

Chapter 13

Decoding South Africa's 1999 Electoral Geography

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Introduction

Variations in the support given to the African National Congress (ANC) and its political opponents in the June 1999 election are attributable to several factors. This chapter examines the election results in relation to regional differences in public opinion about government priorities and economic performance during the months prior to the election. The extent to which political contestation occurred in each province is shown to be a function of the levels of satisfaction with and trust in the government. Also of importance is the distribution of the racial and ethnic diversities of the population, a dimension that has marked effects on electoral outcomes elsewhere in southern Africa. Data used in this chapter were generated by the Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) national sample survey in March 1999, which was conducted to test the pre-election mood of potential voters.

Although it is difficult to determine the causes of individual voting behaviour, studies of election results have demonstrated that political allegiances are related to a variety of factors. Prominent among these are the socio-economic characteristics of an electorate and the spatial context within which their political socialisation has occurred.

The second round of fully democratic national election in South Africa was held on 2 June 1999. The ANC government was returned to office with just less than two-thirds (266) of the 400 seats in the National Assembly. Since the April 1994 election, substantial progress has been made in the transformation of the former apartheid state into a non-racial democracy. The extent to which this has been perceived to benefit

different sectors of the population in different parts of the country varies in relation to historical perceptions of relative material or other deprivation.

The intention of this chapter is to examine voting behaviour in relation to regional differences in public opinion about government performance, the economic and crime situations and race relations. The relationship between political contestation in each province and public opinion about levels of satisfaction with and trust in the government is explored. The extent to which regionalism impacts on public opinion and voting behaviour, independent of the racial and ethnic diversities of the population in each province, is also investigated.

Determinants of Voting Behaviour

The academic study of elections from a geographical perspective has focused primarily on long-standing western democracies. The electoral cleavage model developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) has informed much of this work. They postulated that electorates are sub-divided along cleavages based on social class differences. In economic terms, these could be portrayed as representing the respective views of labour and capital or producers and consumers. Less prominent cleavages between groups of voters were also identified in the model, namely urban and rural localities, economic core and peripheral regions, and religious and secular interests.

Both social class and regional cleavages occur in the United Kingdom. The industrial north of the country, with a dominant working-class population, has traditionally been a Labour Party stronghold. In contrast, the Conservative Party has dominated the wealthier region of southern England (Johnston, Pattie & Allsopp, 1988). In the United States, political cultures pertaining to three regions, namely the East, South and West, are seen to represent the dominant electoral cleavages (Archer & Shelley, 1986). Place and locality sectionalism have been shown to be more influential than class in determining voting behaviour in that country. Public opinion about social issues such as capital punishment, homosexuality, abortion, racial segregation and women in politics has shown consistent regional differences in the United States, although these

differences have declined in recent decades. More liberal views predominate in the New England and Pacific coastline regions, whereas conservative views predominate in the southern states. These views usually translate into electoral support for the Democratic and Republican parties respectively, although the regional origin of the candidate concerned also plays a role (Weakliem & Biggert, 1999).

In the newer democracies of the developing world, electoral cleavages in several countries have been shown to follow both ethnic and socio-economic lines. During the initial years of independence, Zimbabwean voters were split along a regional and ethnic cleavage. Matabele speakers in the southwest supported the Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF-ZAPU), while the Chishona-speaking community in the rest of the country voted for the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). After the merging of the two parties in 1987, voter participation among the Matabeles decreased significantly and politics has since been dominated by Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF. Cracks in this dominance showed up in the 1995 election when one independent candidate was elected from within a Shona-dominated Harare constituency. Additionally, during 1999 workers began to mobilise against the Mugabe regime, presenting further evidence of the emergence of new non-ethnic electoral cleavages (Bond, 1999). Namibian voters still largely vote along ethnic lines, with support bases for SWAPO and the DTA existing among the Ovambo and Okavango/Herero/white/coloured>Nama groupings respectively. In Botswana, the BDP has won every election since 1965 on the basis of strong support from most of the numerically dominant Setswana-speaking groups, especially the Bangwato, Bakwena, Bakgatla and Batlokwa. The opposition BNF has, however, garnered growing support amongst urbanised voters of all groups and obtained almost two-fifths of votes cast in the election of 1994 (Rule, 1995).

