern Province were affiliated to parties and that the appointment of such people should be avoided. Given the circumstances, the newness of the voters' roll and the lack of experience amongst officials, AZAPO expressed the view that the IEC "did not do badly" although it was working amongst ANC "sharks". The PAC argued that even relying on town clerks as LEOs allowed distinct political preferences to impact on the election. The PAC respondent argued that since the majority of town councils were controlled by the ANC, town clerks would have "a particular allegiance". It claimed that the majority of LEOs "came from the ruling party" and that "town clerks are direct activists of political parties which leads to the direct manipulation of events".

It proposed that to combat any biases, IEC staff should be recruited by an independent agency at provincial and local level; this agency should then make recommendations to the IEC on employment issues. This step would, it argued, "balance the scales". However, some other parties said they had no problems with the recruitment of qualified staff from the civil service and local authorities.

On the issue of communication between the national IEC office in Pretoria and lower levels, many respondents said it had been rather poor, leading to confusion in the implementation of policy decisions. Communication between the IEC and political parties was also seen as less than optimal and more regular meetings were suggested for the next election period.

For example the NNP, UDM and PAC all specifically mentioned that decisions taken by the National Liaison Committee - which consisted of senior IEC officials and representatives of all political parties - were either slow in filtering down to provincial and local electoral officials or were countermanded and re-discussed in some cases. The UDM remarked that, as a result, its own provincial officials did not receive the instructions or guidelines that they were supposed to, following decisions taken at the national level. The party did however note that this apparent lack of communication between IEC national and provincial structures might have been the result of the limited time frame for the election and/or the result of the failure of some IEC officials to cope with the pressures of the job. The UDM argued that while the overwhelming majority of IEC officials could be said to have performed well, "the remaining 20%" did not do so. Did this also not reflect perhaps a lack of training for these officials, it asked. The PAC remarked that the "left hand of the IEC did not seem to know what the right hand was doing".

Similarly, the IEC was perceived by ECCO- the Electoral Code of Conduct Observer Mission (KwaZulu-Natal) - to be a "top-down" structure in which last-minute changes to the voting regulations could not be adequately communicated. ECCO complained that IEC Conflict Management Committee meetings were scheduled at short notice and that it was not possible for ECCO to attend these.

Some respondents pointed to very specific issues in voting stations as reflecting the poor communication within the IEC. One party (ACDP) stated that in the Northern Province and KwaZulu-Natal (Kokstad-Matatiele region) ballot boxes were not sealed as required. Also, stickers depicting Thabo Mbeki had been put onto persons waiting in a queue, without any action being taken by the LEO. Although these do reflect very localised station management issues, it is important that the IEC puts in place procedures for future elections which convincingly undercut the possibility of such incidents. .

Many parties suggested that in the next election, officials with experience and legal knowledge should be appointed in order to improve all-round management. The ANC and DP indicated that training was inadequate and that party agents had often had to enlighten some presiding officers (POs) over issues such as the differences between a provisional and a final voters' roll. Many parties suggested that these issues arose because of the ways in which the IEC had recruited staff, an issue to which we now turn.

IEC Staff Recruitment

The saga of recruitment of registration officials and their subsequent abandonment by the IEC (due to budget constraints) coloured the experience of the election for many political parties and support organisations.. These organisations. found it difficult to reconcile the IEC's opulence in terms of information technology and its various presentations with its cries of poverty, particularly when it came to paying local volunteers or providing them with refreshments on election day.

Prior to the first registration period in November 1998, the IEC was told to recruit staff on the basis of a R270 per day salary. It was subsequently announced that the budget would not cover such salaries and that volunteers should be sought. Most of the previous recruits thus withdrew and volunteers were recruited, but not on merit, A total of 3 500 volunteers were required in the Durban Metro area and most were teachers, city council workers or unemployed people. A problem with this system was the lack of hold that the IEC had over the volunteers. People who were not being paid generally displayed little accountability.

Ideally, highly qualified individuals with knowledge and experience of legal matters should be appointed as POs. School principals were seen to be good potential candidates for such a role. If they could not be paid, they should at least have been given incentives in the form of time off for time worked.

One local IEC official who took a long-term perspective used her discretion to compile a brief performance appraisal of each official employed; this will be used to recall and reposition existing capacity during the forthcoming local government election. She bemoaned the fact that the IEC did not require this of her, suggesting that far as long as the IEC fails to retain existing capacity it will not become a "learning organisation". It will be condemned to retrain staff during every election.

Another IEC provincial official noted that the pressure to employ unemployed persons perhaps contributed to the difficulties experienced in some voting stations on election day. He argued that such persons were often ill equipped to deal with crises; perhaps, too, he noted, they did also not receive enough training in voting station management.

The KwaZulu-Natal Violence Monitoring Project (VMP) expressed the view that there should be "more care in selecting people" for high positions in the IEC. It mentioned cases where known supporters or sympathisers of particular parties were appointed as electoral officers at high levels, even to the IEC itself. Appointees who were perceived to be "neutral" were in some cases "vetoed" by the IFP. A former IFP mayor of Esikhawini was appointed LEO in spite of protests by other parties. Similarly a KwaZulu-Natal MEC (IFP member) and the close relative of an IFP chief were appointed to high IEC positions in KwaZulu-Natal. The response given to complainants was that similar appointments were made in other provinces in favour of other parties and this was perceived to be "balancing things out".

It was suggested by the VMP that professionals or people involved in the church should be appointed to IEC posts and that in "hot spots" external people should be appointed, although not at lower levels. There should be wider consultation with organisations. such as the VMP in order to identify suitable "unaligned" people.

Discretion of Electoral Officers

Ongoing tension among election staff resulted from the need to observe the letter of the regulations (replete with last-minute changes, misconceptions etc.) as opposed to the limits on their discretion in ensuring that the intent of the regulations was met. Some staff who were inexperienced in the handling of elections and cognisant of the importance of their role were often reluctant to use their discretion when interpreting incomplete and even confusing regulations for guidance.

The IEC (Durban) felt that the roles at different levels had been poorly defined, leading to a lack of knowledge about responsibilities and a lack of accountability on the part of officials. On the other hand, the autonomy and flexibility exercised by some officials had been a positive feature. it would be vital to define roles and responsibilities more clearly next time, the official asserted. The IEC urged that the skills and experience gained in the 1999 election be maintained so as not to have to start from scratch next time. The benefit of keeping on a few well-qualified staff would far outweigh the cost of retraining. Lessons learnt should not be lost.

Additionally, provincial LEOs, who were much more in touch with situations at the grassroots, were insufficiently empowered to make decisions. An example of this was in KwaZulu-Natal, where provincial LEOs were not permitted to centralise counting stations in the face of local political friction or lack of security. Counting was centralised anyway, in order to prevent problems.

Voter Registration

While there was general acceptance of the need for a voters' roll and thus the registration of voters, the parties, in general, were critical of aspects of the registration process, often identifying sectors of the electorate they felt had been prejudiced by the process. Although the entire voting process was more complicated and burdensome compared to 1994, they acknowledged that the new process limited the extent of the electoral fraud in the founding election. And, after three registration periods, a substantial number of South Africans had been able to register, thereby providing a base upon which registration of voters could be built for the 2000 local government election or the 2004 national election.

In the opinion of some respondents the benefits of registration were however undermined by the insistence on bar-coded identity documents and by last-minute changes to the electoral regulations which allowed voters to vote "as long as their names were on the voters' roll". The latter was seen as undermining the voters' roll (particularly at local level) and as running against the spirit of the registration process.

The FA, for example, while supportive of the need for registration, felt that the time allocated for the process had been inadequate. Other smaller parties also supported the registration requirement - particularly the PAC, ACDP, SOPA and UCDP. The PAC argued that since an estimated four million persons did not register, it was clear that these potential voters did not understand the significance of registration and the "power of the vote". The rural poor, in particular, did not understand the need to register.

The UDM argued that while the insistence on bar-coded identity documents was the "best principle", South Africa was not ready for such a system. Neither was the IEC nor the Department of Home Affairs prepared for the implications of implementing the system. The UDM argued that "thousands" of potential voters in the Eastern Cape - which was one of its support bases - had been excluded from voting as a result of the insistence on bar-coded identity documents. Also, the time table envisaged by the IEC for registration kept changing in response to various political, budgetary and practical issues. The UDM noted that the IEC's original intention of holding an on-going registration period from October 1998 to February 1999 was abandoned as a result of budget disputes between the IEC and the government. The party said the IEC then attempted to justify a once-off three-day registration period with the comment that "if voters can vote on one day, why can they not register over a single three-day period?" The UDM and other parties opposed this suggestion; they did however feel vindicated by the IEC's later decision to hold two further registration periods following very low registration rates in the first period. The UDM said it appeared that the IEC had accepted that a free and fair election could not be conducted on the basis of one registration period alone.

The Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA) noted two points about the insistence on a bar-coded identity document. The first was that the legal aspect of the conflict - through applications to various levels of the judicial system - established a political and legal precedent for future applications over IEC decisions. This notwithstanding, EISA argued that some of the parties challenging the IEC did perhaps prejudice their electoral performance, in that their supporters probably anticipated a successful outcome to the legal challenge.

The legal challenges centred on the IEC's compelling South African citizens with the old identity document to subject themselves to the "unnecessary" bureaucratic hurdle of obtaining an updated form of identification conducive to verification by newer information technology systems; the parties argued that this, prima facie, prejudiced older citizens without bar-coded identity documents. The NNP, for example, argued that the purpose of registration was to get persons onto a voters' roll and "not to exclude persons". One party official estimated that about two million persons had been unable to register, even though they had been in possession of valid identity documents. The party also said clarity was needed on the IEC's use of the figure of 22 million "potential voters". The ACDP expressed the view that the acceptance of only bar-coded identity documents for registration was "wrong" in that it failed to restrict registration to the citizenry or to ensure the optimal registration of citizens. It alleged that "about one million illegal identity documents had been issued to non-South African citizens" on the basis of bribes of between R300 and R500 each.

Respondents from a range of parties cited sectors of the voting public who they felt were prejudiced by the registration process. AZAPO felt that the registration process "was not up to scratch", especially among disabled black voters. It argued that such persons were not aware of the IEC's special arrangements to register the disabled at their homes. The FA and DP indicated that many voters, especially pensioners, had not registered because of the lengthy queues at regional offices of the Department of Home Affairs. The MF said some registration points had not opened at all or opened for only a part of the weekends set aside for registration by the IEC. In addition the poor, pensioners and the unemployed who were unable or unwilling to pay for photographs or the

transport costs associated with obtaining an identity document, were further prejudiced by the requirement: Clearly, respondents from various political parties did not distinguish between costs compelled by the Department of Home Affairs and those compelled by IEC processes. The FA felt strongly that voters should not have incurred any costs for registration.

The MF felt that many voters had not understood the need for registration or the procedures for registering. They suggested that greater motivation should have occurred and more information been made available to the average voter. Respondents from various parties pointed out that resistance to the bar-coded identity document was heightened by its being seen as "unusable" beyond the election - it did not contain particulars on drivers' licenses or marital status, as did the old documents.

All political parties suggested amendments to the registration process. These suggestions covered, in particular, the roles of the IEC, the Department of Home Affairs and local authorities. All political parties seemed to agree that voter registration should be an on-going process. Some presented specific ideas.

The FA, and other parties; suggested that whenever a new municipal services account was opened or transferred, the particulars of the members of the relevant household should be re-registered in the voting district to which they had moved. It was pointed out that the average voter visits a local authority structure on a regular basis. The UDM noted that local authority involvement in the updating process would ensure that local authorities maintained interest in the election process.

The PAC argued that a house-to-house registration campaign was needed to get eligible voters onto the roll; such a campaign could be undertaken in co-operation with local authorities: An NNP respondent noted that such campaigns had been held once every ten years in apartheid South Africa; they were paid for and organised by the former Department of Home Affairs. Consideration should be given to repeating these processes.

Another NNP respondent suggested that it was essential to add the addresses of voters to the roll as "a roll without addresses is just as good as having no roll". The respondent noted that the IEC had argued that to insist on addresses would have disadvantaged persons from informal settlements where no physical addresses existed. While the NNP had some sympathy with this argument, it also pointed out that insistence on addresses might have invited people to register with false addresses. The NNP had uncovered such fraud in Centurion, for example.

The NNP also suggested that the voters' roll (with addresses) should be made available to political parties on the day that an election date is promulgated by the president. Such information on the voters' roll would enable political parties to canvass persons directly. Supplementary rolls could be made available depending on the extent of further registrations.

The UDM, for its part, suggested that the Department of Home Affairs should return to the system whereby citizens had to notify the department of changes of address; this would automatically lead to the updating of the voters' roll.

