

# PARTISAN REALIGNMENT IN CAPE TOWN 1994-2004

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## ABSTRACT

*The Western Cape is the one part of South Africa that has experienced strong competition in democratic elections and a dramatic shift in power between political parties. Between 1994 and 2004 the initially dominant National Party lost almost all of its support, while support for the African National Congress rose steadily. Because of both the heterogeneity and supposed fluidity of the 'coloured vote' neither voting patterns nor shifts in the Western Cape fit neatly within a simple racial explanation of voting behaviour. Firstly, coloured voters have voted for opposing parties. Secondly, it has been asserted widely, there was a swing among coloured voters from the National Party to the African National Congress. This paper explores ward-level election results and survey data on Cape Town to show that coloured voters continue to be heterogeneous in their voting behaviour but that there is little evidence that former National Party supporters became ANC supporters between 1994 and 2004. The major cause of shifting partisan power in Cape Town is not voter realignment but rather demographic change, with differential turnout playing a role in specific elections. It is the overall electorate, rather than the individual voter, that has changed.*

## INTRODUCTION

In South Africa as a whole successive elections since 1994 have returned almost identical results. The share of the vote won by the African National Congress (ANC) has risen very slightly, while the opposition parties have failed collectively to make any inroads into its support. South Africa seems to have a dominant

party system, with little real competition for the popular vote (Lodge 1999, 2002; Reynolds 1999; Southall 2001; Piombo & Nijzink 2005).

In one province, however, not only has there been fierce electoral competition but there was also a striking shift in political power between 1994 and 2004. Historically the Western Cape is not an area of ANC strength and in the first democratic elections, in 1994, the ANC won just one-third of the vote in the province – approximately the same share that it won in KwaZulu-Natal and less than its share in each of the other seven provinces. The largest share (53%) of the 1994 vote in the Western Cape was won by the National Party (NP), so, from 1994 the province had a National Party provincial government and premier. Just ten years later, however, the picture was very different. In 2004, in the third democratic elections, the ANC won 45 per cent of the provincial vote, against just 11 per cent for the by then ‘New’ National Party (NNP). ANC leaders served as provincial premier (Ebrahim Rasool) and Mayor of Cape Town (NomaIndia Mfeketo).

The shift in power from the NP to the ANC was fast but steady. Table 1 summarises the votes won in the Western Cape by the major parties in each provincial and local election between 1994 and 2004.

**Table 1<sup>1</sup>**  
**Votes for major parties in elections in the Western Cape 1994-2004**

Party	1994 provincial		1996 local*		1999 provincial		2000 local**		2004 provincial	
	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%
DA							564	50	425	27
DP	142	7	60	5	189	12				
NP/NNP	1 138	53	564	48	610	38			170	11
ANC	706	33	432	37	668	42	440	39	709	45
ID									123	8
Other	151	7	108	9	134	8	117	10	140	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 137</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 164</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 601</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 120</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 567</b>	<b>100</b>

\* PR votes \*\* PR + ward votes, divided by 2

<sup>1</sup> Numbers in tables have been rounded off to the nearest integer resulting in rounding errors when the totals are calculated, hence there are some disparities in the percentage totals.

The ANC's share of the vote rose from 33 per cent in the 1994 provincial elections to 37 per cent in the local elections of 1995-96 and 42 per cent in the 1999 provincial elections. The ANC's share of the vote dropped slightly in the local elections of 2000 before resuming its upward trend again, reaching 45 per cent in the 2004 provincial elections. The NP's decline was even sharper than the ANC's rise. From 53 per cent of the vote in 1994 its share fell to 48 per cent in 1995-96 and 38 per cent in 1999. It contested the 2000 local elections as part of the newly formed Democratic Alliance (DA), together with the Democratic Party (DP) and other, very minor, allies. In 2004, after splitting from the DA and forming a new alliance with the ANC instead, the NNP won a mere 11 per cent of the vote.

The shift in institutional power from the NP to the ANC was not achieved through these general provincial and local elections alone. In the Western Cape, the ANC has repeatedly benefited from institutional rules that gave it power ahead of its rising share of the popular vote. Thus, after the first post-apartheid local elections in 1995-96, the ANC won control of a number of municipalities – including two major parts of Cape Town – on the basis of the legislative provision that former 'black' areas received half the wards in the new 'interim' councils, even if they were home to a much smaller proportion of the electorate (see Seekings 1995, 1997a). More recently, changes in power have run ahead of changes in the popular vote as a result of defections, floor crossing and shifting partisan coalitions in provincial and local assemblies. As the NP has fallen apart, many of its provincial and municipal legislators have found their way into the ANC. At local government level, for example, the ANC won control of the Cape Town City Council when former NP councillors, elected in 2000 under the flag of the DA, crossed the floor in September 2004.

Both the initial patterns of electoral support and post-1994 trends have attracted widespread commentary in the press as well as a range of scholarly analyses. Voting patterns in the 1994 election received the most detailed analysis, as scholars grappled with the incongruence between voting in the Western Cape and simple race-based explanations of voting behaviour. In the country as a whole the support base of the ANC comprised African voters, and the support base of the NNP comprised coloured, Indian and white voters. This simple correlation gave rise to descriptions of the 1994 election as a racial census, to use a phrase coined by Horowitz (1985) to describe elections in other multi-ethnic societies. In the Western Cape, as Reynolds (1994, pp 203-4) and many others have noted, there was a strong correlation between race and voting, with African citizens voting for the ANC and most white and coloured citizens voting for the NNP. But the ANC did win the votes of an estimated one in four coloured voters (Reynolds 1994, p 201; Mattes et al 1996, p 145). Indeed, as Mattes, Giliomee and James pointed out, none of the NP, ANC or DP had a mono-racial support base:

the NP's support base was (they estimate) two-thirds coloured and one-third white, the ANC's almost equally African and coloured, and the DP's almost equally white and coloured (Mattes et al 1996, p 146).

