



ELECTION UPDATE 2004 SOUTH AFRICA

number 1 · 2 february 2004

Editorial

South Africa will hold its third multi-party general election sometime this year. This general election, in fact, coincides with the country's celebration of its ten (10) years of democracy. The election, therefore, is crucial to the nurturing of South Africa's democracy since the political changes of 1994. Not only that; the election is also epoch-making in that it sets the scene for the future of democratic governance in the country, at least in the next decade.

The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) has a keen interest in fostering democratic governance in the in Africa, the SADC region and South Africa. It is for this reason that EISA has established the Election 2004 Task Team as it did with the 1999 Election. Through this team, EISA will produce a fortnightly newsletter prior to, during and after the election. The newsletter will provide a detailed coverage and analysis of the political developments that have both direct and indirect bearing on the 2004 election on the basis mainly

of press reports, observation and interviews with relevant stakeholders. This first issue of the newsletter covers seven (7) of the country's nine (9) provinces and focuses debate around such issues as review of the 1994 and 1999 elections; the institutional and legal framework for the 2004 elections; voter education; voter registration; and party registration. The newsletter is compiled by EISA staff and associates located across the country. With a view to encourage rich and fruitful debate, contributors have been given the liberty to express their own opinions, based on factual and verifiable information. Of course, democracy is all about tolerance of divergence or diversity of views without imposition of one particular world-view .

The newsletter will be posted on the EISA website, printed in a series, CD-Rom format and as a book at the end of the elections as an historical record. It will also be widely disseminated – through the following: postages services, emails to political parties, government departments, the IEC (Independent Electoral

Commission), foreign embassies and missions, Universities, NGOs, religious bodies, and other related agencies. We strongly encourage that you contact us at jackie@eisa.org.za if you would like to receive the newsletter every fortnight.

Individual authors take responsibility for the views and opinions expressed in the publication.

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THE CONTEXT

How the System Works

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South Africa has used a national list system of proportional representation in its elections since 1994. Voters complete two ballot papers, one for the National Assembly and one for the legislature of one of the nine provinces. No names appear on these papers, only the titles of parties, pictures of their leaders and their symbols or logos. Parties may contest the polls for all of the legislatures and the National Assembly or only some of these institutions, in the 120 or so parties currently registered with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) are many regional parties that will probably only seek seats in a single legislature as well as a variety of single issue groups. Parties submit lists of candidates to IEC: two lists for the National Assembly – nominations for a “national list” and nominations of Assembly members proposed from the parties’ provincial formations, and lists for each of the regional legislatures.

After the voting, seats are allocated in accordance to the share of the vote received by

each party. For the specialists among *Update’s* readers, South Africa uses the Droop formula (or the highest remainder method) to award seats: this is described in detail in last year’s Electoral Law Amendment. In effect, this system means that there is no formal threshold for parliamentary representation and, in 1999 parties that collected as few as 27,000 votes, AZAPO for example, in the last general election obtained a seat in the National Assembly.

What this means is that voters choose parties, not individual representatives, and MP’s are directly accountable to their leaders, not to the electorate. The larger parties do assign their MP’s to different areas, in doing so normally following the boundaries of municipal demarcation, but this assignment is voluntary not a legal requirement and there are no strong incentives for MP’s to nurture their own geographical support base. Many people feel this is a weakness of the system because legislators do not have the same kind of public accountability that exists in the constituency-based system under which minority rule South Africa was governed until 1994. South Africa’s choice of national list representation was prompted by a number of considerations. Of these the

most compelling were the perceived need during the constitutional negotiations to adopt an electoral system in which racial minorities would have a presence and the desirability of including within the ambit of formal political institutions very small parties on the edges of the ideological spectrum. In these two respects, the electoral system has served South Africa well: minorities are generously represented in parliament (arguably they enjoy disproportionate influence) and previously radical fringe groups have been drawn into the political mainstream (black-conscious revolutionary socialists, Afrikaner irredentists, Christian fundamentalists, etc.).

Because the issue of who sits in parliament is at the discretion of party leaders this means that parties can include in their lists people who might encounter difficulties in securing support if they had to stand as candidates in Westminster style constituency elections: uncharismatic technocrats, for instance, or people from racial minorities who lived in predominantly African areas (assuming that racial identity might influence voter decisions, in South Africa an untested and perhaps questionable assumption). Women normally fare badly

in constituency elections and women are especially well represented in South African parliaments largely because the ANC has adopted a quota arrangement in which every third name on every electoral list is female. How parties choose their lists is up to them as though most groups have incorporated a degree of democracy into their procedures: the ANC, for example, initiates a nomination process from the branches and holds lists conferences, though the final choice can be adjusted by its National Executive.