Local election officials had contradictory points of view on the issue. Some officials concurred with the need for on-going registration while others did not. One IEC official in Durban saw the registration process as good preparation for election logistics, as well as being a means of creating "sustained public awareness" of the election. However, continuous registration for the 1995/1996 local government election did not increase public awareness and was more expensive than expected.

Another IEC respondent from the Durban metropolitan area felt that door-to-door registrations could not be as strictly controlled as those undertaken at specific registration points.

The Violence Monitoring Project (VMP) based in KwaZulu-Natal argued that the registration process during the 1999 election was a major improvement over that of the 1994 election. Nevertheless, it came across a number of irregularities in the voter registration process. These included omission of names of voters on a roll at Paulpietersburg, and a local chief in Eshowe telling some voters to register "elsewhere". It also noted that many voters had not collected their identity documents from the Department of Home Affairs and that others had not known how to check whether their names had been included on the voters' roll. It suggested that voters' rolls be scrutinised more comprehensively and with more active participation by political parties. This would also help to

ensure impartiality.

According to the SAPS, the three registration periods between November 1998 and March 1999 entailed "stress on the overtime budget" and the cessation of normal anti-crime operations. The SAPS had also not been a participant in decisions about registration dates, nor had it been given sufficient notice of dates decided upon by the IEC. An SAPS spokesperson said the SAPS would prefer either a continuous registration process or one conducted on a house-to-house basis since these methods would avoid security risks at specific registration points. However, the respondent noted that the repeated registration periods served as a good preparation for SAPS participation on election day itself.

Voting District Demarcation

Most parties seem, in general, to have had few negative comments about the structural issues of demarcation. Some did raise specific issues, though.

The FF, for example, complimented the IEC on the relative simplicity of the principle for voter allocation per voting station: a maximum of 3 500 voters. However, the NNP pointed out that this led to the assumption that these voters would be processed quickly on election day, which assumption proved false when some smaller stations experienced problems in processing voters.

Many local IEC officials objected to the high concentration of voters in some stations. Their appeals for equipment and staff for extra stations went unheeded or were rejected (often on the basis that at a given tempo the numbers could be accommodated). These local officials pointed to a snowball effect in that the larger voting stations were driven to crises by errors compounding each other. For example, the more populous voting districts tended to be located in less developed/serviced areas where less secure tents and less reliable sources of power for lighting and battery charging tended to be used, and where access to telephones tended to be more limited.

Voter Education

Few respondents from political parties commented on voter education undertaken by organisations other than themselves. Generally they also saw voter education as being the prerogative of institutions other than the IEC.

The UCDP asserted that voter education had been left to IDASA which, it argued, had an interest in the results of the election. More substantial criticism of the process came from one of the organisations that monitored the IEC during the election. It perceived the voter education process and infrastructure as being "fraught" with nepotism and corruption. Contracts were apparently awarded entirely at the discretion of provincial officials and compliance with these contracts was not adequately monitored.

Most agencies and parties felt that there was not enough voter education during the pre-election period. The PAC noted that when the IEC was faced with the need to cut its budget, voter education programmes were "cut out almost entirely". It also felt that voter education had been better implemented in the 1994 election. AZAPO felt that inadequate funding was not an excuse for the lack of accessible voter education material for illiterate, rural voters. The MF complained that voter education was done at the "eleventh hour" and that parties did not have time to do much of their own voter education.

The ACDP felt that organisations supportive of the ANC had dominated "voter education", which may have biased education in favour of the ANC. An example cited by the UCDP was the omission of its name and symbol from mock ballot papers used in training. The UCDP felt this negatively influenced voting for the party among voters who had received voter education.² The UDM noted that information conveyed in IEC voter education manuals was sometimes wrong or did not reflect late changes.

One local IEC official stated that, according to information the IEC received, television was the medium that made the greatest impact on voter education. AZAPO noted, on this point, that radio and television programmes had been of a good quality but that urban and literate voters benefited

more than rural and illiterate voters.

Opinions on voter education were often tinged by the perceived needs of the different constituencies targeted by different political parties, i.e. urban or rural, black or white, poor or rich, literate or illiterate etc. However, the UDM noted that the political literacy of South African voters was often underestimated in the debate on voter education; it pointed to the low level of spoilt votes as proof of this.

Suggestions by respondents for improved voter education often hinged on the need to establish on-going democracy education courses; these courses would have to have a broader focus ("why vote?") than the narrow procedural issue ("how to vote") addressed by voter education.

Accordingly, AZAPO urged that a nation-wide state-funded voter education programme take place before the next election. This should include "hands-on practical activities" and radio should be utilised more than television, in view of the greater reach of radio among the electorate. The PAC, which said it preferred democracy education courses over voter education courses, said the IEC should demand sufficient funds to fulfil democracy or voter education and that it "should take the lead in developing a module for voter education". It could then sub-contract NGOs to run courses on its behalf, if it did not have the capacity to do so itself. The UDM felt that voter education was a "basic responsibility" of the IEC. However, it noted that voter education for local authority elections differed from that for the national election. Hence programmes would have to explain the differences between the ward and the proportional representation system used in the local authority elections.

The IEC (Durban) expressed the view that very little voter education took place and that "even the most educated people didn't understand the last-minute changes" regarding special and declaration votes. It recommended that voter education begin much earlier and that election regulations also be determined at an earlier stage. Despite lengthy briefings on changes to election procedures, the last-minute changes were "very confusing". A major problem had been how to convey the implications of the changes to the 11000 staff on duty over the election period.

The VMP argued that elderly people were "most victimised" by the general absence of voter education because they were "less likely than young people to stand up for their rights". In the future, radio should be the main medium for voter education. The concept of the secret vote and procedures for reporting irregularities should receive the greatest attention in voter education courses.

ECCO distributed posters to clinics, magistrate's offices, police stations and churches throughout KwaZulu-Natal. Their delivery was however hampered by the withdrawal of SASCO bakery from an undertaking to deliver the material; in ECCO's view, this illustrated the level of fear of intimidation in the province before the election.

Political Party Funding

Most parties felt that the current system of funding the election campaigns of parties according to their performance in the previous election needed to be reviewed. Currently only parties represented in parliament receive funding and the amount is determined by the relative strength of the party in parliament.

Most parties were of the opinion that state funding should be allocated more equitably. Alternatively some suggested that in the absence of more equitable arrangements state funding of parties should cease. However, respondents from the smaller parties represented in parliament noted that state allocations were indispensable for their survival. The FF indicated that had it not been for parliamentary funding, "we would not have been able to run an election"

While state funding may equip smaller parliamentary parties to survive between elections, it might also indirectly serve to entrench existing patterns of support. SOPA, for example, claimed that state funding ensured the replication of the apartheid era support patterns and the maintenance by established parties of their privileged positions. The UCDP suggested that elections were intended to determine levels of popular support. Hence the allocation of state funding based on seats held in

parliament assumed that levels of support were known, which assumption renders elections unnecessary. Again, the PAC proposed that funding to parties should proceed on an equal basis, once an election date has been promulgated.

Respondents from most parties nevertheless expressed the view that state funding should not go to parties formed shortly before an election. This would serve to discourage "fly-by-nights", the proliferation of small parties, the dilution of available funding and the "logistical nightmare" of printing thick ballot papers.

Suggested alternatives to the current policy included the abolition of state funding, the development of more equitable "objective" criteria, equaling for all contestants or a substantial minimum amount. The DP, for example, argued that parties could make submissions to a commission that could determine more appropriate levels of funding for each party. It suggested that funding be based on a 40:60 ratio of currently held seats versus current party support level as shown by opinion polls.

The IFP suggested that "blanket funding" be provided to all parties with a proven support base. Proof of support could be gauged from the signed-up party membership or the number of supporters' signatures collected. Although most parties suggested that the funding discrepancy should be reduced, others thought that funding for parties should be equalised as all parties were "working for the same goal".

AZAPO indicated that it would be preferable to withdraw all parliamentary funding to parties. Additionally, foreign funding for South African political parties should not be allowed. Funds should be raised internally by each party through its own organisational structures. A compromise, in the event of funding being provided, would be for all parties older than five years to be permitted to access parliamentary funding upon the submission of a minimum of 10 000 signatures of support. AZAPO expressed the view that the current system resulted in elections being "run for the rich" only.

Three parties (SOPA, the UCDP and DP) expressed similar views over the need for transparency over sources of funding. The DP felt that foreign funding should be disclosed, referring to the role of the Federal Electoral Commission in the USA which permits only individual donations to a political party and limits corporate funding. However, the PAC argued that foreign funding to political parties was an internal matter; similarly the NNP said corporate funding was a private issue.

The NNP proposed that party funding should not promote the proliferation of political parties in parliament. It pointed to Italy where political parties had proliferated, resulting in an unstable national government. Rather, it proposed, a minimum number of votes should be required to qualify for funding; if this was deemed unsuitable, then a larger deposit could be asked of parties for registration and participation in an election. "Fly-by-night" political parties had to be eliminated as far as possible, it argued. Parties had to pay a deposit of R100 000 to contest the national election and R20 000 to contest the provincial election.

This point was also picked up by the UDM. It did however point out that restricting funding to parties already represented in parliament was tantamount to "feeding the fed". If a middle road could not be found, then political funding should be scrapped entirely.

The ACDP and pointed out what they perceived as injustices in the present system. The ACDP claimed that the ANC had spent R2 million on posters alone, out of a total budget of R32 million, although it had received a grant of R660 000 only. In contrast, SOPA was given a grant of R200 000, of which R160 000 was needed as a deposit for registration, which was forfeited when the party failed to win a seat.

The ANC argued that parliamentary funding was disbursed too early in the campaign. The IEC required that 60% of funds be used during 1998, leaving relatively little for the final months of the election campaign. Respondents from the ANC expressed divergent views about whether extra-parliamentary parties should receive funding for their election campaigns. Some interviewees supported such funding; others opposed it unless a broad indication of widespread support for the party could be illustrated.

The very divergent views expressed by political parties towards the issue of state funding for political parties suggest that the IEC should review policy options on this issue in collaboration with the political parties and the national legislature.

Conclusion

Elections are by nature divisive events, pitting contending parties and policies against one another. One striking element of this review of the attitudes of political parties is that all political parties voiced criticism about one or other aspect of the election and the IEC's handling of the election. A second striking element is that the IEC, despite these criticisms, was generally seen to have "done a good job under the circumstances". This positive sentiment should motivate the IEC to consider the views of political parties and incorporate them into its preparation for the 2004 general election.

Another striking element is the extent to which the large number of smaller parties often expressed quite vehement criticism of the environment in which they had to compete for votes, for example inequitable state funding of smaller parties, inefficient voter registration and perceived political biases amongst electoral officials. It is quite possible that much of their criticism comes from having their expectations dashed, even though they arguably went into the election with inflated expectations about their electoral strength. Nevertheless, their views should not be dismissed simply because they performed badly in the election; their criticisms should also be evaluated and digested by the IEC alongside those made by the more established and larger parties.

Notes

- 1 AZAPO complained that SOPA's emblem resembled its own too closely and appealed to the IEC to prevent SOPA from using it. SOPA responded, in part, by not campaigning with the emblem. SOPA felt that the failure of the IEC to inform SOPA that AZAPO's complaint had been rejected, prejudiced its electoral performance.
- 2 A question needs to be raised as to the appropriateness of using workshops for "mass" education.

Chapter 7

Voting in Action: Focus Group and Workshop Findings

MESHACK KHOSA

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the election evaluation study based on workshops and focus group discussions held throughout South Africa during July 1999. The purpose of the workshops and focus group discussions was to assess the voting public's perception of the effectiveness of the election process, focusing on voter education, voter registration, electioneering, voting and vote counting.

A workshop was held in each of the nine provinces. In addition, focus group discussions were held in Soweto (Gauteng), Crossroads (Cape Town), Umsinga (KwaZulu-Natal) and Ikageng (North West).

Local election observers, election monitors, voters and non-voters, representatives of church, women and youth organisations, officials of the Independent Electoral Commission and representatives of community based organisations participated in the workshops. In contrast, the focus groups were homogeneous groups of individuals.

The participants revealed rich insights, knowledge and expertise, which were vital for the post-election evaluation project. The richness of their contribution could be ascribed to their different involvement in the election process - some had been involved in voter education and others had been independent monitors; some were from the 'elite' segment of society (having substantial knowledge of the election process and playing some role before or after election day) and others were merely voters.

The workshop and focus group discussions centred on experiences during the election period. More particularly, the participants were asked to identify successes and problems in a number of focal areas and to make recommendations for improvements. This chapter weaves together issues raised in 13 shorter workshop or focus group reports. The chapter covers the following:

- Voter education
- Voter registration
- Electioneering
- Efficiency and effectiveness of the election
- Vote counting
- Expected and real election results
- Major successes

Voter Education

Voter education is critical in educating the electorate about the importance of voting and voting procedures. After all, an informed electorate is an important pillar in the promotion and consolidation of democracy.