Any explanation of voting patterns in the Western Cape has to confront the fact that there is no monolithic 'coloured vote'. For the ANC and NP, campaigning in 'African' and 'white' residential areas respectively was a matter of promoting turnout among their core supporters. It was in 'coloured' areas that there was a battle for hearts and minds. This presented each of these political parties with a strategic dilemma: might promoting themselves in coloured areas perhaps undermine their turnout in their areas of core support? A series of studies focused on how the ANC and NP addressed this dilemma and how coloured voters responded to the parties' campaigns (Calland 1994; Eldridge 1996; Eldridge and Seekings 1996; Seekings 1996a; Mattes et al 1996). The overall result is clear: working-class coloured voters opted en masse for the NP while middle-class coloured voters were divided, with many supporting the ANC.

In a poll in mid-1993 half of all coloured voters in the Western Cape said they did not know for which party they would vote. In an earlier paper I argued that the story of the 1994 election in the Western Cape was essentially the story of the NP's success in persuading most of these initially undecided coloured voters to vote for the NP (Seekings 1996a). Most other scholars writing about the election have also argued or implied that the 1994 result was not pre-ordained, but instead was contingent upon the campaigns run by the major competitors. The NP emphasised its national leader, FW de Klerk, who enjoyed strong personal support among these voters. The ANC's campaign was characterised by mishaps that alienated coloured voters (Mattes et al 1996, pp 129-31). Almost all voters (and parties) concurred that the key issues in the election were jobs and crime, and both parties ran issue-oriented campaigns, but the NP's take on these issues was more appealing to undecided voters. As I wrote then:

Coloured voters might have been convinced that the ANC had an impressive 'Plan' [the Reconstruction and Development Programme] to build houses and provide jobs, but they seem to have remained skeptical that they themselves would benefit. ... The NP campaign, on the other hand, was effective in linking voters' fears to the spectre of a destructive ANC. When African squatters occupied houses built for coloured families, the NP warned (coloured) voters that their houses were 'not safe under the ANC'. ... The NP succeeded in defining the way in which the issues were understood.

Calland (1994) argues that the ANC would have done better had it adopted a more aggressive, and negative, campaign, focusing primarily on the long history of apartheid. Mattes et al (1996) note that it would have been difficult for the ANC to run a negative campaign in this province while running a positive campaign nationally. But there are different kinds of negative campaign: Eldridge and I (1996) argue that a more effective negative campaign in the Western Cape would have focused on the immediate issues, that is, jobs and crime, emphasising the NP's failure to address these issues while they held power in the very recent past.

Electoral trends after 1994 supported the general interpretation of contingent voting, that is, that voting was contingent on circumstance and campaign and was not fixed or pre-determined. The dominant media interpretation of the apparently increasing support for the ANC was that there was a 'swing' from the NP to the ANC, with individual voters defecting from the former to the latter. The ANC, unsurprisingly, backed this interpretation in its public statements. I contested it in a series of articles following the first post-apartheid local government elections (Seekings 1995, 1996b, 1997a). My argument revolved primarily around data on turnout in the elections. Between 1994 and 1995-96, the ANC's share of the provincial vote may have risen, but the absolute number of votes the party won in the Western Cape actually declined, from 706 000 to 432 000. The ANC's share of the vote only rose because there was an even more spectacular collapse in the number of votes won by the NP – from more than 1,1 million to just 564 000.

I suggested that the shift in the vote was the consequence of differential turnout: the ANC had a much larger core of strong supporters, who turned out to vote in 1995-96, while the NP had a small core of strong supporters and a large number of weak supporters, so it was especially hard hit by low turnout in 1995-96. The 'swing' was the result of voters who were undecided in mid-1993 but opted for the NP in 1994, who then became disproportionately apathetic in 1995-96 so that the primary 'swing' was from voting for the NP to not voting at all. The evidence of a swing from the NP to the ANC was weak. 'Without the results of consecutive elections at the same level, or comparable and sound opinion poll data, we should beware strong claims about shifts and swings' (Seekings 1997a, p 135).

The results of the 1999 provincial elections were not clear enough to resolve the issue of voter realignment (see Table 1). The ANC won more votes in 1999 than it had in 1995-96 but fewer than it had in 1994. Its share of the vote continued to rise, not because it was winning more votes but because the other parties were losing them. The DP and NP combined had won almost 1,3 million votes in 1994. In 1999 they won just 799 000. Unfortunately, most studies of these results ignored

the existing literature and tended simply to replicate rather than build on the findings of earlier studies. Jacobs (2001)<sup>2</sup> found that the 1999 election showed that support for the NP was not strongly entrenched. Like me, he suggested that there had been a clear swing to the ANC in small towns and among farm workers. Like me, he pointed to the importance of turnout. Like Mattes et al, Eldridge and myself, and Lodge (1999), Jacobs argued that the parties' strategic and tactical choices were consequential. The new NP leader, Martinus van Schalkwyk, was no vote-puller in the De Klerk mould. The ANC, on the other hand, waged a more effective campaign than it had in 1994, addressing directly many of the concerns of poorer coloured voters and attacking the NP more strongly (see Lodge 1999, pp 142-6, 176-7). The ANC also reaped the electoral benefits of having delivered improved living conditions in some areas. Habib and Naidu (1999) also reached the very unoriginal conclusion that class as well as race played a part in voting behaviour, with the NNP and DP performing better in poorer coloured areas in the Western Cape (and, similarly, Indian areas in KwaZulu-Natal) while the ANC performed better in richer coloured (and Indian) areas.

The results of the 2000 local elections further complicated analysis of voter realignment in the Western Cape. The ANC's vote dropped to almost the same number as in the previous local elections, in 1995-96. Its share (39 %) was slightly higher than it had been in 1995-96, but was lower than that in the 1999 provincial elections (see Table 1). The ANC's opponent in the 2000 local elections was, for the first and only time, the Democratic Alliance. The new DA won far fewer votes than the NNP and DP in combination had won in 1995-96 and its share was the same as it had been in 1999 (but was up slightly in Cape Town).