So, the South African system is strong when it comes to “descriptive representation” or the inclusion within institutions of a good cross section of the population. Critics suggest, though, that because the main lines of accountability flow upwards, from legislators to their leaders, ruling party parliamentarians are reluctant to exercise their oversight function, that is, to challenge their leaders if they find legislative proposals objectionable or they perceive abuses of power. MP’s can be dismissed by party leaders at any time during a parliamentary term. If ANC representatives were directly elected they might be readier to challenge government more vigorously over certain contentious policy issues,

though they would have still to undergo party re-selection at the end of the parliamentary term as is the normal practice in many constituency systems. On the whole, irrespective of electoral system, the modern international trend is towards executive dominated parliamentary caucuses.

As far as elections are concerned, the consequences of a national list PR ballot are generally benign. Because all votes count equally – there are no “wasted” votes as in the case of constituency elections, parties have an incentive to seek out all votes wherever they are rather than merely concentrating on their home bases. This consideration helps to motivate parties to direct their appeals at the unconverted and to cross South Africa’s historical social barriers of race and region and normally this means that they try to occupy the “middle ground” ideologically. In a society with a history of political polarization this centrist dynamic is helpful. Because “occupation” of “territory” is less relevant than it would be in a first past the post system, there is less reason for parties to deny their rivals access to certain neighbourhoods: this sort of behaviour was quite common in the 1994 elections whereas in 1999, outside KwaZulu-Natal, it had

become exceptional. Even within KwaZulu-Natal the relationship between ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party was more civil in 1999 than in 1994, though “no-go” zones persisted, especially in the northern regions of the province.

On the whole, South African party campaigning tends to be presidential in character, another consequence of a system in which voters are encouraged to support parties rather than individual legislators. The identification of the party with its leader helps to personalise the campaign and, in the past opinion polls have often indicated that the popularity of individual national politicians can cross party boundaries. Parties are prohibited from advertising on television, though radio advertising (as well as the provision of free radio time to parties) were key factors in the 1999 campaigning. However the more professional South African parties direct their messages at television audiences assiduously. Opinion polls suggest that more and more South African citizens use television as their main source of political information and hence the free coverage that party campaigning may receive in television news and actuality programming may be a very important influence

on voter decision-making. With this consideration in mind, party-presidential “road shows” and telegenic events such as stadium rallies have become an increasingly important ingredient in campaigning, though the ANC as well as the Democratic Alliance and the New National Party maintain traditional forms of electioneering such as door to door canvassing especially in poorer neighbourhoods where people will only support parties that they deem to be part of their local community life. Indeed the ANC’s plans this year are for a renewed emphasis on direct contact with individual voters. Direct mailing and telephone canvassing, staples in US-style elections, are in their infancy in South Africa.

Despite their deployment of volunteers the bigger parties spend large amounts of money on campaigning, much more so proportionately than is usual in most developing countries. In 1999 radio advertising constituted the leading item in party budgets but there are also huge printing costs that arise from the extensive use of posters and leaflets, as well as a considerably heavier investment in print media publicity than is normal in advanced democracies. The three main parties spend millions of rands on surveys

and other kinds of market research. The ANC has since 1994 been the lead spender. In 1994 and to a lesser extent in 1999 much of its funding arrived from foreign sources: today party political funding is mainly domestic and competition between parties to secure it is very keen. State funding is available to those parties that already enjoy representation, roughly in proportion to their support, but with respect to the larger parties public finance only pays for a small share of their electioneering. Businesses now confront a degree of public pressure to disclose their donations to parties and certain companies have done so. The larger parties, unsurprisingly, resist calls for disclosure.

Elections as well as voter registration are organised by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which since its establishment in 1999 has consolidated a reputation for both integrity and efficiency. The most persuasive evidence of its administrative and moral qualities was the absence of any serious questioning of the 1999 results (as well as those of the 2000 municipal poll) by any of the parties, even those that did very badly. The IEC is meant to function both as a manager of elections and as a regulator. In practice it has

performed the first role more confidently than the second.

In 1999 polling stations opened on time, officials behaved helpfully and conducted procedures neutrally, and the ballot count was swift and accurate. Earlier registration procedures embraced about 18 million people, more than three quarters of the eligible population, a comparatively high figure in a developing democracy, and the process itself was undertaken quite carefully (there were exceptional lapses) so that only people who were entitled to cast their votes (in contrast to 1994). In line with South African political culture, the IEC favours conflict mediation rather than the adjudication of disputes between parties during elections and both in 1999 and in the 2000 local poll, its party liaison committees and its provincial conflict resolution structures performed outstandingly in sorting out quarrels and addressing contraventions of the IEC’s Code of Conduct.