In the watershed 1991 election in Zambia, Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) was routed by the trade union-based Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) under Chiluba. The exception was Kaunda's home province (Eastern Province), where UNIP maintained majority support on the basis of its historical clientelist relationship with

the former president. The spectre of political sectionalism in the west, a remnant of the old Barotseland polity, re-emerged in 1993 when the National Party (NP) was formed by several MPs in the Western Province (Rule, 1996).

Nairn (1977) asserts that socio-cultural differences between voters are secondary to the material economic factors of uneven development. Politicians mobilise voters by encapsulating their material interests in broader ethnic, cultural or nationalistic visions. He ascribed the rise of Scottish nationalism to a growing awareness of the wealth of the North Sea oil-fields from which Britain as a whole has derived substantial economic benefit. In Sri Lanka, Hennayake (1992) held that a nation is nothing more than an ethnic group which happens to be in control of the state apparatus. She explains Tamil minority activism as a counter-hegemonic force in the face of Sinhalese domination of the polity. While the basis of the coherence of “ethnic” groups is tenuous, the power of regional ethnic sentiment in mobilising political support is manifest in southern Africa. The hegemonies of the Ovambo, Shona and Tswana-dominated regimes are arguably portrayed and propagated as broadly representative “nationalisms” in Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana respectively. The case of Tanzania differs somewhat in that the cross-cutting factors of ethnic territoriality, urbanisation and religious differences tend to blur any monolithic party support blocs among specific cultural groupings (Myers, 1998). Nevertheless, opposition to the dominant Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) government originates mainly from two regions with particular social characteristics. The first is the predominantly Muslim electorate of the Zanzibar island of Pemba represented by the Civic United Front (CUF), which won 28 seats in the Tanzanian parliament of 269 seats in the 1995 election. The second is the Chagga linguistic community of the Kilimanjaro region in the south, where the National Convention for Constitutional Reform (NCCR) won 19 parliamentary seats.

In Ghana, Dunn (1980) concluded, the electorate tended to vote for the parties that their “sense of social identity suggested that it would be appropriate for them to vote”. Popular obligation towards a party was not a deep existential commitment but an ideological category manipulated for

individual advantage. In states that are economically peripheral in the world economy, insufficient resources prevent the government from any widespread and meaningful distribution wealth in terms of the expectations of a social democracy. Elections thus constitute a means whereby the local elite legitimises its control of the state apparatus (Taylor, 1991). Decalo (1992) expresses the view that multi-party democracy is an inappropriate form of government in developing countries, a sentiment echoed by President Museveni of Uganda earlier this decade (Kahl, 1993). Decalo (1992) maintains that

competitive politics is an imported luxury neither needed nor affordable in developing countries, that can in any case devise other equally democratic structures (notably one-party democracy) more suitable to their unique circumstances. A multiplicity of political parties mainly mirrors, even politicises, existing social cleavages (ethnic, clan, regional, religious).

Given the lengthy history of segregation and apartheid, it is inevitable that race and ethnicity will play a prominent role in electoral politics in South Africa. In order to achieve success, the nation-building project of the present government will have to overcome decades of perpetuated social consciousness among the different groups of the country. It should therefore not be surprising that contemporary electoral cleavages identified in this study are closely associated with the social geography of the apartheid state. Of greater pertinence is an exploration of the dimensions of public opinion underlying the contemporary racial polarisation of the South African electorate.

Research Methodology

The data used in this chapter were generated by a national sample survey of 2 207 households throughout South Africa conducted during March 1999. The sample comprised randomly selected clusters of eight households each, stratified by nine types of enumerator areas (EAs) (Table 13.1) identified in the national census of 1996. The data were then weighted in accordance with the numbers of households in the EA concerned. The

resultant weighted data set was adjusted marginally to replicate the national distribution of population by race and province.

Statistical correlations between the responses to questions about several issues were calculated, and aggregated indices of satisfaction were determined for the respondents in each province by a living standard measure (LSM) and by racial category. These were then compared with actual election results in each province.