There appeared to be variations in the nature of, and also the extent to which voter education was conducted during the 1999 election. For example, the Soweto focus group revealed that voters were exposed to voter education of various types. Several methods were used to educate people about

voting: television, drama, announcements by teachers, and workshops by church groups. Indeed, voter education on television occurred so frequently that it frustrated a young Soweto voter:

They [voter education adverts] were too monotonous. While we were watching this interesting story then boom, the advertisement about voter education when you really don't want to listen to that, but not all the times so that was boring and it was just too much. (Gauteng focus group.)

In almost all provinces there were complaints from workshop participants that voter education only took place during the two weeks directly before election day. However, others indicated that voter education started earlier, although the resources allocated for voter education were inadequate.

Another frequent complaint was that those conducting voter education 'did not have all the information' and 'were not adequately trained' (Eastern Cape workshop). Others indicated that there was no transport to get people to the workshops in rural areas, and that the transport did not cater for people with disabilities.

The role of the media in the promotion of voter education was questioned. For example, an Eastern Cape participant argued that the media could not provide fair, reliable and objective information about the voting process. The endorsement of certain political parties by certain media representatives further convinced some voters that the media did not provide objective information to the electorate.

Some focus group participants indicated that voter education did not receive priority in 1999. A KwaZulu-Natal workshop participant concurred: 'In the 1994 elections there was an intensive kind of voter education. This year there was that misconception that people now understand ... but the elections that we had are totally different from what we have seen in 1994.'

The Umsinga focus group generally confirmed lack of voter education in that area. When asked whether voter education took place, one participant said, 'None were organised. People had to find out for themselves.' According to another participant, '[t]here was no voter education'.

Several other rural districts similar to Umsinga relied on the radio for voter education, or on information from political parties, tribal chiefs and family members. Such information could hardly be neutral.

Apparently more urban than rural areas were reached by voter education. In the words of a female workshop participant in Mpumalanga, '[voter educators] only concentrated here on the urban areas ... [where] they've got access to the media and everything'.

Some voter education trainers at the workshops and focus group discussions alleged that the money allocated for training was far too little and in some instances amounted to 'exploitation of trainers to do what the IEC ought to do' (Soweto focus group). Some IEC officials conceded that few resources were allocated for voter education.

However, some participants found the voter education useful. An election observer participating in the Mpumalanga workshop stated the following: 'To start with they introduced us to ballot papers and how to vote. I mean how to differentiate between the leaders and how to vote. They told us to be careful not to spoil ballot papers.'

Given the limited time and inadequate resources for voter education, it is not surprising that voter education did not take place throughout the country. Moreover, in some areas where voter education did take place, voter apathy prevailed. Some of the voter educators were alarmed at the lack of interest among young people in attending voter education workshops. This was confirmed by the following citations from the Mpumalanga workshop:

If you organise voter education, most of the youth have a bad attitude about this ... They used to resent us. I don't know why.

Youth have got a bad attitude ... We tried our best ... but people, they don't show up.

An election observer participating in the KwaZulu-Natal workshop remarked as follows:

From what we observed I think [voter education] was implemented but not actually enough. Because, for instance there was an assumption that only the black people needed it. We also experienced a need amongst white voters. They also need to be educated around voter education.

Gauteng workshop participants also felt that voter education was not conducted widely and effectively. In Evaton, for example, no voter education was apparently conducted. In addition, even though voter education was conducted in, for example, Soweto (Diepkloof) and Alexandra, not all areas there were covered. Other key problems are clear from the following citations:

Poor response rate among the youth and elderly in some areas with regard to voter education workshops. (Northern Cape workshop.)

Expected the IEC to run voter education because of its national infrastructure. (Northern Province workshop.)

The IEC allocated insufficient funds for voter education. (Soweto focus group.)

Some voter education organisations. were partisan. (KwaZulu-Natal workshop.)

Some voter educators represented the views of government which did not deliver on its promises. (Western Cape workshop.)

Material used during the voter education was mainly written in English, and some people in the Northern Cape and Western Cape felt more could have

been done to translate voter education material into Afrikaans. (Northern Cape workshop.)

Voter education was only started in March 1999. (Gauteng workshop.)

Some segments of society did not understand why, unlike the 1994 election, they were required to register as voters. Young people showed reluctance to register; some claimed they did not see any benefit in registration. Poor attendance could also be attributed to the fact that most second-time voters had attended voter education in 1994 and thus believed that in 1999 voter education was more a matter of giving information than educating people. Some eligible voters may have equated voter education with choosing whom to vote for. Thus, as many voters had already made up their minds as to whom to vote for, they did not see fit to attend voter education. Evidence from the workshop and focus group discussions suggests that voter education was not as highly prioritised as it was in 1994. The majority of focus group and workshop participants underscored the importance of voter education.

Voter Registration - Efficient? Improvements?

There were three rounds of registration in South Africa to ensure that the largest possible number of eligible voters would be able to vote on 2 June 1999. In general, there was wide-spread acknowledgement of the effort and energy devoted to getting a maximum number of people to register. With a few exceptions, there was consensus that, on the whole, voter registration went remarkably well. In the Western Cape, Northern Province, North West and Mpumalanga, for example, workshop participants indicated that house-to-house visits and mobile registration stations were used to mobilise people to register

The following problems arose from voter registration:

- The names of some people who had registered did not appear on the voters' roll. In addition, some living people were declared 'dead' while the names of some deceased persons appeared on lists in North West.
- In North West, family members living in the same household were registered at two or three different voting stations.

- There was concern about the role of media bias during voter registration. The IEC, however, did embark on an information campaign towards the middle of May 1999 (Eastern Cape and North West workshop).
- Some voting stations had a far greater number of people registered than others, which created several problems on election day (Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal workshop).
- There were delays in getting identity documents from the Department of Home Affairs (Eastern Cape workshop).
- Confusion and lack of understanding among some eligible voters as to why they should register led to others failing to register. It appears as if some people might have seen registration as an inconvenience and not worth pursuing (Mpumalanga workshop).
- Some voters took the mobile registration vehicles to be also their designated voting stations. Others did not know the location of their voting station on election day and spent half the day looking for 'the right station' (North West workshop).
- Some voters assumed that they would be allowed to vote even if they had not registered (Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape workshop).

Some workshop participants suggested that the Department of Home Affairs should register people automatically on the voters' roll when they turn 18 years.

The exclusion of non-citizens was raised as another problem in Gauteng and the Western Cape. It was based on the argument that since non-citizens were allowed to vote in 1994, they should have been allowed to vote again in 1999. A few participants indicated that, had they been informed of their exclusion in time, they could have made arrangements to apply for South African citizenship.

Registration was easy compared to the verification process. For example, an Eastern Cape woman said it was easy to go and register but that to check up on whether her name appeared on the voters' roll was extremely difficult: 'To try and get into the computer [Internet] to check if your name was on the list was a nightmare. It was so jammed.' She suggested that there should be more time between registration and the election so those mistakes could be corrected in time. Several other participants echoed this sentiment.

Questions around designated registration days were also raised. In the Eastern Cape, members of the community suggested that one of the registration days should have been a public holiday to match the fact that election day was a public holiday and to emphasise the importance of registration. (Registration was designated for weekends, including Fridays.)

The role of the media in promoting registration was also discussed. An Eastern Cape workshop participant asserted that the media had not got to the 'morale of the people ... We needed to boost their morale about the election', and put energy and excitement into the election. Another Eastern Cape workshop participant said this was particularly important in respect of the youth and added that 'door-to-door contact was important' during voter registration.

Voter registration was little criticised in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape and Mpumalanga. The major concern appeared to be with the motivation of people (especially young people) to register rather than with voter registration itself. This was worded as follows by a KwaZulu-Natal election observer:

To me [registration] was done in a way that was satisfying. Even though initially it was a bit of a problem with regard to people who were not actually keen to go and register, for example, in our own organisation many graduates were reluctant to go and register. But that was based on the issues that made it politically important ... but after the Youth Commission and some youth structures were engaged in the course of the registration and making a whole event of the whole election process [it improved].

Those who chose not to register did so for various reasons. A member of a Mpumalanga organisation for unemployed graduates related lack of enthusiasm to register to disillusionment and 'political disengagement': 'They promised us we were going to get jobs, and then, afterwards, we never got any - I mean people never get any jobs ... so we don't care because even if you go and register, nothing is going to happen for us people.'

Some Mpumalanga workshop participants claimed that a 'rumour' was spread in some areas that sanctions would be imposed on people who did not vote: 'The rumour was that if you don't vote you won't get any job. So after they extended the date people started to go and register. They turned up in big numbers.'

A similar perception occurred in Soweto. One focus group member worded this as follows:

Some of my friends just registered because they did not want to be targeted if they did not want to be targets. There were even some saying that if you do not register you were not going to get a job. You remember the sticker would be on your ID so they would tell if you had no sticker.

However, the alleged 'threat' was thought to have come from some political parties and not from the IEC.

According to another Mpumalanga representative, some people thought that 'even if we don't go and register, they will make some way for us to go and vote'. However, some of those who did not register did so as a way of protesting against the post-1994 government. In the words of one workshop participant in Mpumalanga, 'it's just a way of showing that we are angry with the government ... So [next time] some more people will not go and vote, until the promises are fulfilled.'

Other reasons for not registering to vote can be teased out from the following comments:

The main problem was that most of the IDs arrived very late. (Umsinga focus group.)

It is difficult for young people to get IDs if their parents did not get married or did not register them. (Soweto and Umsinga focus group.)

The voting stations were very far away. And when we got there the [mobile] IEC had already moved to another place. (Eastern Cape workshop.)

People stay far away. It costs more than R20 return to get there. (Umsinga focus group.)

The other elections did not help us. Why will these ones do so? (Umsinga focus group.)

In the Free State and Gauteng, workshop participants also indicated that registration apathy among young people might have been caused by various factors. One that stood out was the perception that once you registered, the government would be able to trace your whereabouts. This was confirmed by a Soweto focus group participant who said, 'I know some of my friends who are involved in crime and definitely avoided registering, in case the police trace them.'

In the majority of workshops and focus groups a significant number of participants indicated that, after registering, they were unable to verify whether their names actually appeared on the voters' roll. Reasons for that included lack of time, confidence that they were registered and, in some cases, ignorance as to the importance of registration verification. Many of those who did not check the voters' roll discovered only on election day that they were not registered.

Did the Electioneering reach Voters Effectively?

Party political electioneering was largely conducted through rallies, and through the electronic and print media. Electioneering was generally effective in that an overwhelming majority of the electorate knew about the elections. Some political parties avoided areas where there was political hostility to them. There was also concern among a significant number of the workshop and focus

group participants that the IEC campaign ignored fundamental issues, such as political parties being in a 'vote-catching mode' and failing to debate grassroots issues.

The focus group and workshop participants generally agreed that bigger parties did more in terms of electioneering than smaller parties, largely because the former had more resources than the latter, which could partly be attributed to the fact that in line with the current Electoral Act, parties not represented in parliament did not receive any funding to contest the 1999 election.

This situation was criticised by some focus group and workshop participants who supported smaller parties. They also suggested that party political election funding should have been allocated more equitably. A small yet vocal group of individuals argued that small parties should be nourished in order to secure the future of multi-party democracy, which would require adequate funding for electioneering by them.

Campaigns and Rallies

Some local election observers claimed that some political parties did not plan their election campaigns in time, which prevented observers from being present at their rallies. Others suggested that political parties should give their election campaign programmes to election observers by a specified date to facilitate monitoring. They added that this should be made compulsory by the IEC. However, some community representatives claimed that rallies were mainly for registered party members and party sympathisers, and not for any person who wished to get more information about the policies and manifestoes of particular political parties.

Some focus group participants felt that voters voted for parties because they liked certain individuals, rather than because they agreed with the policies of a particular party. This motivation for voting for a particular party pointed to inadequate education about democracy at the grassroots level.

The focus group discussion held in an informal settlement section of Ikageng in North West revealed some interesting findings. Although the election campaign there only consisted of the placement of posters and adverts, the residents there decided to vote for the ruling party for the following reasons:

- Their quality of life had improved since 1994 and they now had access to water, electricity and housing.
- They cherished the freedom of movement they now had.
- Programmes for the elderly had been introduced in their communities.
- They had been freed by the new government from decades of slavery on the farms.

The focus group participants in the Crossroads informal settlement in Cape Town also chose to support the ruling party for locally specific reasons, such as the successful development programmes in their community and improvements in the quality of their lives.