There are, to my knowledge, no independent studies of the 2000 elections in the Western Cape or Cape Town specifically,<sup>3</sup> but Lodge's study of the local elections countrywide includes some discussion of Cape Town (see especially Lodge 2002, pp 104-10). Both parties again pitched their campaigns at coloured voters, with the ANC selecting as their candidate for mayor Lynn Brown (having failed to persuade Cheryl Carolus, the ambassador to London, to stand) and the DA selecting Pieter Marais (from the NNP). Both parties made concerted efforts

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<sup>2</sup> In his article Jacobs claimed that the extant literature on voting among coloured South Africans tells us nothing about the 'political behaviour of coloured voters' or 'the tactics of political parties that were contesting the vote' (p 26). His grasp of the literature was poor. He fails to cite any of the work of Calland (1994), Eldridge (1996; Eldridge and Seekings 1996) or myself (Seekings 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997a). Although he did refer to data in one article of mine (Seekings, 1996a) he failed to attribute the article to me and ignored the substantive argument contained therein. Jacobs perhaps ignores all this previous work because he is distrustful of pre-1999 opinion polls, but his criticisms of those polls (p 25) are not specified.

<sup>3</sup> ANC official Max Ozinsky wrote an insightful commentary in the ANC magazine, *Umrabulo* (Ozinsky 2001).

to appeal to coloured voters. But in the end the overall result was more of a reflection of the DA's success in mobilising its supporters in white areas relative to the ANC in African townships, that is, the election result hinged on turnout – as both parties acknowledged (Lodge 2002, p 119). Lodge does not attempt to assess trends in coloured areas or among coloured voters.

The 2004 election results seem to provide much stronger evidence of a swing to the ANC, which won 709 000 votes in the province, even more than it had in the 1994 election (see Table 1). Its share of the vote was a full 12 percentage points higher in 2004 than in 1994, a dramatic rise in view of the fact that the total number of votes cast in the province in 2004 was much the same as that in 1999, and way below the 1994 figure. The opposition parties were more fragmented in 2004 than in 2000. A large section of the NNP had split from the DA (leaving a significant rump of former NNP members behind) and entered a remarkable alliance with the ANC. Meanwhile, Patricia de Lille – a high-profile coloured member of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) – left the fractious and moribund PAC to form a new party, the Independent Democrats (ID). The results showed that the NNP was spectacularly unable to maintain its former support, winning just 11 per cent of the vote, way behind the DA. But the DA and ID were unable to attract the share of the vote the NNP had once commanded. The DA won just 27 per cent and the ID an impressive 8 per cent.

Overall, comparing the 1994 and 2004 results, it might *appear* that there have been at least two 'swings' in the Western Cape: from the NP to non-voting (or to other opposition parties), and from the opposition parties collectively to the ANC. In this paper I argue that there is still inadequate evidence to support the second part of this conclusion. I suggest instead that the ANC's vote has increased primarily because of the changing demographics of the electorate, with the party's support base growing rapidly. The ANC's share of the vote has risen because of the combination of, firstly, demographic change, which swelled its support base, and, secondly, the collapse of the National Party, many of whose voters have never swung behind any other party. This is the case, at least, in metropolitan Cape Town. In this paper I consider only evidence for the metropolitan area – which includes two-thirds of the provincial electorate. It is likely that processes in voting behaviour in the smaller towns of the Western Cape, and in farming districts, are different from those in the city of Cape Town (see Seekings 1995; 1997a; Jacobs 2001).

I use two kinds of evidence that have hitherto been ignored or unavailable: ward-level results combined with ward-level data from the Population Census and a sample survey of adults across Cape Town. I use ward-level data to analyse in what kinds of areas the ANC performed strongly and in what kinds of areas it did not. I use data from the 2005 Cape Area Study – a survey of a representative

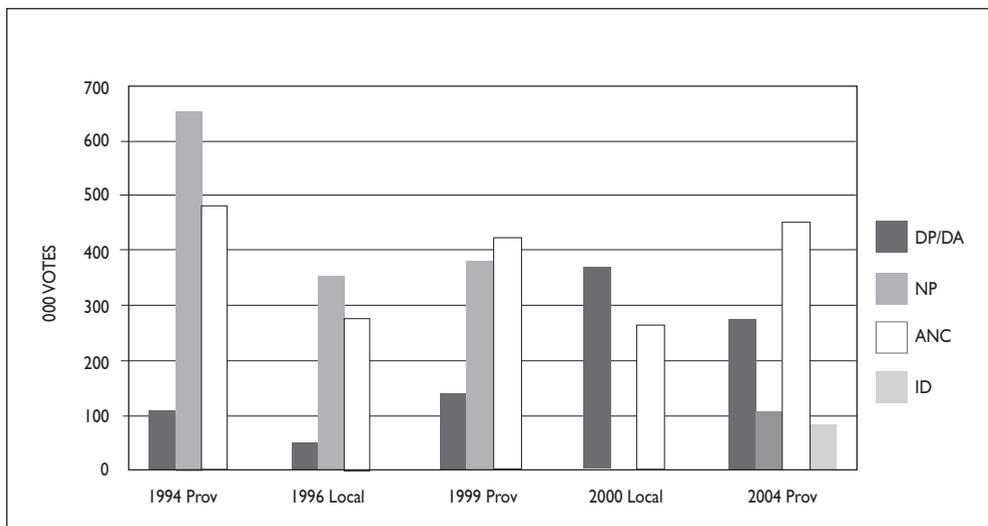
sample of 1 200 adults across Cape Town – to examine which voters supported which parties. Finally, I use data from this sample survey to shed some light on changes in the voting behaviour of individual voters, probing both the extent of conversion from one party to another and the characteristics of such converts.