Table 13.1: March 1999 survey sample stratification

Enumerator area type	Number of households
Rural former homelands	655
Urban informal settlements	136
Hostels and hotels	160
Urban former coloured areas	184
Urban former Indian areas	48
Urban former black townships	481
Non-metropolitan urban former white areas	105
Metropolitan former white areas	208
Rural areas excluding former homelands	230
Total	2 207

Political Parties in South Africa

Political parties endeavour, using politically “correct” terminology, to encapsulate the needs and priorities of the segments of the electorate that they perceive to be their constituencies. The major parties in South Africa made concerted efforts to attract votes from beyond the bounds of their historical race or ethnic support bases. Thus the African National Congress (ANC) emphasised non-racialism in order to attract whites and the Democratic Party (DP) stressed the importance of merit-based good quality governance without regard to race. Similarly the New National Party (NNP) made frequent reference to the racial diversity of its support base, as did the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM) to inter-ethnic co-operation. The African Christian

Democratic Party (ACDP) stressed the importance of morality and Christian family values irrespective of race.

Not surprisingly, the election manifestos of the major political parties reflected a broad consensus about the importance of building a strong and united nation. Policies that favoured the poor and disadvantaged components of the population dominated the goals of most parties. Only after careful study is the reader able to discern policy differences in relation to tackling the national priority issues of job creation and crime prevention. The average voter would be hard-pressed to differentiate between parties committed to large-scale national public works employment creation programmes, the stimulation of entrepreneurship, the privatisation of state assets or a system of monetary vouchers exchangeable for vocational training. In terms of the fight against crime, nuances of approach relative to the control of the security sector, the treatment of sentenced criminals and the effective operationalisation of the justice system are similarly absent from the popular consciousness. It is likely that policy awareness is dictated by media sound bites and electioneering slogans. Most voters would conceptualise the parties in terms of simplistic phrases such as “Working together for change” (ANC), “Fight back against corruption” (DP), “Partnership is the only option” (UDM), “Make South Africa governable” (IFP), “Hang rapists and murderers” (NNP) and “Restoring order to the nation” (ACDP).

South African Public Opinion

Pre-election public opinion throughout South Africa reflected a range of apparently contradictory opinions about various national issues. Only one-quarter of the electorate was satisfied with the economic situation and only one in ten thought that the government had the crime situation under control. Not surprisingly therefore, 41% felt that the creation of employment should be the government's top priority and 32% felt that fighting crime should have number one priority status (Table 13.2).

Nevertheless, more than half said that they were satisfied with the way the country was being governed and that race relations had improved in South Africa since the April 1994 election. Most encouraging to the

government was that two-thirds of the adult population expressed trust or strong trust in it.

The Economy

Opinions about the national economy varied substantially from province to province. The March 1999 survey showed that satisfaction with the general economic situation in South Africa ranged from only 11% in KwaZulu-Natal to 40% in Mpumalanga. Satisfaction levels (with the general economic situation in South Africa) in the three provinces with large metropolitan populations (KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape and Gauteng) were all lower than the national average of 23% (Table 13.2). The electorates of the economic core areas of the country were thus more dissatisfied with the state of the economy than were those of the economically peripheral regions.

A slightly higher proportion (28%) (Table 13.2) indicated satisfaction with the financial situations of their own households. Again, however, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape registered below average levels of satisfaction, in this case together with the population of the Free State. Gauteng respondents were, on the other hand, slightly more satisfied than average in respect of their household finances. This was not surprising, given the province's below average rate of unemployment in relation to other provinces.¹

Nearly one in five adults felt that government policies during the preceding twelve months had been beneficial to the economy of the country. This proportion was as low as one in ten in KwaZulu-Natal, with similarly low approval of the impact of economic policies in the Northern Cape, Northern Province and Western Cape.

Lower than average proportions living in the Western Cape and Gauteng felt that employment creation should be prioritised by the government. This is probably attributable to the relatively low levels of unemployment in those two provinces. In contrast, more than two-thirds of people in the (relatively poor) Northern Province mentioned job creation as top priority (Table 13.2).

Landscape Table 13.2

The Crime Situation

A small minority (less than one in ten people) was of the view that the government was in full control of the crime situation. Lowest levels of confidence occurred in the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and Free State, where 4% or less felt the government had full control over crime (Table 13.2). Inexplicably, the Eastern Cape was an exception, where 25% of the population felt that the government was in full control of the crime situation.

Overall, one-third (32%) of the population felt that fighting crime should be accorded top priority by the government. However, in three provinces the proportion was substantially higher. In Gauteng, the Western Cape and Eastern Cape, larger proportions prioritised the crime situation over job creation as the government's number one priority.