In some parts of South Africa, less political hostility occurred in the 1999 election than in the 1994 election. For example, 'hard no-go bound-aries' (KwaZulu-Natal workshop) which existed in 1994 in KwaZulu Natal, the Eastern Cape and Gauteng softened in 1999. Political contestation nevertheless continued in some pockets in KwaZulu-Natal. In order to canvass votes, rival political parties in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape agreed not to interfere with each other's political activity. But, in some areas, such pacts only lasted until the media left the relevant community. Thereafter rival political parties would shred the posters of their political opponents. There were also instances where political parties were explicitly 'intolerant of other views', although not on a large scale.

Respondents in several provinces, especially the Western Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, claimed that they evidenced a war of political posters. In the words of a Western Cape workshop participant, it was like a sitcom - one enjoyed the drama, the events, the political theatre of our time, the never-ending war'. The political contestation manifested itself in several ways; pulling

down posters of rival political parties; putting up posters that defame rivals; and disrupting rallies of opponents. Nonetheless, these incidents were few, relatively violence-free, and did not substantially alter the nature and direction of political campaigns in South Africa.

Was the Election Run Efficiently and Effectively?

The workshop and focus group participants supported the view that the 1999 election was run more efficiently and effectively than the 1994 election. However, many problems were also raised about the 1999 election.

Overcrowding and Long Queues

According to the HSRC Election Day Survey, nationally at least 20 per cent of the voters queued for more than two hours, and at some voting stations in North West voters waited ten or more hours to vote. Overcrowding and long queues were most evident in the black townships and informal settlements, and in densely populated inner-city areas that had more than 3,000 voters registered.

Long queues were perhaps the single most important problem encountered by the electorate. In the words of an Eastern Cape voter, 'if anything needs to change, that would be the registration table where you actually register and book in', This complaint was corroborated by an Eastern Cape workshop participant:

That is what caused all the queues for miles, because once they got into the polling station there was no problem. It went smoothly once their name was crossed off the list, but to get your name crossed off the list is what took time. You stood in that queue to get to the table.

In addition, a significant number of voting stations had an insufficient number of tables, voters' rolls and IEC staff.

There were a few cases where violence erupted due to long queues an election day. For example, voters started fighting due to long queues which were becoming 'unbearable' (Ikageng focus group). The voting station was thus closed temporarily but reopened after police intervention. Voting at overcrowded voting stations continued after the closing time. One respondent indicated that he finished voting at midnight on 2 June and another at 03:00 on 3 June 1999. Another participant indicated that she left the voting station at 02:00 on 3 June without voting as the queue was still long and she was tired.

Special Votes

Specific days were set aside for special votes. However, it appears that some of those who qualified for special votes did not get adequate information to make arrangements in due time. Those who fell ill on election day or had just been hospitalised were also not accommodated.

The procedures and rules around special voting were also a problem. The flow of information on special voting was uneven or voting officials were unfamiliar with the specifications for casting special votes. A churchman in KwaZulu-Natal made the following comment in this regard:

The IEC has to try to ensure that each and every community receives the same treatment. For me, I was exposed to three regional council areas. It really was interesting to see that in places you would think there would be intensive training there was a complete lack of training and organisational work.

A Western Cape observer indicated that it was unclear whether observers should or should not vote on days set aside for special votes. Information on special votes was often not understood by those who were entitled to special votes.

Voting Stations and Demarcation

Another set of problems related to voting stations and demarcation:

- It appears as if some people in informal settlements went to wrong stations. This was because they had registered at a mobile station. Apparently some of them spent half the day queuing only to discover they were at a wrong voting station (North West workshop).
- At some voting stations ballot papers ran out and voters had to wait long periods before ballot papers were replenished (Free State workshop).
- The selection of voting stations in other cases was questionable. For example, in Khayelitsha a voting station (wooden church) collapsed (Western Cape workshop).
- At some Gauteng voting stations presiding officers did not understand the voting process. Apparently some people who were not registered at a particular station were allowed to vote (Gauteng workshop).
- At voting stations where scanners (zip-sip machines) were used, the scanners broke down and delayed the process (Northern Province workshop).
- In some cases mobile voting stations moved on, leaving people wishing to vote behind (Umsinga focus group).

Fortunately, the problems that occurred did not substantially threaten the election process. Some of the problems were solved in the course of election day.

IEC Staff

Most workshop and focus group participants contended that the IEC ably employed a great number of people to run voting stations. However, the late employment of key IEC staff resulted in some IEC staff receiving inadequate training and insufficient information about the election process.

In some parts of Gauteng there was concern about the appointment of high-profile political figures as presiding officers. Some regarded this as a 'sign of partisanship on the part of the IEC' (Gauteng workshop).

Lack of understanding of the electoral process frustrated some voters at some stations. The following two remarks related to this problem:

When you go to the voting station maybe you are going to apply for a declaration vote. The person in charge wouldn't allow you to vote, because he didn't receive enough training. The IEC is saying 'go and vote'. And the person in charge is [saying] 'I am in charge here ... I won't allow you to vote'. (Mpumalanga workshop.)

I mean the presiding officers in those voting stations. They didn't have enough information. The IEC didn't properly train them. (Mpumalanga workshop.)

The IEC staff was also claimed to be hardly identifiable at some voting stations. However, this was a problem of limited scope as almost all IEC staff wore an armband.

Another minor but perhaps significant problem was the IEC's lack of provision of food to its staff during the long day and night. As a result officials ate and 'braaied' with party agents, creating the impression that they collaborated with those parties (KwaZulu-Natal workshop).

The use of employed teachers as polling station presiding officers was not well received in the Northern Province, where unemployment is high. There had been strong calls for unemployed people to be trained and utilised but apparently these were ignored.

Apart from a lack of training, which obviously diminished the effectiveness of the IEC officials, there were allegations that some of them were rude and arrogant. An Umsinga focus group participant commented: 'I was monitoring for my party. I had to stay at one station until counting time. The presiding officer sat not moving at any time. When asked for help he did not offer. Children (under age) were going inside and helping.'

In addition to the alleged unhelpfulness, IEC officials stationed at Umsinga were from a different district and thus regarded by locals as 'foreigners'. This sentiment is reflected in the following two comments:

In future IEC officials will not be welcome here. This time we did not want to stop them because people might say that is because it is Umsinga. But next time they will NOT BE WELCOME.

Feeling that the IEC used 'foreign' people. They did not even know Umsinga. How can that person serve him well? There was rigging somewhere.

In the Northern Province, Mpumalanga, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape there was a notable perception that the recruitment of IEC staff may have been biased against members of certain political parties. At the Crossroads focus group discussion there were allegations that four family members were working at one voting station, which led to animosity against them. This points to the importance of establishing monitoring mechanisms to ensure that recruitment adheres to employment equity. However, evidence of systematic bias in IEC staff recruitment did not emerge.

As the majority of the IEC staff was employed on a temporary basis, it is not surprising that there were some hiccups. However, the focus groups and workshops indicated that the majority of the IEC staff did a fine job, given the apparently insurmountable problems which they overcame.

Election Day

There was palpable peace on election day. Some participants described election day as 'extraordinary' and 'amazing', and the local and international media described it as 'boring'. Some first-time voters described their voting experience as 'a life experience', 'exciting', 'cool', 'thrilling' and 'fulfilling' (Soweto focus group, of whom most were first-time voters).

The 2nd of June was declared a public holiday to facilitate voting. Consequently some workshop and focus group participants were concerned that employees of petrol stations and supermarkets, which were open on election day, may have been prevented from voting.

In the Free State, North West, the Northern Cape, the Northern Province, Mpumalanga and North West some farmers did not allow their employees to register and vote. According to an election monitor in the Northern Province, '[f]armers generally did not allow workers to leave their places of work an election day', In the Free State, an election observer indicated that he had heard several accounts of 'farmers locking their workers in so that they cannot go and vote'.

Several problems occurred on election day. The normal means of transport to work and school were unavailable on this holiday. As the voting stations were generally within reach, the lack of transport was not a major problem to many people. However, in some rural areas where voting stations were far, the elderly, in particular, had difficulty to reach the voting stations.

Party Agents, Presiding Officers and Observers

The relationship between party agents, presiding officers and observers is assessed in this section against the Electoral Act which stipulates that political parties have to desist from campaigning near polling stations. Besides, on election day, active political campaigns are banned by legislation, although this has a downside: It 'removed the excitement and the jovial atmosphere' and 'basically every citizen goes by himself (Eastern Cape workshop).

The problems of the presiding officers and the voting officers were exacerbated by the number of people whose names were absent from the voters' roll and the consequent sorting out and explanations. The inadequate skills and training of the presiding officers and voting officers seemed to be a significant problem. In some cases the presiding officers apparently effectively employed the observers as their advisors. In other cases the presiding officers and voting officers were exhausted even before election day, as they had been involved in the preceding three days of special voting and immediately thereafter, on election day, they had to be up at 04:30. Said an Eastern Cape

election observer: 'On that particular day ... they really needed to be sharp and there were thousands of people waiting outside their door (but) they were exhausted.'

Election staff also had problems getting home after the counting had been completed as limited transport arrangements had apparently been made. Many officials had to wait for several hours, notably in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

According to an Eastern Cape observer, people trusted observers more than the IEC officials:

If I cannot write I had better trust an observer, because in most cases some of the observers were rurals and people were respected in their home communities, so the voters ended up trusting those [rather than the presiding officers].

In KwaZulu-Natal, strong feelings were expressed regarding the training and ability of both the presiding officers and the voting officers. According to a KwaZulu-Natal participant who was a voting officer, she had not been properly trained:

We were trained the previous night and the election was the following day. And then the problem is that we just saw it on the board. We did not do it practically. But the following day we had to open the boxes and see them open for the first time. For me I was totally confused. I mean that we were not allowed to touch the (ballot) box(es).

The importance of the role of presiding officers in the electoral process requires that they should be carefully selected. According to a KwaZulu-Natal workshop participant, they should have an appropriate 'level of understanding of these issues ... to interpret and translate that kind of information to people who will be reporting to you'. This participant continued:

But at the same time I think the other important issue when we are training people who will be managing the stations we need to be clear as to what kind of level of, not academic qualifications, but exposure [is needed]. A person who can be in a position to read and write and interpret what is written. Because he has to do with a lot of legal kind of powers that are invested in that individual.

Another KwaZulu-Natal workshop participant asserted the following: '[Given] the financial constraints and the lack of training that was given the logical conclusion would be everything was a mess, but I think ... that it was actually a success.'

The claim that the IEC had a 'contingency squad' that could be rushed to 'overloaded' polling stations was rejected by participants who were directly involved with the electoral process. A KwaZulu-Natal workshop participant involved in the IEC put this rejection as follows:

We had contingency staff [but] ... in fact we ended up exhausting all our contingency staff and secondly it was earlier mentioned to all the presiding officers that if you come across a situation whereby you do not have sufficient staff, you have power to get people to come in and work. It appears that many did not take the necessary steps to overcome the first bottleneck.

Party agents were also not trained and some were not properly briefed. Political parties were invited by the IEC to send representatives for training. However, in many cases party agents did not turn up for training. Some of the party agents indicated that they had only been asked by their party organisers on the morning of election day to act as observers.

There was some animosity at certain voting stations between presiding officers and party agents. An Ikageng focus group participant remarked:

In our district the party agents were saying that we should take money and buy food for them. We told them that we were not given any allowance either for meals or transport. We were just taken to the stations and the party agents were just controlling the presiding officers. Even if you were doing a small thing they would come and check what is it that you are writing.

From this section it thus transpires that although the rules of the game were generally spelt out in the Electoral Act, unwritten rules and power relations were operative at different voting stations. Because power relations pre-suppose unequal access to and use of power, the roles of specific officers require clarification in order to avoid confusion.

Registration and Ballet Papers

Although the IEC claimed that the voting districts were properly demarcated and the voting stations were well distributed, some voters claimed otherwise. A KwaZulu-Natal election observer asserted the following:

I think really they never studied the voters' roll properly ... If they know they have got about four thousand people who have registered like Amatikulu, then they were supposed to make about four polling stations there and they never provided properly. Some of the stations did not have people properly trained there and there was a lack of security.

There were also a few incidents of registered people being denied their right to vote. A KwaZulu-Natal election monitor said the following:

I know of some instances where people actually did not vote. They did not know that they had to complete the declaration form and the question of queues affected them ... Some of the voters were not actually registered, so it was a question of training of those officers.

The same sentiments were voiced in the Western Cape, Mpumalanga and the Northern Province.

Cost appears to have been the deciding factor in using cardboard ballot boxes. There was concern, however, in some areas that these ballot boxes invited fraud. A Mpumalanga workshop participant worded this concern as follows: 'I, for one, didn't think it was okay to use paper ballot boxes. We have to stick to the one that was used in 1994. They were metal ones. These ballot boxes, you can easily put in a paper there. Because you see how the box is made.'