**Table 2**  
**Votes for Major Parties in Elections in Cape Town, 1994-2004**

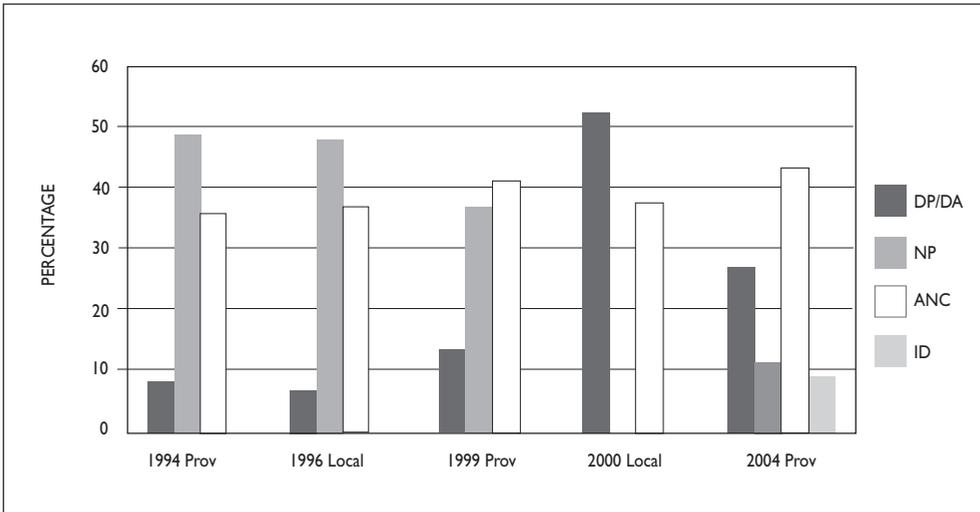
Party	1994 provincial		1996 local*		1999 provincial		2000 local**		2004 provincial	
	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%	votes (000)	%
DA							564	50	425	27
DP	107	8	51	7	142	14				
NP/NNP	655	49	358	48	386	37			112	11
ANC	481	36	278	37	424	41	270	38	454	44
ID									83	8
Other	67	5	51	7	88	8	57	8	101	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 337</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 040</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1 030</b>	<b>100</b>

\* estimated \*\* PR votes \*\*\* PR + ward votes, divided by 2

**Figure 1**  
**Number of votes in Cape Town**



**Figure 2**  
**Shares of votes in Cape Town**



Trends in election results in metropolitan Cape Town have been broadly similar to those in the province as a whole. Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2 show how voting has changed in successive elections in the metropolitan area only, that is, omitting votes cast elsewhere in the province. As Figure 1 shows, the ANC's share of the vote rose steadily across the decade, except for the dip in the 2000 local elections. But the overall rise is less dramatic than that in the province as a whole (as shown in Table 1) and in Cape Town the ANC failed to win as many votes in 2004 as it had in 1994 (see Figure 2). The NP's share of the vote in Cape Town plummeted, albeit not as dramatically as it did in the province as a whole.

#### WHICH AREAS SUPPORTED WHICH PARTIES IN 2000?

In the 2000 elections Cape Town was divided into precisely 100 local government wards. Not only are data for the 2000 election results available by ward, data from the 2001 Population Census are also available at ward level. The political parties pay careful attention to ward-level results, but independent scholars have hitherto not used ward-level data.

Ward-level data can be used to address many questions. For example, do the characteristics of the candidate (race, gender, age, religion, and so on) make a difference, and in what areas? Which candidates outperform their party, either in terms of the gap between ward and proportional representation (PR) votes or relative to overall levels of support for the party, and why? And how does social

change at ward level affect voting patterns? In this paper I present a very preliminary analysis of ward-level data, examining only the kinds of area that rallied behind each of the parties and their candidates in the 2000 ward elections.<sup>4</sup>

A simple inspection of the 2000 local election results in the different wards across Cape Town indicates a clear pattern. The ANC won just one of the 66 wards in which fewer than 35 per cent of the voters were African. (This was ward 48, Rylands, a middle-class Indian and coloured area.) It won five of the seven wards in which between 35 and 70 per cent of the voters were African and all 27 wards where more than 70 per cent of the voters were African. Overall, there is a very strong relationship between the racial composition of the electorate and the ANC's share of the vote.

Table 3 records the results of a series of models regressing the ANC's share of the vote (as a percentage) against other variables.

Model A regresses the ANC's share against just one other variable: the portion of the ward's adult population that is African. In this simple bivariate regression model each additional percentage point in the African share of the electorate correlates with an additional 0,77 percentage points in the ANC's share of the vote. The correlation is significant at the 1 per cent level. The  $r^2$  is a massive 0,88. This reminds us that there is a very strong correlation between race and voting. But in a situation where race and class are also closely correlated perhaps the causation runs from class to voting?

In Model B, the ANC's share of the vote is regressed against four non-racial variables: the percentage of adults with post-matriculation education, the employment rate (ie, the percentage of adults in employment or self-employment), the mean household income, and turnout in the ward in the local election. The coefficients for the employment rate and mean household income are negative (and highly significant), indicating that higher employment and income correlates with a lower ANC vote. But the coefficient on the proportion of adults in the ward with post-matriculation education is positive: controlling for employment and income, post-matriculation education increases the ANC's share of the vote. Turnout is not significant. In this second model, the adjusted  $r^2$  is 0,66 – which would normally be considered very high, but is much lower than in the bivariate Model A.

Model C uses all the variables, together with a variable for the percentage of coloured voters in each ward. The coefficients for African and coloured voter share are both positive (but weakly so in the latter case) and highly significant.

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<sup>4</sup> Both election results and population census data are available at a higher level of disaggregation than that of wards, but it would be immensely difficult to match up sub-ward voting data with sub-ward census data.

The other variables cease to be significant. The adjusted  $r^2$  rises to 0,93. A comparison of models A and B suggests that the racial share is the crucial variable: both race and class correlate with voting, but race correlates more closely.

**Table 3**  
**Regression Models for ANC's Share of the Vote in 2000**

Variable	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	Coefficient	Std error	Coefficient	Std error	Coefficient	Std error
African voters as % of electorate	0,77***	0,03			1,14***	0,09
Coloured voters as % of electorate					0,43***	0,08
% of adults with post-matric qualifications			2,26***	0,5	0,35	0,28
Employment rate			-1,03***	0,36	0,37	0,18
Mean household income			-0,0006***	0,0001	-0,00002	0,00006
Turnout			0,16	0,12	0,12	0,59
Constant	14***	1,5	108***	16	-38***	14
r2		0,88		0,66		0,93
Adjusted r2		0,88		0,65		0,93
N		97		95		93

**Note:** these models are for 97, 95 and 93 wards respectively. One ward (#76) is omitted entirely because the ANC did not contest it, instead supporting a pro-ANC independent candidate.

A comparison of models A and C suggests that the addition of other variables besides race does little to improve the model (while a comparison of models B and C shows that adding race to model B improves the model considerably).

A consideration of only the predominantly coloured wards underscores the power of the analysis. For wards in which more than 90 per cent of the adults are coloured, and excluding one ward where the ANC stood aside to support an 'independent' candidate, the relationship between mean household income in the ward and the ANC's share of the vote in 2000 is statistically significant (at the 1 per cent level): the higher the mean household income, the larger the ANC's share of the vote. And the relationship is reasonably strong. But a bivariate regression gives an  $r^2$  of just 0,22. Class explains a part, but only a small part, of the variance in voting in predominantly coloured areas.