Governance

In spite of the aforementioned concerns about the economy and the crime situation, more than half (53%) of the population expressed satisfaction with the manner in which the country was being governed (March 1999). However, provincial variations were marked, with only one-quarter of those in the Western Cape and one-third in KwaZulu-Natal expressing satisfaction. A slightly lower than average proportion (46%) of satisfied citizens was also to be found in Gauteng. In contrast, more than three-quarters of the population of Mpumalanga and the Northern Province were either satisfied or very satisfied with national governance.

A similarly surprising finding of the survey was that two-thirds of the population had either strong trust or trust in the national government. In the Northern Province this proportion was a massive 88%, with the Eastern Cape and North West close behind at the 84% level. Once again, residents of the metropolitan provinces, namely the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and to a lesser extent Gauteng, were less likely to be satisfied with national governance (Table 13.2).

A previous HSRC survey (November 1998) found that two-thirds of South African adults agreed with the statement that "democracy is always

preferable to any other system of government". The attitudinal differences between the races were less significant than the differences between those respondents with higher versus lower levels of education. Among both blacks and whites, more education correlated positively with support for democracy (Alence, 1998). In conjunction with the high levels of satisfaction with and trust in the government, this sentiment bodes well for the country's new democratic system.

Race Relations

Respondents were asked whether they thought that relations between the different races of South Africa had improved since the first democratic election of April 1994. More than half (55%) replied in the affirmative and more than eight in ten in Mpumalanga and the Northern Province felt that this was the case. However, only three in ten in the Western Cape thought that race relations had improved. This may be attributable to relatively minor improvements in race relations in the traditionally more liberal politics of the Western Cape, compared with other provinces. A similar pattern emerged when respondents were asked more specifically whether they thought that racial tensions "against people like you" had decreased since April 1994. Just over half (52%) said that there had been an improvement, with much higher proportions holding this view in the Northern Province (84%) and Mpumalanga (82%). Again, only 26% of the Western Cape population felt this way (Table 13.2).

Overall Satisfaction

Different overall levels of satisfaction emerged in each province. Satisfaction ranged from a level of 55% in Mpumalanga to only 23% in the Western Cape. Ironically three of the top provinces (Mpumalanga, Northern Province and Eastern Cape) constitute the poorest in the country, whereas the bottom three (Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng) have the highest levels of economic activity and wealth (Figure 13.1). This suggests that the ANC government's deliberate targeting of the poor in its economic policies since 1994 has met with success in the perception of the electorate. At another level, however, the distribution of levels of

satisfaction was largely a reflection of the racial distribution of the South African population. Satisfaction levels were generally highest in provinces with the greatest proportion of black residents and lowest where other races comprised larger proportions of the population. The only exception to this pattern was KwaZulu-Natal, where isiZulu speakers comprise the vast majority of the population. Nationally, the correlation between ranked satisfaction indices and ranked percentage black population in a province was strongly positive (0,8). Conversely, non-black population and satisfaction index by provincial ranking correlated strongly negatively (-0,7).