Political Intimidation

The majority of focus group and workshop participants confirmed that political tolerance was high during the political campaigns and on election day. In contrast to 1994, political intimidation was almost absent. Even in those areas where there had been political contestation and political hostility in 1994, intimidation either did not exist, or was a mere drop in the ocean in the 1999 election. Moreover, the few instances of what was seen to be political intimidation in 1999 included party agents wearing party badges, elderly people being bussed to voting stations and voters being told which party to vote for, in other words, indirect intimidation. According to a Soweto focus group participant, in Orlando Township

'[p]eople would come with a party's T-shirts, which I thought was not right at all. Some guy was wearing the ANC and the other IFP so I think what they were doing was not right because they were confusing old ladies. When a granny gets in she would see this emblem and say it means I should vote for this guy.'**Lack of Identity Documents**

The majority of identity documents were processed in time. In order to accommodate those who might not receive their bar-coded identity documents in time, the Department of Home Affairs issued temporary registration cards. Therefore the complaint by participants in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province that their identity documents arrived late despite their timely application implies that not everyone took advantage of the use of temporary registration cards.

In an attempt to speed up delivery, some political parties themselves apparently delivered identity documents at some voting stations in North West and the Eastern Cape. This understandably

created confusion and insecurity because voters were seen collecting their identity documents from a particular political party.

Security at the polling stations was one of the major problems facing the IEC, voters and observers. Security in the majority of voting stations was generally tight and police and security officials were visible throughout. Specific acts of violence or crime directed at voters were not observed.

However, focus group and workshop participants raised a number of problems.

Police and security officials were not stationed at all the voting stations and where they were stationed, there seemed to be an uneven distribution. For instance, although the Crossroads informal settlement had more people registered than anticipated, there were only two police officers. Peak times were also inadequately catered for. A Mpumalanga workshop participant had the following to say: 'We didn't have enough security. People usually come towards closing hours. You would find only one policeman.'

In addition, even in areas reputed for violence, voters were apparently not searched for weapons when they came to vote. Some voters were concerned that there was no clean sweeping and checking for bombs at polling stations before voting started. Some voting stations did not even have telephones.

Vote Counting - Best Possible? Better Alternatives?

The manner in which vote counting took place was generally commended. Counting the votes at the polling stations was seen to limit the possibility of fraud during the transfer of ballot boxes to a central counting place. The counting system was regarded as effective and fast. The following problem areas were however identified:

- Most election officials worked day and night without a break. This led to exhaustion which slowed down the process toward the end (Crossroads focus group). At a significant number of voting stations in the Eastern Cape presiding officers literally fell asleep and 'did not count the votes' until the following day or two. One election observer in this province added: 'All the observers that I know ... landed up counting votes.'
- Apparently political parties were pressurising the IEC to release unverified results. This caused a problem when a mistake was detected in the number of votes for the IFP and ANC. Whereas the unverified numbers indicated that the IFP was the official opposition, they lost this position after verification. One voter claimed that 'this did not make the IFP happy' (Gauteng workshop).

Although the majority of participants found the vote counting to be fair and efficient, a Mpumalanga workshop participant asserted the opposite: 'I think the counting wasn't fair ... Even where I was observing, they were arguing a lot and they had to count the papers three or four times.'

There were also complaints that some observers were counting ballots instead of observing the process. According to a Mpumalanga workshop participant, '[th]ose guys were - they were tired at that stage, because they were supposed to observe the voting, not the counting. It looks like everybody was not counting.'

The exhaustion after the long and laborious day was captured by a Mpumalanga observer: 'Everything was okay, except that the presiding officer was confused at the end of the day.'

Some participants compared the election processes of 1994 and 1999. A Mpumalanga workshop participant criticised the 1994 confusion about the person responsible for the ballot box, but commended the 1994 arrangement in connection with counting staff; There were teams, and when one team 'knocked off there was another staff that came in for the counting. Those people, they were fresh.'

As some of the voting stations did not have access to electricity, they had to rely on candles and gas lights. Some of the respondents intimated that this might have affected several rural voting stations during the counting process.

All in all, the 1999 vote counting was a major improvement compared to the 1994 vote counting. The problems detected by the participants should however be eliminated as far as possible in the future.

Election Results as Expected?

Almost all the workshop and focus group participants accepted the outcome of the 1999 general election. Many claimed that they were not surprised by the actual results. However, there was some surprise at the poor showing of the Pan-Africanist Congress and the performance of the United Democratic Movement.

Even though the ANC was expected to emerge as the winner, those who voted indicated that voting was one of the key pillars of democratic societies. Therefore, casting a vote implied the voter's acceptance of and participation in democratic consolidation and social transformation. The level of acceptance and participation varied across and within provinces, between rural and urban areas, and even within a single voting district.

Major Successes

The workshop and focus group participants generally appreciated the unfolding and deepening of democracy, the deepening of tolerance and the gelling of patriotism. The success of the election process could be measured by assessing voter education, electioneering, election procedures, election day events and the counting process.

These are some of the ways in which the 1999 election process was described:

It was a good idea to have people vote where they had registered. (KwaZulu-Natal workshop.)

There were police officers in voting stations. I felt a sense of security. (Gauteng workshop.)

The logistics were handled well by the IEC ... the technology was smart, cool, in fact better than anything I've ever seen. (KwaZulu-Natal workshop.)

Conflict management committees were set up to attend to areas such as Green Fields, which was identified as a 'hot spot'. Mediators were apparently deployed and the situation was placed under control, and no violence erupted. (KwaZulu-Natal workshop.)

Queues were reasonably fast in most areas where there was a correct number of people registered. (North West workshop.)

In some voting stations some elderly people were given priority in queues. (Gauteng workshop.)

Joint partnership between the private sector and the IEC was admirable. (KwaZulu-Natal workshop.)

Great - it was one day and quicker. (Eastern Cape workshop.)

There were fewer incidents. (Eastern Cape workshop.)

The voting station was kept open after nine. Everybody who came could vote. (Eastern Cape workshop.)

The ballot papers cast were counted there and then tallied up. (Gauteng and Free State workshop.)

The doors were closed, everybody was there present and even though there were police but they sat watching as much as they could. The police were awake. (Eastern Cape workshop.)

Just having the visibility of the police in terms of safety was great. (Northern Cape.)

Also the tolerance of the political parties. (Eastern Cape workshop.)

The officials were good tempered and the public waiting. I mean some people waited two hours in a queue just to get in to vote ... other people waited longer. (North West workshop.)

Based on evidence gathered from the focus groups and workshops, the (allowing successes can be identified:

- The 1999 election occurred within an atmosphere of peace.
- The voting procedures were generally free and fair and the IEC officials were, in most cases, helpful.
- Voting districts were properly demarcated, with the exception of a few black townships, informal settlements and densely populated city centres.
- Except in some rural areas, the voting stations were accessible and within easy reach.
- The IEC was greatly efficient and effective in organising, managing and executing the election.

Conclusion

Support for the 1999 election has been extra-ordinary given that millions of voters were poorly educated and indigent. For the majority who voted, the election affirmed that apartheid was dead and that a new democratic society had been born. According to one voter, voting was the 'best tribute to Mandela who gave so much to us' . Most of those who chose not to vote did so out of protest against what they saw as the snail pace of transformation.

Chapter 8

Outcome of the Election

STEPHEN RULE

Election Results

The first democratic election held in South Africa in April 1994 was unusual in that no voter registration took place and all permanent residents of the country were permitted to vote, regardless of citizenship. The total number of votes cast amounted to 19 533 494.¹ Uncertainty about the number of eligible adult voters made it difficult to calculate the percentage poll. Estimates were in the region of 22,7 million votes, which indicated a poll of 86%. Because the 1996 population census revealed that there were fewer people in South Africa than had been expected in the light of projections from the 1991 census (40,5 million rather than 43 million), the 1994 poll percentage was probably higher, even as high as 91%.

Circumstances had changed by the time of the 1999 election and these impacted on voter turnout. First, unlike in 1994 when all adult residents were allowed to vote, only those who explicitly registered as voters were permitted to vote. The registration entailed the issuing of a number to each applicant, but only once he/she had applied for a new bar-coded identity document (see Chapter 3). Second, unlike in 1994, non-citizens were not allowed to vote in 1999. Third, a registered voter was allowed to vote in his/her home voting area only, thus excluding those who happened to be in another part of the country or out of South Africa on election day. Finally, despite high-profile election campaigns by 15 political parties, the level of popular interest in the second election was far lower than it had been in 1994, which indicated the advent of some form of "normality" in South African politics. All these factors were expected to reduce the number of votes cast. A national sample survey of potential voters conducted 12 months prior to the June 1999 election² indicated that only 80% of citizens were in possession of the required bar-coded identity documents (Chapter 3). By April 1999, 18 341 853 people had registered, representing 69% of the adult population but 81% of those eligible to vote, according to the Independent Electoral Commission (Table 8.1).

In the June 1999 election, 15 977 142 votes were cast. This represented a decrease of 3 558 442 votes in comparison with 1994 (Table 9.2). The proportion of eligible adults who voted decreased from 86% to 70%, and was even as low as 60% if the total adult population is taken into account as was done in 1994. There was generally a high degree of consistency across the provinces in respect of the proportion of registered voters who actually cast their votes between 85% and 89%. However, a stark contrast was evident in the turnout in the two most populous provinces, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Although they were home to almost the same number of eligible adult voters (4,7 million or 20,6% of the electorate nationwide), the participation rate of the Gauteng population far exceeded that of the KwaZulu-Natal population. Whereas the Gauteng electorate cast 23,2% of all votes, only 18,5% came from voters in KwaZulu-Natal. Failure to register and abstention from voting by registered voters in KwaZulu-Natal resulted in the electoral choices of Gauteng voters effectively counting 25% more than those of KwaZulu-Natal voters.

The number of votes cast for each of the parties ranged from 10,6 million for the ANC to only 9 062 for the Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA). The ANC achieved just short of the two-thirds of votes required to modify the constitution unilaterally. Although this represented a proportional increase, there was an absolute decline in votes for the ANC from its 12,2 million in 1994. The DP came in second with 1,5 million votes, a dramatic increase on its 0,3 million in 1994, thereby enabling it to assume the role of the new official parliamentary opposition. The IFP was third with 1,4 million, a sharp decline from its 2,1 million in the previous election. The NNP suffered the greatest decline in popularity, with its number of votes decreasing from almost four million (20%) to just over one million (7%). Fifteen parties contested the election at national level and 12 of these won enough votes to gain representation in parliament.

In the election for each of the nine provincial legislatures, some 100 000 voters voted for parties other than those they voted for in respect of the national legislature.³ This resulted in certain parties gaining greater provincial than national representation. The Minority Front (MF) for instance, obtained double the number of votes at provincial level that it received at national level in KwaZulu-Natal (Table 8.3).

Table 8:1: Percentage poll by province, election 1999

Province	Eligible Adult population (EAP)	Registered voters (RV)	% registered (RV/EAP)	Votes cast (VC)	% poll (VC/EAP)	% poll (VC/RV)
Eastern Cape	3 233 152	2 483 950	76,8	2 188 102	67,7	88,1
Free State	1 516 405	1 237 125	81,6	1 094 691	72,2	88,5
Gauteng	4 687 061	4 208 663	89,8	3 703 562	79,0	88,0
KwaZulu-Natal	4 686 503	3 469 998	74,0	2 958 662	63,1	85,3
Mpumalanga	1 544 822	1 290 171	83,5	1 132 427	73,3	87,8
Northern Province	2 410 714	1 872 099	77,7	1 660 814	68,9	88,7
North West	1 895 069	1 536 860	81,1	1 307 452	69,0	85,1
Western Cape	2 317 030	1 862 804	80,4	1 601 433	69,1	86,0
Total	2 277 189	18 341 853	80,5	15 975 052	70,2	87,1

Table 8.2: Comparison of votes received by political party: 1994 and 1999 elections

Party	Number of votes received			% of total votes received			Seats won	
	1994	1999	Growth factor	1994	1999	% change	1994	1999
AITUP	0	10 611		0	0.07	+0.7	0	0
ACDP	88 104	228 975	2.60	0.45	1.43	+0.98	2	6
ANC	12 237 655	10 601 330	0.87	62.65	66.35	+3.70	252	266
AEB	0	46 292		0	0.29	+0.29	0	1
AZAPO	0	27 257		0	0.17	+0.17	0	1
DP	338 426	1 527 337	4.51	1.73	9.56	+7.83	7	38
FA	0	86 704		0	0.54	+0.54	0	2
IFP	2 058 294	1 371 477	0.67	10.54	8.58	-1.96	43	34
MF	13 433	48 277	3.59	0.07	0.3	+0.23	0	1
NNP	3 983 690	1 098 215	0.28	20.39	6.87	-13.52	82	28
PAC	243 478	113 125	0.46	1.25	0.71	-0.54	5	3
GPGP	0	9 193		0	0.06	+0.06	0	0
SOPA	0	9 062		0	0.06	+0.06	0	0
UCDP	0	125 280		0	0.78	+0.78	0	3
UDM	0	546 790		0	3.42	+3.42	0	14
VF/FF	424 555	127 217	0.30	2.17	0.8	-1.37	9	3
Other	143 869	0	0	0.75	0	-0.75	0	0
Total	19 533 498	15 977 142	0.82	100	100		400	400

Voter Satisfaction

The HSRC national public opinion survey conducted in March 1999, three months before the election,⁴ revealed differences between provinces and population groups in levels of satisfaction with government performance and conditions in the country that mirrored the election results. Based on the HSRC survey, aggregate satisfaction indices were calculated for each province.⁵ These indices ranged from 55% in Mpumalanga to only 23% in the Western Cape. Ironically the top three provinces in terms of satisfaction (Mpumalanga, the Northern Province and the Eastern Cape) constituted some of the poorest provinces in the country, whereas the bottom three (the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng) had the highest relative levels of economic activity and wealth. This suggests that the ANC government's deliberate targeting of the poor in its economic policies since 1994 were acknowledged by the electorate.