These results might seem to provide strong support for the racial census model. But the weakness of that model was not that there is no correlation between racial demographics and voting shares – clearly there is a widespread and strong correlation. The problem is rather different: does correlation indicate causation? Or, to be more precise, what is it about a voter's racial classification that explains his or her voting behaviour? An answer to this question requires the examination of survey data.

#### WHICH VOTERS SUPPORT WHICH PARTIES? EVIDENCE FROM THE 2005 CAPE AREA STUDY

Surveys have been widely used to examine voting behaviour at the national level (see Johnson and Schlemmer 1996; Mattes et al 1996; Mattes, Taylor & Africa 1999). But publicly available national sample surveys rarely have samples that are large or representative enough to probe in any detail voting behaviour at the provincial or metropolitan level. The 1993 survey conducted by Research Surveys that I used in earlier articles (Seekings 1996; Eldridge and Seekings 1996) was unusual in that its sample in the Western Cape was both representative and large ( $n=1\ 282$ ). Mattes et al (1996) used a survey conducted in February 1994 with a large provincial sample ( $n=2\ 500$ ). Ten years later, in early 2005, we conducted a survey in Cape Town that allowed us to examine again voting behaviour at this level.

The 2005 Cape Area Study (CAS) examined a range of topics broadly concerning inequality and diversity in post-apartheid Cape Town (see Seekings et al 2005). The survey used a two-stage probabilistic sample design. The first stage – the selection of 'enumeration areas' (ie, the neighbourhoods demarcated as discrete areas by Statistics South Africa for the Population Census) – was stratified, meaning that the sample in practice comprised four separate samples – one in predominantly coloured areas; a second in predominantly white areas; a

third in predominantly informal, African areas; the last in predominantly formal, African areas. The second stage entailed the selection of households within each enumeration area and of individuals within these households. As a result of differential response rates, the final sample requires weighting for the analysis of many issues. The overall sample comprised 1 205 adults.

Respondents were asked:

*Did you vote in the national elections held last year, in 2004?*

If the respondent answered affirmatively, he or she was then asked:

*I know that voting is a private matter, but I hope you will be able to tell me whether, last year, you voted for the African National Congress (ANC), for the Democratic Alliance (DA), for the New National Party (NNP), for the Independent Democrats (Patricia de Lille), for a different party, or did not vote.*

Table 4 shows the declared votes of our sample in the 2004 elections and the actual results across the city as a whole in 2004.<sup>5</sup> Whereas the second column presents the distribution of the votes that were actually cast, the third column includes also the many adults of voting age who did not vote, either because they were not registered to vote or because, even though they were registered, they did not bother to vote. The first and third columns are not strictly comparable, because we had a response rate of less than 100 per cent and it is not unlikely that the kinds of people who do not vote are the kinds of people who we failed to interview (either because they were not available or they refused). But comparing the first and last columns suggests that our sample includes too many self-reported ANC voters and too few self-reported opposition party voters. The most likely explanation for this is that ANC supporters were disproportionately likely to say they voted for their party even if they did not actually cast a vote in 2004, whilst opposition party voters are disproportionately likely to refuse to answer our questions about voting. This is unlikely to make any significant difference to the analysis below of the decision about which party to vote for, although it would affect analysis of the decision of whether to vote or not.

<sup>5</sup> Our sample was in fact drawn from just 55 of the city's 100 wards. In six of these wards we had only one or two respondents, leaving 49 with nine or more respondents. The wards were not entirely representative of the city. A comparison of the 2000 local government election results in these 49 wards with the results in all 100 wards shows that our sample includes a very slightly higher percentage of opposition voters and a smaller percentage of ANC voters than in the city as a whole. But the differences are not large.

**Table 4**  
**Comparison of Declared Voting in 2004 by CAS Sample**  
**With Actual 2004 Voting Results**

Party	Declared votes in 2004, entire CAS (unweighted)(%)	Actual votes cast in 2004 (%)	Votes cast and estimated non-voters
Democratic Alliance	10	27	13
New National Party	5	11	5
African National Congress	39	44	21
Independent Democrats	3	8	4
Other	3	11	5
Refused	11		
Did not vote	28		51
Cannot remember	2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Note:** The final column is based on an eligible voting population in 2004 of 2,13 million voters. This figure was extrapolated from the 2001 Population Census data for Cape Town, assuming that the annual growth in the adult population between 2001 and 2004 was the same as between 1996 and 2001 (ie, 3% per year).

The Cape Town survey data can be used to explore the relevance of competing theories of voting behaviour. The three predominant approaches focus on partisan identification, issues and sociological factors. Partisan identification refers to the enduring psychological identification of citizens with parties, formed over long periods (often in adolescence). Issue-voting refers to voters making decisions on the basis of a retrospective or prospective assessment of the competing parties' performance on key issues. Sociological explanations focus on variables such as race or class, which can affect voting behaviour in a variety of ways (including partisan identification or issue-voting).

In South Africa, the 'racial census' view of elections was a rather poorly developed version of a sociological explanation. A more thorough-going explanation would entail analysing class as well as race and the interaction

between these in the formation of identities and interests. Table 5 shows that a variety of sociological factors correlate with voting decisions in Cape Town.

Unsurprisingly, African voters massively favour the ANC. But there is also a clear and strong correlation between household and neighbourhood income and voting, as well as a weaker correlation between education and voting.

In the 1990s, there was a relationship between class and voting among coloured voters (as among Indian voters in KwaZulu-Natal), with richer coloured voters disproportionately likely to vote for the ANC and poorer coloured voters disproportionately unlikely to do so (Eldridge and Seekings 1996; Habib and Naidu 1999). We found a rather more complex pattern in 2005 (see Table 6).