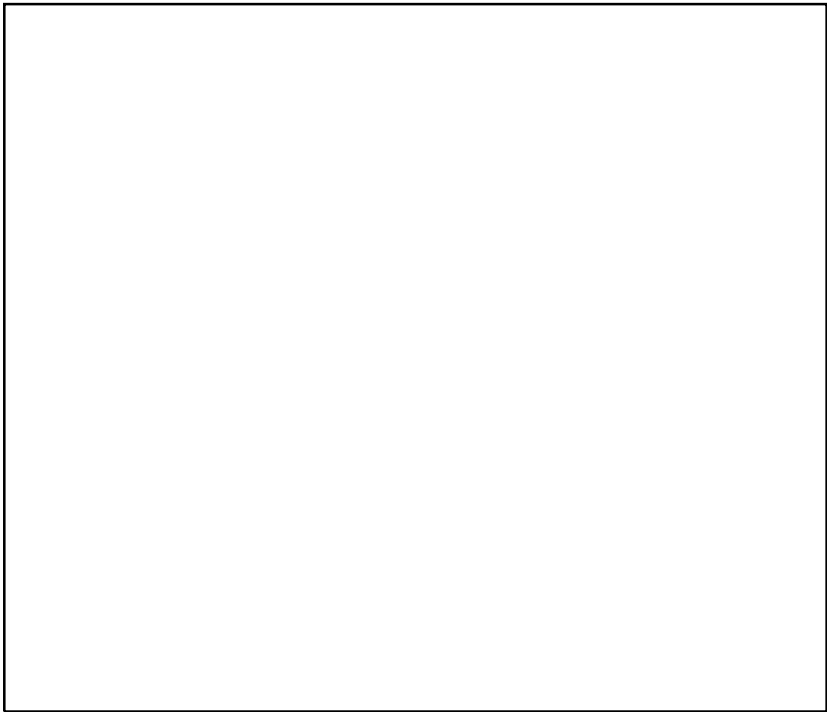


Figure 13.1: Satisfaction index: SA voters

The Effect of Race and Standard of Living

Given the apartheid history of South Africa, political opinion and voting behaviour could be expected to reflect the cleavages not only of race and ethnicity but also of living standard. Regional patterns in levels of satisfaction could thus be expected to be mirrors of socio-economic differences.

In order to test the hypothesis that regional differences are only significant because of the geographical distribution of races in the country, the satisfaction indices for each race group were calculated using the same methodology as in the previous section of this chapter. Among the black population, the national satisfaction index was 45, much higher than that for the other three races. This nevertheless represents a decline since the euphoric months shortly after the 1994 election when Møller (1994) found that 80% of blacks expressed satisfaction about their lives (albeit using different questions). Similarly, 86% indicated that they were happy in 1994.

The relatively high level of satisfaction among blacks in March 1999 was not uniform across all nine provinces, however. Mpumalanga (60) and the Northern Province (54) scored highest and KwaZulu-Natal (28) was at the bottom end of the satisfaction scale. This is indicative of the relevance of regional politics in accounting for variations in public opinion, regardless of race (Table 13.3).

White satisfaction was highest in the Eastern Cape (36), significantly more so than the national average index of only 15. This constitutes a drastic decline since 1988 and 1994, when 82% and 78% respectively said that they were satisfied with their lives (Møller, 1994). 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 1994.² That component of the white electorate was the only one where the majority even voted against the initial liberalisation of the constitution in 1983. However, the rank correlation between white and black satisfaction levels was only weakly negative overall ($r_s = 0,207$).

Landscape Table 13.3

Blacks were thus not necessarily most satisfied where whites were least satisfied, and vice versa.

Like whites, coloured people were most satisfied in the Eastern Cape (40). Coloureds were least satisfied where the largest proportion of this group is domiciled, namely the Western Cape (20). In the case of the small Indian population, those in KwaZulu-Natal (16) were more satisfied than those in Gauteng (4) (Table 13.3). These are the only two provinces where South African Indians live in significant numbers. These intraracial differences between provinces further illustrate that region is a determinant of public opinion, acting independently of race.

If race is replaced with a different social indicator, namely standard of living, a broader picture emerges. A living standard measure (LSM) was derived from a set of 19 questions asked in March 1999 in respect of lifestyle (Table 13.4). For the high LSM group, the national average satisfaction index was 31. The Northern Province population in this group was most satisfied (50) and the Western Cape (24) least satisfied. Overall, the medium-level LSM group was generally more satisfied (44) than the high-level group. Mpumalanga residents in this category indicated the highest level (66) of satisfaction and, again, those in the Western Cape the lowest level (22) (Table 13.5). Living standard group categories were high, medium and low. These comprised of 24%, 38% and 38% of the population respectively (Table 13.5).

Among the low-LSM group, average satisfaction was marginally lower (40) than the medium LSM group (44). The satisfaction indices (in the low LSM group) ranged from 51 in the Northern Province to only 20 in KwaZulu-Natal, with the Western Cape only marginally more satisfied, at 21 (Table 13.5) (in the low LSM group).

Thus, controlling for the effects of living standard, the broad pattern of satisfaction across the country 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 13.4: Indicators used to determine value of Living Standard Measure (LSM)

<p>Household possession of appliances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fridge or freezer • polisher or vacuum cleaner • hi-fi or music centre • television • microwave oven • washing machine <p>Household has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electricity • hot running water • a domestic servant • at least one car • a flush toilet • buys dishwashing liquid 	<p>Respondent personally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does household shopping at supermarkets • shops at supermarkets <p>Respondent personally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has insurance policy/ies • has a bank account, ATM card or credit card • has account or credit card at retail store <p>Household lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a hut • in a rural area
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The Resultant Electoral Geography

The foregoing detail points to a particular national distribution of public satisfaction levels. Residents of Mpumalanga and the Northern Province were consistently the most satisfied and those living in 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 1999 election mirrored this pattern of public opinion. The pattern was also predicted by the high correlation between satisfaction and the expressed intention to vote for the ANC.