The distribution of levels of satisfaction also mirrored population group distribution in South Africa. Satisfaction levels were generally highest in the provinces with the greatest proportion of black residents and lowest where other population groups constituted larger proportions of the population. The only exception to this pattern was KwaZulu-Natal, where the isiZulu-speaking population constituted the vast majority of the population.⁶ Nationally, the correlation between ranked satisfaction indices and the ranked percentage black population in a province was strongly positive (0,8). Conversely, the white/coloured/Indian population and satisfaction index by provincial ranking correlated strongly negatively (-0,7).

Given the apartheid history of South Africa, it could be expected that political opinion and voting behaviour would reflect the cleavages not only of race and ethnicity but also of differences in living standard, and that regional patterns in levels of satisfaction would mirror socio-economic differences between these groups. The black population registered a national satisfaction index of 45% in 1999, which was much higher than that for the other three population groups. The national satisfaction index for blacks nevertheless represented a decline since the euphoric months shortly after the 1994 election when 80% of blacks expressed satisfaction about their lives⁷ and 86% indicated that they were happy.⁸

The level of satisfaction among blacks in March 1999 was not uniform across the nine provinces, however. Mpumalanga (60%) and the Northern Province (54%) scored the highest while KwaZulu-Natal (28%) was at the bottom end of the satisfaction scale. White satisfaction was highest in the Eastern Cape (36%), significantly more so than the national average of 15% (Table 8.5). This constituted a dramatic decline since 1994, when 78% of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their lives.⁹ In 1999 white satisfaction was lowest in the Northern Province, where black satisfaction was highest. Whites in that peripheral region of the country are historically the most politically conservative and have arguably experienced the greatest paradigm shift since the inception of the new democratically elected government in 1994.¹⁰ However the rank correlation between white and black satisfaction levels was only weakly negative overall ($r_s = -0,207$). Blacks were accordingly not necessarily most satisfied where whites were least satisfied, and vice versa.

Table 8.3: Provincial distribution of votes for the national legislature by political party, June 1999

PARTY	EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	TOTAL
AITUP	1 745	421	1 146	3 206	437	387	1 281	520	1 468	10 611
ACDP	24 344	10 031	43 359	53 799	12 415	5 295	18 151	11774	49 807	228 975
ANC	1 617 329	887091	2527676	1 176926	962 260	211 206	1 483 199	1 052 895	682 748	10 601 330
AEB	3 996	4 228	10 922	5 878	4 256	1 686	6 095	6 130	3 101	46 292
AZAPO	2 743	1 919	5 293	4 525	1 059	1 237	8 121	1 426	934	27 257
DP	139 520	64 262	655 883	288738	56 114	18 952	28 116	48 665	227 087	1 527 337
FA	4 097	9 041	31 386	8 984	8 481	2 292	6 198	7 376	8 849	86 704
IFP	6 511	4 938	131 296	1 196 955	15 868	1 448	5 389	5 929	3 143	1 371 477
MF	750	351	1 271	43 026	401	182	653	362	1 281	48 277
NNP	72 639	54 769	142 749	73 766	28 559	31 072	550 775	1 098 215		
PAC	21 978	11 300	25 412	8 414	6 929	2 083	20 070	8 878	8 061	1 131 25
GPGP	693	285	2 179	1 952	246	98	570	320	2 850	9 193
SOPA	741	838	1 718	2 658	516	167	1 285	750	389	9 062
UCDP	2 528	8 019	7 619	2 671	830	1 684	97 755	1 781	125 280	
UDM	281 748	18 073	79 627	38 080	15 807	3 092	42 643	18 574	49 146	546 790
VF/FF	6 822	19 210	40 782	6 044	14 687	5 229	8 835	15 106	10 502	127 217
TOTAL	2 188 184	1 094 776	3 708 318	2 958 963	1 128 648	327 950	1 660 849	1 307 532	1 601 922	15 977 142

Table 8.4: Distribution of votes for each provincial legislature by political party, June 1999

PARTY	EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	Total
ACDP	20 857	9 827	42 581	53 743	12 626	5 004	18 281	12 227	44 323	219 471
AMP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9 513	9 153
ANC	1 606 856	881 381	2485 064	1 167094	958504	210 837	1 464 432	1 030 901	668 106	10 473 175
AEB	3 673	4 390	11 447	5 801	4 523	1 722	6 59	6 637	2 854	47 645
AZAPO	-	-	5 895	5 052	1 091	1 360	8 931	-	-	22 329
DPF	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 229	-	-	8 229
DP	136 859	58 163	658 231	241 779	50 246	15 632	23 486	42 593	189 183	1 146 352

FA	3 575	8 798	32 493	9 762	9 020	1 735	5 365	7 157	4 153	82 058
GPGP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 453	2 453
IFP	7 166	5 119	128 717	1 241 522	15 991	1 728	5 644	6 759	2 895	1 415 541
LP	-	-	1 088	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 088
MUM	-	-	-	2 261	-	-	-	-	-	2 261
MF	-	-	-	86 770	-	-	-	-	-	86 770
NACP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 126	1 126
NNP	70 141	56 740	142 563	97 077	27 925	79 214	28 159	29 931	609 612	1 141 362
PAC	24 837	12 548	26 774	7 654	7 303	2 158	23 325	9 613	7 708	121 920
PLP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	915	915
SOPA	-	1 235	1 988	3 451	-	-	-	-	-	6 674
SPP	-	-	-	-	4 318	-	-	-	-	4 318

PARTY	EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	Total
UCDP	-	8 543	8 596	-	2 599	-	-	124 874	-	124 874
UDM	29 6015	18 194	71 604	34 586	16 039	2 936	41 700	16 785	38 071	535 930
ULA	-	2 974	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 974
VF/FF	7 287	22 996	45 749	6 804	19 171	5 446	10 727	17 964	6 394	142 538
WIVL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	672	672
XP	-	-	-	-	-	-	13 817	-	-	13 817
TOTAL	2 177 266	1 090 908	3 662 790	2 963 358	1 129 536	327 772	1 658 694	1 305 441	1 587 978	15 903 743

Table 8.5: Satisfaction levels by race and province

		EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	Total
Black	Satisfaction index	49	42	46	28	60	53	54	50	49	45
	Provincial rank	5	8	7	9	1	3	2	4	6	
White	Satisfaction index	36	5	14	22	13	12	4	14	11	15
	Provincial rank	1	8	4	2	5	6	9	3	7	
Coloured	Satisfaction index	40	-	29	-	-	35	-	-	20	25
	Provincial rank	1		3	-		2	-		4	
Indian	Satisfaction index		-	4	16		-	-	-	-	14
	Provincial rank	-		2	1	-	-	-	-	-	
Total population	Satisfaction index	47	37	35	27	55	37	53	47	23	38
	Provincial rank	3	6	7	8	1	5	2	4	9	

Like the whites, the coloured people were most satisfied in the Eastern Cape (40%) and least so in the province where the largest proportion of this group lived, namely the Western Cape (20%). In the case of the small Indian population, who lived in significant numbers in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng only, those in the former were more satisfied (16%) than those in the latter (4%). These are the only two provinces where South African Indians lived in significant numbers.¹¹ If race is replaced with a different social indicator, namely standard of living, a broader picture emerges. A standard of living (SOL) indicator was derived from a set of 19 questions asked in March 1999 in respect of lifestyle. For the high-level SOL group, the national average satisfaction index was 31%. The Northern Province population was most satisfied (50%) and the Western Cape least satisfied (24%). Overall, the medium-level SOL group was generally more satisfied (44%) than the high-level group. Mpumalanga residents in this category indicated the highest level (66%) of satisfaction and those in the Western Cape again the lowest level (22%) (Table 8.6)

Among the low-level SOL group, average satisfaction was marginally lower (40%) than among the medium-level SOL group (44%). The satisfaction indices ranged from 51% in the Northern Province to only 20% in KwaZulu-Natal, with the Western Cape only marginally more satisfied at 21%. Thus, after controlling for the effects of living standard, the broad pattern of satisfaction across the country appears to have remained the same. The residents of Mpumalanga and the Northern Province across all living standard groups were generally more satisfied than those living elsewhere in the country, especially those in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Table 8.6: Satisfaction levels by standard of living (SOL) and province

SOL		EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	Total
HIGH 24% 99% electricity 94% refrigerator 58% insurance	Satisfaction index	44	30	31	29	39	27	50	40	24	31
	Provincial rank	2	6	5	7	4	8	1	3	9	
MEDIUM 38% 80% electricity 52% refrigerator 13% insurance	Satisfaction index	51	43	42	29	66	46	55	55	22	44
	Provincial rank	4	6	7	8	1	5	3	2	9	-
LOW 38% 19% electricity 9% refrigerator 1% insurance	Satisfaction index	44	37	36	20	50	31	51	42	21	40
	Provincial rank	3	5	6	9	2	7	1	4	8	-
TOTAL POPULATION	Satisfaction index	47	37	35	27	55	37	53	47	23	38
	Provincial rank	3	6	7	8	1	5	2	4	9	-

Resultant Electoral Geography

The foregoing details point to a particular national distribution of public satisfaction levels. Residents of Mpumalanga and the Northern Province were consistently the most satisfied while residents of the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal were the least satisfied. It is therefore no surprise that the distribution of support for the different political parties in the June 1999 election mirrored this pattern of public opinion, as predicted by the high correlation between satisfaction and the expressed intention to vote for the ANC (Figures 8.1 to 8.4).

The March 1999 survey data revealed a correlation of 0,463 between the overall satisfaction index and the intention to vote for the ruling ANC. In contrast, there were negative correlations between the satisfaction index and the intention to support an opposition party. The correlations were more strongly negative for the NNP (-0,212) and the DP (-0,195) than for the IFP (-0,123), UDM (-0,042) and ACDP (-0,064), which indicates a higher absence of satisfaction among NNP and DP supporters than among those of other opposition parties. This was corroborated by another survey in March 1999, conducted by MarkData,¹² which found that whereas only 27% of ANC supporters felt that the government had run the country well, only 5% of IFP supporters felt the same.

Table 8.7 shows that predictors of support for the ANC were satisfaction with the national economy and the government's economic policy, trust in the national government, positive views about race relations and racial tension, and satisfaction with the way the country was being governed. In contrast, there were much lower levels of correlation between ANC support and satisfaction with household financial situations and crime control. ANC supporters also demonstrated a much stronger interest in the prioritisation of employment creation (48%) than in fighting crime (26%). This implies that although ANC supporters were generally unhappy about crime and employment, they trusted the government, were satisfied with the way the country was being governed and felt that race relations were improving.

The intention to vote for either the DP, IFP, NNP, UDM or ACDP correlated negatively with satisfaction with the economy, trust in the national government, crime control and national

governance. Supporters of the DP and NNP tended to favour the prioritisation of the fight against crime (67% and 40% respectively) above employment creation (14% and 30% respectively). The other three parties favoured employment creation as a top national priority above fighting crime.