**Table 5**  
**Declared Voting in 2004 by Race, Income, Education and Gender (%)**

		ANC	DA	NNP	ID	Other party	Not vote	Refused to say	Don't know	Total
Race	White	4	29	6	2	3	24	29	3	100
	Coloured	20	10	8	5	4	40	10	3	100
	African	83	0	0	0	1	15	1	0	100
Household income	Rich	18	19	4	4	5	33	15	2	100
	Middle	39	11	8	2	2	31	6	2	100
	Poor	62	6	4	1	2	21	3	1	100
Neighbourhood	Rich	17	19	6	3	2	29	21	2	100
	Middle	35	7	6	3	4	37	6	2	100
	Poor	76	2	2	1	1	15	2	1	100
Education	Post-matric	22	17	2	3	2	28	22	2	100
	Matric	38	11	4	2	3	30	9	2	100
	Less than matric	45	8	6	2	2	26	8	2	100
Gender	Male	37	9	4	3	4	29	13	1	100
	Female	40	11	6	2	2	27	10	2	100

**Note:** The survey asked a series of questions about racial classification; the analyses reported in this and subsequent tables use the variable f5, 'how were you classified under apartheid?'

Coloured respondents in rich *and poor* households were more likely to say they voted for the ANC than respondents in middle-income households. This might reflect the difficult choices facing poor coloured voters in the aftermath of the collapse of the NNP. The DA does not provide a comparable home for poor voters. Coloured men were also more likely to vote for the ANC than coloured women.

**Table 6**  
**Declared Voting in 2004 by Income, Education and Gender,**  
**Coloured Voters Only (%)**

		ANC	DA	NNP	ID	Other party	Not vote	Refused to say	Don't know	Total
Coloured total		20	10	8	5	4	40	10	3	100
Household income	Rich	27	9	5	6	5	38	6	4	100
	Middle	13	14	13	4	3	46	6	2	100
	Poor	26	15	9	3	4	36	5	3	100
Neighbourhood	Rich	21	10	8	4	4	41	8	4	100
	Middle/poor	19	12	9	7	2	36	15	1	100
Gender	Male	25	9	8	5	6	36	10	2	100
	Female	17	11	9	4	2	42	11	4	100

The complexities of voting in Cape Town obviously complicate a crude racial census interpretation (see Eldridge and Seekings 1996). But a more fundamental challenge to sociological interpretations in general arose from an examination of partisan identification in South Africa (Mattes 1995; Seekings 1996b; see also Seekings 1997b). Many South African voters, like voters in other polities with well-established party systems, had deep-rooted attachments to the ANC or, far less commonly, to one of the other parties. But explaining voting behaviour in terms of pre-existing identification raises the question 'what determines identification?' Mattes et al (1999) developed a simple model that explained

identification and voting behaviour at the national level without recourse to race or other 'structural' (ie, sociological) variables. They found that a battery of purely attitudinal variables explained why most voters either identified with the ANC or with a competing party or, if they identified with no party, for which party they said they would vote. The attitudinal variables used included views on the competing parties and assessments of their past and prospective performance.

CAS 2005 was not designed as a study of voting behaviour. We did not ask our respondents directly why they voted the way they did, nor did we ask a large number of attitudinal questions allowing us to replicate the modelling of Mattes et al (1999). But we did ask questions about our respondents' grievances and assessments of different levels of government, allowing for some analysis of voters' reasoning.

We found the expected level and pattern of partisan identification in Cape Town, with high levels of identification among African respondents but much lower levels among coloured and white respondents. Three out of four African respondents identified with a political party, almost all with the ANC. Only one in five coloured respondents identified with a political party, and fewer than one in six white respondents. Strikingly, *most* of the coloured party identifiers identified with the ANC. Even one in five white party identifiers identified with the ANC (with three in five identifying with the DA). Overall, 80 per cent of our partisan identifiers identified with the ANC and less than 10 per cent with the DA. If identifiers are more likely to vote than non-identifiers it would follow that low turnout in all areas would favour the ANC.

Responses to our questions about issues were also much as we expected. Half our respondents identified job creation and unemployment as the most important problem that the government should address. One-fifth identified crime as the most important problem. Few respondents singled out any other issue. Differences by race were muted: white respondents were somewhat more likely to mention crime, but there were some African and coloured respondents who did likewise, and even among white respondents, jobs were mentioned more often than crime.

Table 7 records the results of a series of probit regressions on voting for the ANC in 2004 as opposed to voting for any other party. The dependent variable is a dummy variable, with a value of 1 if the respondent voted for the ANC and a value of 0 if he or she said that he or she voted for any other party. No account is taken of respondents who refused to say for which party they voted, or who said they did not vote.

In Model A, voting for the ANC is regressed simply against the racial classification of the voter. Being African increases the probability of voting for the ANC by 83 per cent, and being coloured increases it by 29 per cent.



Identify with the ANC					0,64***	0,03				0,52***	0,03	0,38***	0,05
Assess Mbeki's performance as good							0,26***	0,04	0,16***		0,04	0,12***	0,04
Assess Rasool's performance as good							-0,04	0,05					
Trust Mbeki to do what is right							0,14***	0,05					
Trust Rasool to do what is right							-0,18***	0,05	0,1***		0,03		
Understands politics							-0,16***	0,05					
Most important problem is crime							-0,18***	0,06					
Most important problem is jobs							0,00	0,04					
Pseudo r <sup>2</sup>								0,43			0,57		0,66
N								711			708		673

Note: \*\*\* indicates significance at the 1 per cent (0,01) level; \*\* indicates significance at the 5 per cent (0,05) level. 0,07\*\* 0,03

Just knowing the racial classification of the respondent explains half the variance in the dependent variable.

Model B regresses voting for the ANC against a set of other structural or sociological variables, omitting race. The average income in the neighbourhood and the income of the household are both highly significant. Living in a rich neighbourhood or household reduces considerably the probability of voting for the ANC. But this model explains much less of the variance in the dependent variable than did Model A.

Model C regresses the voting decision against identification with the ANC. Unsurprisingly, the correlation is strong and highly significant.

Model D regresses voting for the ANC against a set of attitudinal variables, with some of the correlations being highly significant and others not being significant even at the 10 per cent level. But, as with Model B, this model explains only a small part of the variance in the dependent variable.

Model E combines a variety of structural and attitudinal variables, but omits race. The neighbourhood, partisan identification, assessment of President Mbeki's performance, and trust in Premier Rasool are all highly significant and explain more of the variance in the dependent variable than did race alone in Model A. This shows that, as Mattes et al (1999) argued, much of the voting decision can be explained without recourse to race, even if there is a strong correlation between race and voting.