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 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), however

Landscape Table 13.5

(Table 13.6). This is indicative of a higher absence of satisfaction amongst NNP and DP supporters than among those of other opposition parties. This was corroborated by another survey in March 1999. Conducted by MarkData (Johnson, 1999), the survey found that whereas only 27% of ANC supporters felt that the government had run the country well, this was as low as only 5% among supporters of the IFP.

Table 13.6 shows that indicators 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 views about the crime situation. ANC supporters also demonstrated a much stronger interest in the prioritisation of employment creation (48%) than in fighting against crime (26%). The implication here is that although supporters of the ANC were generally unhappy about crime and unemployment, 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 the DP, IFP, NNP, UDM or ACDP correlated negatively with satisfaction with the economy, trust in the national government, the crime situation 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%). The other three parties were more in favour of employment creation as a top national priority than fighting crime.

Thus, 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 said 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% said that they would have voted for the ANC in March 1999. The survey revealed that even amongst ANC supporters, 58% and 61% respec-

Landscape Table 13.6

tively were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the economic situation of the country and with their own household financial situation. Clearly, views about the economy and its impact at the national or household level did not affect political allegiance to the ANC in March 1999.

Distribution of actual votes cast in favour of each of the parties on 2 June 1999 largely reflected the range of public opinion as determined in the March 1999 survey. Seven provinces were won by the ANC with large majorities and two were only narrowly lost to opposition parties. The latter were the localities of the most dissatisfied sectors of the electorate, namely the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

The province that expressed the highest average level of satisfaction, the Northern Province, rewarded the ANC with the highest proportion of votes cast (89%) (Table 13.7). This was closely followed by the second most satisfied province, namely 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 (Table 13.7). A strong positive correlation ($r_s=0,82$) between support for the ANC and the satisfaction index was thus evident.

An alternative methodology of depicting the relative electoral successes of the different political parties is the application of the location quotient (LQ). This indicates the degree to which support for a party in each of the nine provinces exceeds or is less than the national average. Relative provincial strongholds for each party are thereby easily identifiable.

The ANC achieved LQs of well in excess of one, in five of the nine provinces. The exceptions were Gauteng, the Northern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The latter all recorded lower than average levels of satisfaction (Table 13.8). The DP's relative strongholds were the metropolitan provinces of Gauteng and the Western Cape. The IFP's support was highly concentrated only in KwaZulu-Natal, where it achieved more votes than predicted by pre-election polls (Johnson, 1999) in spite of lower than average levels of voter registration (Alence & O'Donovan, 1999). The very low satisfaction index for the province accounts for this large vote against the ANC. For the NNP, the Western

Landscape Table 13.7

Table 13.8

Cape and the Northern Cape were the two strongest provinces, 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 13.8).

Conclusion

At one level, 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 white sectors of the electorate. However, this chapter has shown that 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 sub-divided into three standard of living categories, there was no clear correlation between voter satisfaction with the government and standard of living across the provinces. To portray the election results only as a racial or ethnic census is therefore reductionist, owing to the obfuscatory effects of standard of living cleavages that cut across racial divides.

What emerges most clearly from this chapter is the regional differentiation in levels of voter trust in and satisfaction with the national government and the resultant variations in support given to the ANC in the June 1999 election. The electorates of the provinces 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 correlates 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 are black speakers of isiZulu. In both cases, surveys found repeatedly that the voting behaviour of most members of these groupings could be expected to constitute opposition to the ANC.

Broadly, support for the ruling ANC in South Africa has been 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 sublimated in the minds of most voters when casting their votes in the election. Rather, a wide-spread sense of trust or strong trust in the government, satisfaction with the way it has governed the country and a perception that race relations have improved since April 1994 account for the high proportion of votes cast in its favour on 2 June 1999.

Notes

- ¹ The unemployment rate in Gauteng was only 17% in comparison with a national average of 29% (Central Statistical Service, 1996).
- ² Bornman (1999) 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.

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Landscape Table Appendix 13.1