Figure 8.1 Distribution of support for the ANC, June 1994

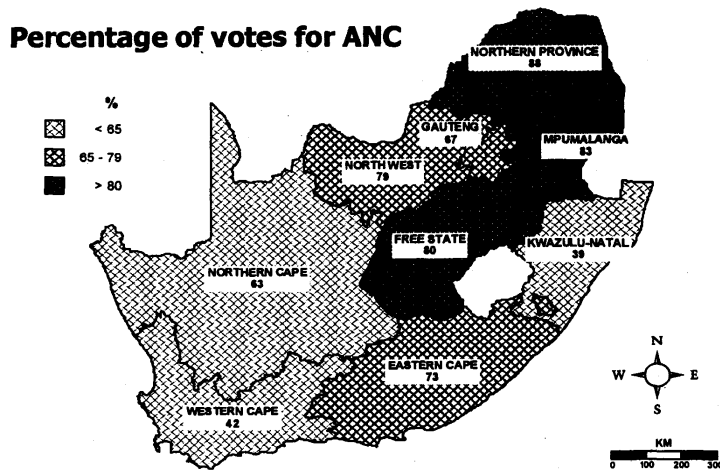


Figure 8.2 Distribution of support for the DP, June 1999

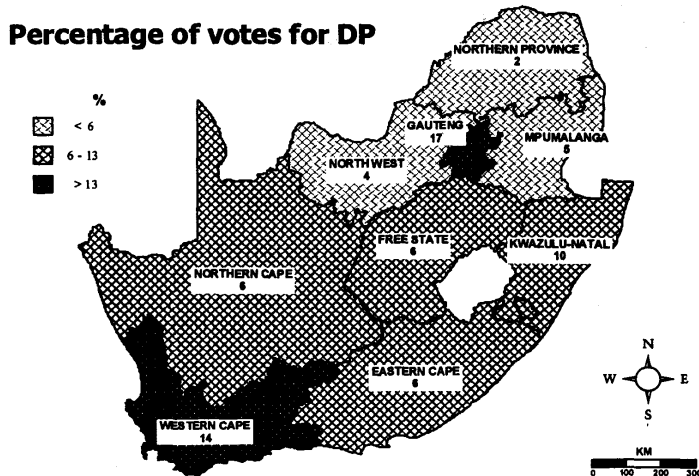


Figure 8.3 Distribution of support for the IFP, June 1999

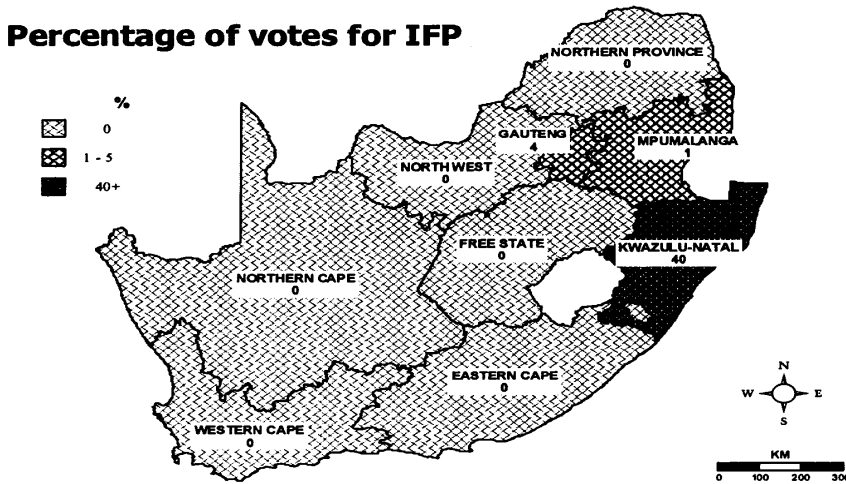
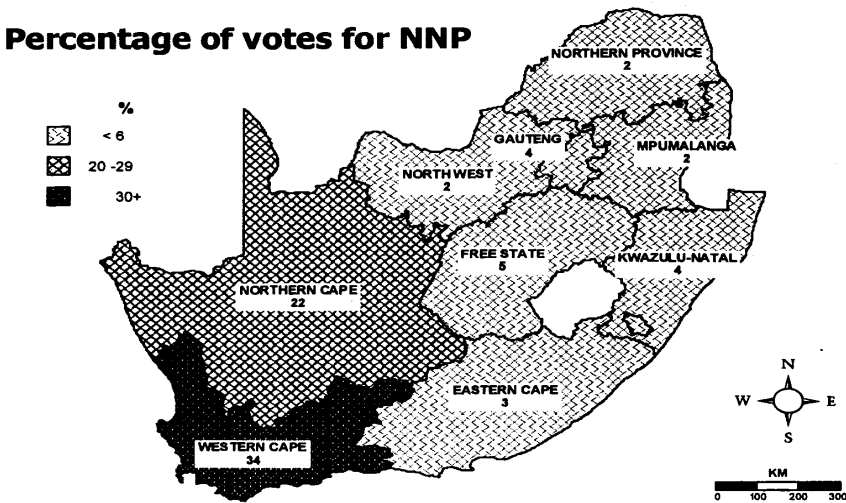


Figure 8.4 Distribution of support for the NNP, June 1999



In spite of the high levels of dissatisfaction with the national economy and with the crime situation, the majority of those surveyed in March 1999 indicated that they would have voted for the ruling party had the election been held at that time. Whereas more than three-fifths of South African adults were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the economic situation in the country and with their own household financial situation, 56% indicated that they would have voted for the ANC. The survey revealed that even among ANC supporters 58% and 61% respectively were dissatisfied with the economic and the household financial situation. Clearly, views on the economy and its impact at the national or household level did not affect political allegiance to the ANC.

The distribution of votes cast in favour of each of the parties on 2 June 1999 largely reflected the range of public opinion as revealed in the March 1999 survey. The ANC won seven provinces with large majorities. There were close contests in the other two provinces, in which opposition parties obtained more support than the ANC. The latter were the localities of the most dissatisfied sectors of the electorate, namely the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (Figures 8.1 to 8.4). The province that

expressed the highest average level of satisfaction, the Northern Province, rewarded the ANC with the highest proportion of votes cast (89%). This was closely followed by the second most satisfied province, Mpumalanga, with an 85% level of support for the ruling party. In the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal the proportions of votes cast for the ANC were only 43% and 40% respectively. A strong positive correlation ($r=0,82$) between support for the ANC and the satisfaction index was thus evident,

The relative electoral successes of the different political parties can also be expressed by means of the location quotient (LQ). This indicates the degree to which support for a party in each of the nine provinces exceeded or was less than the national average. Provincial strongholds for each party are thereby easily identifiable (Table 8.8).

The ANC achieved LQs of well in excess of one in five of the nine provinces, the exceptions being Gauteng, the Northern Cape, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, all of these also having recorded lower than average levels of satisfaction with the ANC. The DP's strongholds were Gauteng and the Western Cape, the two provinces with the largest metropolitan populations. The IFP's support was highly concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal only, where it achieved more votes than predicted by pre-election polls¹³ in spite of lower than average levels of voter registration.¹⁴ The very low satisfaction index for this province accounted for the large vote against the ANC. For the NNP, the Western Cape and the Northern Cape were strongholds and for the UDM, only the Eastern Cape yielded an LQ of more than one. The ACDP achieved above average proportions of the total vote in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape.

Table 8.7: Correlation between intention to vote for a party and issue opinion

Party	Satisfied with general economic situation in South Africa at present	Satisfied with financial situation of household at present	Government policies have had a good effect on general economic situation in past year	Trust or strong trust in the national government	Government is in full control of the crime situation	Race relations have improved in South Africa since April 1994	Racial tension against people like me has improved since April 1994	Satisfied with the way South Africa is being governed at present	Overall satisfaction index
ANC	,218	,088	,235	,420	,108	,273	,317	,426	,463
DP	-,096	,024	-,075	,214	-,027	-,111	-,170	-,197	-,195
IFP	-,062	-,074	-,076	-,033	-,080	-,083	-,086	-,123	
NNP	-,071	,023	-,129	-,181	-,040	-,149	-,159	-,224	-,212
UDM	-,019	-,039	-,023	-,008	,000	-,024	-,033	0,034	-,042
ACDP	-,023	,037	-,046	-,024	-,027	-,085	-,066	-,064	-,064

Pearson's correlation co-efficients. All co-efficients are significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed).

Table 8.8: Location quotient of each political party by province June 1999

PARTY	EC	FS	GT	KN	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC
ACDP	0,78	0,64	0,82	1,27	0,77	1,13	0,76	0,63	2,17
ANC	1,11	1,22	1,03	0,60	1,28	0,97	1,35	1,21	0,64
AEB	0,63	1,33	1,02	0,69	1,30	1,77	1,27	1,62	0,67
AZAPO	0,73	1,03	0,84	0,90	0,55	2,21	2,87	0,64	0,34
DP	0,67	0,61	1,85	1,02	0,52	0,60	0,18	0,39	1,48
FA	0,35	1,52	1,56	0,56	1,38	1,29	0,69	1,04	1,02
IFP	0,03	0,05	0,41	4,71	0,16	0,05	0,04	0,05	0,02
MF	0,11	0,11	0,11	4,81	0,12	0,18	0,13	0,09	0,26
NNP	0,48	0,73	0,58	0,58	0,35	3,27	0,25	0,35	5,00
PAC	1,42	1,46	0,97	0,40	0,87	0,90	1,71	0,96	0,71
GPGP	0,55	0,45	1,02	1,15	0,38	0,52	0,60	0,43	3,09
SOPA	0,60	1,35	0,82	1,58	0,81	0,90	1,36	1,01	0,43
UCDP	0,15	0,93	0,26	0,12	0,27	0,32	0,13	9,53	0,14
UDM	3,76	0,48	0,63	0,38	0,41	0,28	0,75	0,42	0,90
VF/FF	0,39	2,20	1,38	0,26	1,63	2,00	0,67	1,45	0,82
AITUP	1,20	0,58	0,47	1,63	0,58	1,78	1,16	0,60	1,38

Party Supporter Profiles

The HSRC's pre-election survey¹⁵ revealed the average profile of supporters of each of the major political parties (Table 8.9). These profiles were largely borne out by the election results, although a defection of NNP supporters to the DP continued to occur after most of the opinion polls had been published, resulting in a lower than expected level of support for the NNP and a higher than expected level of support for the DP. The proportion of support from each population group for each party could also be estimated, owing to the comprehensiveness of the electoral and census data. The ANC received most of its support (90%) from blacks and the DP most of its support (77%) from whites. The IFP's support base was almost exclusively the speakers of isiZulu who lived in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Almost half (44%) of the NNP's support came from coloureds with relatively large white (31%) and black (18,%) components.¹⁶

Conclusion

Provincial variations in the degree of support for each political party in South Africa's June 1999 election were largely but not exclusively attributable to the spatial distribution of the black and the white/coloured/Indian sections of the electorate. However, black voters were not necessarily most satisfied about the economic and crime situation in provinces where white voters were least satisfied, and vice versa. Similarly, when subdivided into three standard of living categories, there was no clear correlation between voter satisfaction with the government and standard of living across the provinces. This indicates that the election results cannot be construed merely as a racial or ethnic census of the electorate.

What emerges most clearly is the regional differentiation in levels of voter trust in and satisfaction with the national government and the resultant variations in support for the ANC in the June 1999 election. The electorates of Mpumalanga, the Northern Province and North West were in most respects more satisfied with the government than those of the other provinces. Likewise, voters in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape expressed consistently lower levels of satisfaction than the rest of the country. The correlation of the ranked aggregated satisfaction index for each province with the proportion of votes won by the ANC in June 1999 was, unsurprisingly, strongly positive. The high level of voter dissatisfaction in the Western Cape correlated with a population composition unlike any of the other provinces, namely a majority of coloured and white voters, In KwaZulu-Natal, on the other hand, most voters were black speakers of isiZulu. In both cases, surveys found repeatedly that most members of these groupings could be expected to vote against the ANC.

Table 8.9: Party supporter profiles

ANC VOTER PROFILE*												
	Black	Coloured	Indian	White		Language			Province		Religion	
Male	39	2,5	0	0,1		IsiXhosa	22		Gauteng	21	ZCC	11
Female	54	3	1	0,4		IsiZulu	16		E Cape	18	Catholic	10
						Sepedi	14		N Prov	15	Methodist	10
Household finances worse in last year				61		Sesotho	13		N West	11	Old Apos.	6
Dissatisfied with SA economy				58		Setswana	13		KZNatal	9	None	6
Personal economic situation will improve				63								
Has full-time or part-time employment				40		Passed at least Standard 8-level education					43	
DP VOTER PROFILE*												
	Black	Coloured	Indian	White		Language			Province		Religion	
Male	7	5	3	37		English	45		Gauteng	32	NG Kerk	16
Female	54	3	1	0,4		Afrikaans	37		KZNatal	28	Methodist	12
						Afr + Eng	11		W Cape	21	Catholic	8
Household finances worse in last year				48		IsiZulu	2		N West	5	Anglican	7
Dissatisfied with SA economy				83		Setswana	2		N Prov	4	None	7
Personal economic situation will improve				6								
Has full-time or part-time employment				57		Passed at least Standard 8-level education					91	
IFP VOTER PROFILE*												
	Black	Coloured	Indian	White		Language			Province		Religion	
Male	42	0	0	0		IsiZulu	87		KZNatal	91	Zionist	17
Female	56	1	0	1		IsiXhosa	3		Gauteng	4	Catholic	11
						Xitsonga	3		F State	2	None	9
Household finances worse in last year				60		Sesotho	3		E Cape	1	AFM	8

Dissatisfied with SA economy	65		English	1		W Cape	1		Lutheran	7
Personal economic situation will improve	13									
Has full-time or part-time employment	41		Passed at least Standard 8-level education							50

NNP VOTER PROFILE*										
	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Language		Province		Religion	
Male	8	13	4	21	Afrikaans	51	W Cape	39	NG Kerk	16
Female	54	3	1	0,4	English	22	Gauteng	26	Catholic	9
					Afr + Eng	11	KZNatal	15	Anglican	6
Household finances worse in last year				52	IsiZulu	9	E Cape	9	AFM	5
Dissatisfied with SA economy				72	IsiXhosa	2	F State	4	Hindu	5
Personal economic situation will improve				38						
Has full-time or part-time employment				49	Passed at least Standard 8-level education					61
UDM VOTER PROFILE*										
	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Language		Province		Religion	
Male	30	3	2	5	IsiXhosa	52	E Cape	51	Methodist	20
Female	51	4	0	5	IsiZulu	15	KZNatal	15	Anglican	8
					Afrikaans	10	Gauteng	13	Moravian	7
Household finances worse in last year				77	Sesotho	5	W Cape	8	AFM	6
Dissatisfied with SA economy				79	Sepedi	5	N Prov	5	ZCC	6
Personal economic situation will improve				41						
Has full-time or part-time employment				42	Passed at least Standard 8-level education					55

* Figures in this table refer to the percentage of all supporters of the party. Only the largest five language, provincial and religious groups have been listed in each case.