Finally, Model F adds race, which results in neighbourhood ceasing to be significant and the other coefficients shrinking. This model explains more of the variance in the dependent variable than any of the others.

In summary, race is clearly a more powerful factor in explaining voting behaviour than other structural or sociological factors or attitudinal variables on their own. But it is no more powerful than partisan identification or a combination of other sociological and attitudinal variables. And the most complete explanation of voting behaviour needs to include some of these other variables alongside race.

#### CHANGING VOTERS OR DIFFERENT VOTERS?

The 2005 Cape Area Study is, to my knowledge, the first survey to ask people how they voted in several elections. Before being asked about the 2004 elections, respondents were asked:

South Africa's first democratic elections were held in 1994. I know that voting is a private matter, but I hope you will be able to tell me whether, in 1994, you voted for Nelson Mandela and the African

National Congress, for FW De Klerk and the National Party, for the Democratic Party, for a different party, or you did not vote.

The survey thus provides data on respondents' reported voting behaviour in two elections – 1994 and 2004 – that is, ten years apart. While recall over a long period is problematic, we hoped that the founding elections were sufficiently pivotal for respondents to remember how they had voted.

The CAS data allow us to examine who voted – or at least who says they voted – for each party in 1994 and 2004. We can then see how many voters changed their vote, and identify who these voters were. We should note that the wording of the question above was not strictly party based because it refers explicitly to Mandela and De Klerk. It is possible that this wording might have led some respondents to answer “ANC” because of post-hoc identification with Mandela.

Tables 8 and 9 compare respondents' recorded vote in 1994 with their vote in 2004. Note that, given that mistakes might be made either by the respondent or the interviewer, the margin of error must be at least a few percentage points, meaning that small percentages should be treated with caution. The patterns of results are, however, very striking. The first column of Table 8 shows that the ANC retained in 2004 almost all (82%) the votes of those respondents who said they voted for it in the 1994 elections. Some (11%) of its 1994 voters said that they did not vote in 2004. Although the first figure is almost certainly an overestimate and the second an underestimate, because the proportion of African respondents who *said* they voted was much larger than the proportion of people in African areas who actually did vote in 2004, the pattern is clear. Very few (only 7%) of the ANC's 1994 voters said they defected to a different party in 2004. The third column of Table 8 shows that the DA also retained almost all the votes of 1994 DP voters. In complete contrast, as shown in the second column of Table 8, the NNP retained the support in 2004 of a mere quarter (26%) of its declared 1994 voters. About the same proportion of its 1994 voters (28%) voted for the DA in 2004, and a similar proportion said that they did not vote at all in 2004. Small proportions defected to the ANC (7%), the ID (6%) or other parties. Overall, while there is clear evidence of voters shifting from the NP to the DA and from the NP to not voting, there is little evidence of voters shifting from other parties to the ANC.

Some of the respondents in our 2005 survey were not living in Cape Town in 1994. About 8 per cent had moved to Cape Town since 2000, and another 14 per cent moved there during the 1990s (but we cannot tell whether this was before or after the April 1994 elections). Three-quarters of these new arrivals are African, almost all from the Eastern Cape. As many as 27 per cent of respondents

**Table 8**  
**How CAS Respondents Voted in 2004, According to Their Vote in 1994**  
**(Unweighted)**

		Vote in 1994					
		Mandela/ ANC %	De Klerk/ NP %	DP %	Other %	Not vote (too young) %	Not vote (age-eligible) %
Vote in 2004	ANC	82	7	2	9	40	24
	NNP	1	26	2	3	2	1
	DA	3	28	79	23	6	3
	ID	2	6	4	6	1	4
	Other	1	3	2	40	1	1
	Not vote	11	30	12	20	50	68
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note:* The 2004 votes exclude 'refused' and 'don't know'. Possible mistaken responses or recording of responses means that small numbers should be treated with caution.

**Table 9**  
**How CAS Respondents Voted in 1994, According to Their Vote in 2004**

		Vote in 2004				
		ANC %	NNP %	DA %	ID %	Not vote %
Vote in 1994	Mandela/ ANC	68	5	9	33	13
	De Klerk/ NP	2	72	35	30	14
	DP	0	2	32	3	2
	Other	1	2	6	7	2
	Not vote (age eligible)	6	2	2	13	23
	Not vote (too young)	22	7	12	10	39
	Refuse / don't know	1	10	5	3	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

who said they had voted in 2004 had arrived in Cape Town after 1990, and 86 per cent of these say they voted for the ANC in 2004. In short, immigration into Cape Town of ANC-supporting voters from ANC-supporting areas massively boosted the ANC's vote. The ANC also benefited from the new age cohorts reaching voting age. Some of the recent immigrants to Cape Town were too young to have voted in 1994. But the ageing of the younger age cohort that was already in Cape Town also benefited the ANC. Of those of our respondents who were too young to have voted in 1994 but were living in Cape Town before 1990, just over half said that they did not vote in 2004; of the just under half who did vote in 2004, a majority voted for the ANC. If we combine all the younger voters, that is, those who were already in Cape Town and those who immigrated after 1990, the ANC won four out of five of the votes actually cast in 2004.

Overall, of the ANC's 2004 voters more than one-fifth had been too young to vote in 1994 while others who were old enough to have voted in 1994 were not living in Cape Town at the time. Only one-twentieth had converted from other parties. In short, the ANC's increasing share of the vote owed more to demographic change than it did to conversions.

Table 9 shows that the DA support base included many former NP voters, while the ID supporters were drawn in more or less equal proportions from former ANC and NP voters. Defections *from* the ANC were far more important to the DA and the ID than defections from all other parties *to* the ANC. Insofar as individual voters have shifted from one party to another, most of the shifts were between opposition parties, and there were more shifts away from the ANC to opposition parties than from opposition parties to the ANC. Although the numbers are small, it seems that the ANC's gains came, despite a net loss, through voter defection.

The increase in votes for the ANC cannot simply be explained in terms of demographic changes in the electorate. As we saw above, the ANC's increasing *share* of the vote did not reflect an increasing *number* of votes. It gained ground in terms of shares of the vote because it did not lose votes to the same extent as the opposition parties, most especially the NP. This brings us back to the issue of turnout.

Turnout can be analysed using both ward- and voter-level data. The most readily available ward level data come from the 2000 local government elections, when the DA performed relatively strongly and the ANC relatively weakly. Regressing turnout by ward against neighbourhood income shows that the latter had a significant and positive effect in 2000.<sup>6</sup> The relationship becomes insignificant, however, when variables are included for the racial composition of

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<sup>6</sup> These regressions exclude one ward where turnout was very much higher than 100 per cent.

the ward. For each additional 1 per cent of the ward population that is African turnout in 2000 declined by one-quarter of a percentage point. For each additional 1 per cent of the ward population that is coloured turnout declined by one-third of a percentage point. In 2000 turnout is sensitive to racial composition above all, with the addition of other 'class' variables making little difference to the regression. Care must be taken when using individual-level data from, for example, CAS, because of suspicions that some reported ANC voters might not actually have voted in 2004. Taking the responses at face value suggests that party identifiers are much more likely to vote; being coloured reduces the probability of voting; while there is no significant relationship between being African and voting (but this last finding should be viewed with suspicion).

### CONCLUSION

Post-apartheid politics in Cape Town (and the Western Cape) has never been boring. It has been the primary site of the decline of the NP and the rise of the DA. There has been considerable 'floor crossing' by municipal councillors, provincial legislators and members of the national Parliament. The city and province have seen a bewildering succession of mayors and premiers. And both the DA and ANC have been wracked by deep division. Neither the political parties nor the party system seems very stable.

There have been some important shifts in voter allegiance. Most importantly, the NP has retained fewer of its 1994 voters than it lost to the DA, and the ID has attracted former NP and ANC voters. But overall there has been little movement from the ANC to the opposition parties or vice versa. The failure of the ANC to attract substantial numbers of former NP (or DP/DA) voters, despite having coloured provincial leaders, suggests that there has been little deracialisation of the electorate in this city.

The ANC's gains since 1994 have not been the result of successful recruitment from the ranks of opposition party voters. Rather, they have been due to demographic changes and differential turnout (with the 2000 local government elections representing an exception to the general trend of low turnout among non-ANC voters). In 1994 Reynolds (1994, p 204) suggested that racial demographics were crucial to the provincial result, and 'the prospects for the ANC in the Cape may well improve as the century draws to a close, with the continuing influx of black South Africans into the townships and squatter camps of Cape Town'. Reynolds was right. Massive immigration into Cape Town of ANC supporters from ANC-supporting areas, mostly in the Eastern Cape, together with the preponderance of ANC supporters among younger age cohorts reaching voting age, has massively swelled the ANC's vote.

Demographics dictate that elections in Cape Town (and the Western Cape) continue to turn on the 'coloured vote', but this is slowly changing. During most of the apartheid period only 10 per cent of Cape Town's population was African. At current rates of demographic change Cape Town will have a majority African electorate by about 2012. This does not mean that Cape Town is guaranteed to deliver an ANC majority before or by 2012. Turnout remains crucial, although there are no signs that African voters are becoming apathetic or uninterested any faster than others. More importantly, opposition parties might break the mould of the first ten years of post-apartheid politics and recruit significant numbers of former ANC voters. But if current voting patterns persist, demographic change will eventually deliver Cape Town and the Western Cape to the ANC without any need for floor crossing or bizarre political coalitions.

#### POSTSCRIPT: THE 2006 LOCAL ELECTIONS

Local elections were held throughout South Africa on 1 March, 2006. These led to yet another drama-filled episode in the political history of Cape Town. The ANC won 81 of the 210 seats in the new, slightly enlarged City of Cape Town Council. It won these on the basis of 280 000 PR votes, that is, 39 per cent of the total PR votes. The DA received 306 000 PR votes, or 42 per cent of the total. This gave the DA 90 seats on the new council. The ID received 80 000 PR votes, or 11 per cent of the total, giving it 23 seats on the council. The DA, with the support of a clutch of smaller parties, formed a very slender majority, and the DA's Helen Zille was elected mayor, replacing the incumbent, the ANC's Mfeketo. The transfer of power from the ANC to the DA immediately led to controversy.

**Table 10**  
**Votes for major parties in 2006 local elections**

Party	Western Cape total		Cape Town	
	votes (000)*	%	votes (000)**	%
DA	461	40	306	42
ANC	464	40	280	39
ID	123	11	80	11
Other	112	9	59	8
Total	1 160	100	725	100

\* Ward votes plus PR votes, divided by 2, plus DMA votes    \*\* PR votes only

The election was clearly a disappointment for the ANC and a success for the DA and ID. The ID won almost as many votes in 2006 as it had in the 2004 provincial elections, despite the much reduced poll. The DA won more votes in 2006 than it did in 2004, although fewer than it did in the previous (2000) local elections when it still included the National Party. The ANC, however, received in 2006 less than two-thirds of the number of votes it had received in 2004. A key factor in the 2006 local elections, as in the 2000 local elections, appears to have been the higher turnout in areas dominated by the DA. Observers suggested that this reflected both a strong protest vote against the ANC in coloured and white areas and pervasive apathy in African areas, in part because of the power outages that had plagued the city in the final months of the ANC-run administration.

Despite this apparent setback for the ANC and the need for a detailed study of the results<sup>7</sup> a preliminary analysis confirms the general picture, analysed in this paper, of qualified change. The ANC's share of the vote was slightly higher in 2006 than in 2000, albeit lower than in the 2005 provincial election. The ANC's share of the 2006 vote seems to have been depressed again by low turnout in local elections in its strongholds. There is no evidence that the slight rise in the ANC's share of the vote reflected gains in coloured areas. The incorporation into the ANC of the rump of the New National Party does not seem to have brought the party significant gains. Even those voters who had remained loyal to the NNP as late as the 2004 elections would appear to have voted for the DA or ID, or to have stayed away from the polling stations, rather than vote for the ANC. The DA and ID's combined share of the vote in 2006 was the same as the DA's share in 2000. Many voters have certainly chopped and changed between the non-ANC parties, but there is no evidence that many have defected to the ANC. Demographic change and differential turnout continue to matter far more to the changing political fortunes of the parties than voter realignment.

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<sup>7</sup> Further, detailed research might focus on a comparison of ward-level data from 2000 and 2006 (and corresponding data from provincial elections).

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