Broadly speaking, support for the ruling ANC in South Africa was shown to be unrelated to perceptions about its degree of control over the crime situation in the country or to satisfaction with the economic situation at either the national or the household level. Although job creation and fighting crime were mentioned most frequently as top national priorities, concerns about high rates of unemployment and crime appear to have been overlooked by most voters when casting their votes. These concerns were overruled by a widespread sense of trust or strong trust in the government, satisfaction with the way it governed the country and a perception that race relations improved since April 1994, accounting for the high proportion of votes cast in its favour on 2 June 1999.

Notes

- 1 Independent Electoral Commission, 1994. *Election Results 1994*. Pretoria: IEC.
- 2 Olivier, J., Brandt, R., Chauke, P., Hirschfeld, L, Naicker, S., O'Donovan, M., Phillips, H., Pietersen, J., Van Zyl, J., Schwabe, C. & Sibanyoni, C. 1998. *The extent to which eligible voters are in possession of SA identity documents*. Survey conducted for the Independent Electoral Commission. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- 3 Reynolds, A. 1999. The results. In Reynolds, A. (ed.). *Election '99 South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip, Chapter 12, pp.173-209.
- 4 Rule, S. (ed.). 1999. *Public opinion and national priority issues; Election 99*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- 5 Rule, S. 1999. *Decoding South Africa's 1999 electoral geography*. Paper presented at Third Biennial International Conference of the Society of South African Geographers, Windhoek, Namibia, 5-9 July.
- 6 The election results revealed a sharp urban-rural divide between KwaZulu-Natal's isiZulu-speaking supporters of the ANC and IFP respectively.
- 7 Möller, V. 1994. Post-election euphoria. *Indicator South Africa*, 12(1), 27-32.
- 8 In 1988, 86% expressed this sentiment in 1994. The same study (1988) noted that "being black in South Africa was a strong predictor of negative life satisfaction and unhappiness, even when other background factors were controlled".
- 9 Möller, 1994.
- 10 See Bornman, E. 1999. *Groepsidentifisering in 'n post-apartheid Suid-Afrika*. Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing. She found that white Afrikaners were the South African ethnic group most likely to say that they belonged to a unique cultural community (89%). Most whites (92%) in the Northern Province are Afrikaans speaking.
- 11 Such intraracial differences between provinces further illustrated that region is a determinant of public opinion acting independently of race.
- 12 Johnson, R.W. 1999. Gains and losses at the grassroots. *Briefing*, 15, 2-7.
- 13 Johnson, 1999.
- 14 Alence, R. & O'Donovan, M. 1999. *If South Africa's second democratic election had been held in March 1999: A simulation of participation and party support patterns*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- 15 Rule, S. 1999. *Party supporter profiles*. HSRC Press release, 5 May.
- 16 Reynolds, 1999.

Chapter 9

Conclusion: Exercising Democratic Citizenship Through Voting: Policy Implications

YVONNE Muthien AND MESHACK KHOSA

This volume was an attempt to measure the extent of democratic consolidation in South Africa by gauging citizen participation in and voter evaluation of this country's second democratic election.

Chapter 1 set out the modalities of the HSRC's election research package, including the study on bar-coded identity documents, public opinion surveys and attitude surveys, as well as the first exit poll to be conducted on election day.

Chapter 2 set out various indicators of democratic consolidation in South Africa, including public support for democracy, deracialisation, gender equality and the strength of civil society. The chapter revealed high levels of support for and institutionalisation of democracy, reflected on continued racial patterns of identification notwithstanding noteworthy shifts towards deracialisation, examined the policy implications of gender preferences in setting national priorities and finally evaluated the strength of citizen participation in civil society organisations. and positive support for public institutions. Overall South Africa made a good start at institutionalising democracy, although democratic behaviour cannot be taken for granted.

The results reported in Chapter 3 showed how the debate around identity documents raised public awareness of the need to acquire a bar-coded identity document in order to participate in the 1999 election. The results also showed the extent to which the IEC established itself as a credible organisation fit to manage the election. Its credibility and its commitment to a confidential voting process were important indicators of the success of the 1999 election. The broad base of positive support for the IEC among the voting population translated into a relatively high voter turnout on 2 June 1999. Although some isolated administrative problems were recorded on election day, South African voters received, by all accounts, a free and fair election.

In Chapter 4 the author set out a number of constraints embedded in the methodology of exit polls. He concluded that the findings erred in favour of a positive judgement of the freeness and fairness of the election, since the 1999 election excluded a number of potential voters from the process by its requirement of bar-coded identity documents and the exit poll's exclusion of people who preferred not to vote.

Chapter 5 contended that although the election appears to have been largely free and fair, fieldworkers' observations pointed to some gaps. First, there was a need for an equitable distribution of voters between voting districts to reduce the incidence of lengthy queues and voter frustration on the day of an election, particularly in densely populated areas. Second, there was a need for the wide publication of unambiguous information in the most feasible format about the location of registration and voting stations to avoid confusion and lack of motivation among the electorate, particularly in remote rural areas. Third, there was a need for more comprehensive training of local electoral officials, well in advance of an election to enable them to cope effectively with enquiries and logistical hiccups on election day.

In Chapter 6, the author assessed the role of competing political parties in the election and concluded that elections are potentially divisive processes, pitting contending parties with their respective policy platforms and organisational machinery against one another in a race for votes. Viewed in this light, the 1999 South African election generated much less conflict than that which pervaded the founding democratic election in 1994. This chapter suggested that the role of the IEC in preparing the country for the election was an important reason for the diminished conflict. The chapter surveyed the views of political parties and some other actors on the IEC's handling of the electoral machinery. Although all political parties, large and small, had negative comments about aspects of the IEC's handling of the election, they felt that the IEC had "done a good

job under the circumstances". Senior figures in each political party repeatedly noted that the 1999 election was conducted in a much better political and administrative environment than the 1994

election. They nevertheless pointed out that the IEC's planning for the 2004 general election had to start soon and not shortly before the next election.

Chapter 7 presented the findings on focus group discussions and concluded that the participants were generally appreciative of the handling of the logistics of the election. They also expressed the view that the success of the election illustrated a deepening of democracy, tolerance and patriotism. They commended the IEC for its management of the election and considered the voting stations to be accessible, voting to be free and fair, and voting procedures to be efficient.

In assessing the outcome of the 1999 election in Chapter 8, the author concluded that provincial variations in the degree of support for each political party were largely but not exclusively attributable to the spatial distribution of the black and the white/coloured/Indian sectors of the electorate. However, black voters were not necessarily the most satisfied about the economic and safety situation in provinces where white voters were the least satisfied, and vice versa. Similarly, when subdivided into three standard of living categories, voter satisfaction with the government did not clearly correlate with standard of living across the provinces. This indicates that the election results were not construable merely as a racial or ethnic census of the electorate. Indeed, the results were greatly informed by a widespread sense of trust in the government, satisfaction with the way it governed the country and a perception that race relations improved since April 1994.

Nine policy guidelines for future elections emerge from the HSRC's elections research. They are therefore presented below as a framework for future elections in South Africa.

The first policy guideline relates to the importance of voter education. It arose from the perception of the focus group and workshop participants that voter education had not been conducted widely enough. This problem was attributable to inadequate resources and lack of, or inadequately trained, personnel. Hence voter education should be a central objective in the total electoral process, and should be conducted under the broad management of the IEC. It should be funded appropriately and timely and should be particularly targeted at rural and illiterate people. It should be introduced well ahead of an election or, better still, be continuously presented as part of more general "democracy education". Experienced voter education trainers should be employed for this task, but the co-operation of non-governmental organisations and the Department of Education should be sought in this regard. Voter education materials should also be translated into the prevailing local languages.

The second policy guideline relates to the importance of registration and the effective maintenance of voters' rolls. Registration proved to be an important step in counteracting fraud, which could have jeopardised the outcome of the election. Despite the success of the 1999 registration, streamlining is still required. Voters' rolls should be updated continually and by various actors - the IEC, political parties, the Department of Home Affairs, local authorities and voters themselves - when listed addresses are changed. Alternatively, a large number of temporary officials should be recruited to conduct door-to-door registration shortly before an election. In any event, registration of non-registered voters for the up-coming local government elections should start now. The actual address of voting stations should also be provided in time to avoid confusion on election day. The IEC should also consider a special programme of registering the elderly and the disabled.

The third policy guideline relates to the importance of providing relevant, thorough and timely training to electoral staff, especially those to be deployed at the local voting stations. This is crucial to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and understanding to be effective as election observers or presiding officers, and to avoid role confusion. The certification of trained officials would simplify recruitment during subsequent elections.

The fourth policy guideline relates to the need to reconsider voting district demarcation. In 1999, voting stations in black townships, informal settlement areas and inner-city areas tended to experience overcrowding and very long queues. It is essential that the limitation on the number of voters per voting district be limited to manageable numbers. The IEC should therefore bring the demarcation of voting districts in line with the number of registered voters per voting district, but to limit changes to a minimum as voters are easily confused by such changes.

The fifth policy guideline relates to the counting of votes. Evidence shows that many of the officials on duty at the voting stations on election day were too exhausted to count votes. Their bodies

simply "stopped" and many "fell asleep". Appointing a fresh team to handle the counting process could solve this problem.

The sixth policy guideline relates to the clarification and streamlining of the procedures and requirements for declaration and special votes. Most importantly, communication about these to voters and officials well in advance of an election in order to avoid the confusion that occurred in June 1999 is essential. Declaration and special votes should only be permitted under the most stringent conditions, otherwise the quality of voters' rolls might be compromised and the number of votes cast would be suspect.

The seventh policy guideline underscores the importance of collaboration, partnership and joint ventures in working on large-scale projects such as an election. The mammoth task given to the IEC was generally executed through the collaboration of government, the private sector and civil society. The challenge is to cultivate a spirit of collaboration among all levels of society to enhance the electoral process in the future.

The eighth policy guideline relates to electoral funding. Political parties with adequate funding were able to reach larger numbers of voters than small political parties with less funding. The existing legislative framework around electoral funding requires a fundamental review, with due regard being given to international practice and the promotion of multi-party democracy and competition.

The independent evaluation of the election process constitutes the ninth policy guideline. Electioneering was conducted through the media, rallies, poster adverts and billboards on major streets. Apart from the monitoring of media reports on election events by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), the election process was also monitored by several non-governmental organisations.. Indeed, the IEC harnessed its resources well to monitor the election process in order to protect the credibility of the election. The degree to which monitors of the election campaign were representative of the spectrum of parties involved in the election differed from place to place, though.

The HSRC elections studies have illustrated the state of citizen participation in and voter evaluation of the 1999 election. Not only have the key statutory institutions that buttress democracy been established under the constitution, but public support for these institutions is substantial. The extent of habituation to, or institutionalisation of, participation in both public and civil society institutions augurs well for the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. Furthermore, the confidence of the electorate in the ability of the IEC to deliver a free and fair election, and its satisfaction with the IEC's administration of the election process are noteworthy. However, the distribution of voter concentration, queuing time, electoral administration, planning and logistics will have to be attended to before the forthcoming local government elections.

Finally, the 1999 election provided the HSRC with the first major opportunity to test the strength of democratic consolidation since the 1994 election, and to set a valid benchmark for the evaluation of future elections. We trust that this volume will also make a contribution to the literature on elections research.