Other regulatory institutions include the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), the agency that governs broadcasting and which replaced the old Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) which in 1999 was intended

to ensure that the public (and private) broadcasters gave parties equitable (though not equal) coverage. The IBA did not exercise its authority very effectively in this capacity and the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) campaigning coverage included some unfavourable editorial treatment of the Democratic Party. ICASA's first test in this arena occurred last month when it was asked to respond to a complaint about the SABC's decision to accord real-time coverage to the ANC's manifesto launch. Its decision not to censure the SABC was not impressively argued.

Results and Trends: 1994-2004

What are the main trends in party support and voter behaviour? These can be summarised briefly. Voter support for the ANC is stable, as evidenced in two general elections and two local polls, is stable as well as recent opinion poll findings from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and SABC/Markinor. The ANC draws its support from about two thirds of the electorate. Its most loyal and emotionally committed voters are poor, rural and black but it also enjoys overwhelming backing from black people in towns, nation-wide. ANC voters if

they are deeply dissatisfied with the ANC's performance tend to stay at home rather than transferring their support to another party. For the ANC, therefore, this time around, motivating their urban core support to cast their ballots will be a key challenge.

Conventional opinion has it that low turn-out harms the ANC disproportionately, though in fact, in the last election the parties that were damaged worst by voter stay aways were the New National Party and the groups representing the Afrikaner right: a million eligible and registered white voters in 1999 did not bother to vote. The ANC over the last ten years has battled to obtain a majority among Indian voters though its share of the coloured vote has increased, to well above half with its improved performance in these communities especially obvious in the smaller rural towns. White support for the ANC has increased fractionally, mainly in the Western Cape but remains insignificant, though in the Western Cape this time around, in the context of a keen competition, the ANC can be expected to make efforts to court white votes. Expected turnout lows among young voters, given demographic patterns in which black citizens are likely

to be a proportionately growing share of the population, will work to the ANC's disadvantage. Persuading first time eligible voters to participate in elections is increasingly difficult worldwide: South African parties have invested little discernable effort in addressing young voters beyond inviting (often middle-aged) pop singers to perform at their rallies.

The other key trends include Inkatha's tendency to defy predictions and remain an important player (opinion polling procedure is probably most vulnerable to distortion in rural KwaZulu-Natal where people may be most inclined to tell pollsters what they think they want to hear). Inkatha's share of the vote declined by two per cent in 1999 from 1994 but it did well in the subsequent municipal elections. Analysts believe that rapid urbanisation will iron out in the long term to strengthen the KwaZulu-Natal ANC to the IFP's disadvantage. In previous elections, however the ANC has squandered opportunities in this province through weak leadership and inept electioneering.

The most volatile segment of the South African electorate is white and its political fluidity helps to explain the most noticeable fluctuations in

party support between 1994 and 2004. The Democratic Alliance may gain a percentage point or two from the continuing tendency of former supporters of the National Party to back Tony Leon's combative style of opposition: recent municipal by elections have generally confirmed this predisposition. Democrats were beginning in 1999 and 2000 to make inroads into the black electorate and they have since established a network of township branches in Gauteng and adjoining provinces: they will feel that this effort amply rewarded if their share of the black township vote exceeds 10 per cent in those districts in which they have a presence.

1999 witnessed the partial resurrection of homeland political elites at the helm of such groups as the UCDP and the UDM: recent polls indicate that both parties will exceed informed expectations if they maintain their present level of parliamentary representation.

Finally, several more parties are represented in parliament than were elected five years ago: their presence is a consequence of the defections sanctioned by crossing the floor legislation. This was an unpopular innovation and most of the new groups and the personalities associated

with them will probably disappear from public life though the low threshold for representation may ensure the survival of two figures with genuine popularity: Patricia de Lille and Peter Marais, both maverick personalities from the Western Cape.

Points for Democracy Watchers

This is South Africa's third democratic general election. There has been considerable progress in improving the quality of electoral management and in the campaigning conduct of political parties since 1994. For observers who have an especial concern about the quality of South African democracy the following points merit particular attention.

Broadcasting plays an increasingly important role in South African politics. In 1994 the SABC managed to persuade most of the contestants that it would perform its functions impartially and it attracted praise all round. This was not the case in 1999 and early signals this year suggest that there will continue to be contention over the SABC's role. We need good and timely monitoring of broadcasting: this is a project that must be undertaken with skill and sensitivity and it is

one in which other branches of the media can collaborate with the more specialised agencies.

Reports suggest there is less donor money available this time around to support political party expenditure. The temptation will be all the greater for parties who enjoy access to official positions to use public resources improperly: official transport, for example, or government media. Such predispositions need to be discouraged by attentive journalists and assertive electoral observers.

Competition this year is likely to be even more intensive than in the past in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In previous contests the ANC fought restrained campaigns and tacitly recognised the political benefit with respect to a smooth democratic transition of conceding provincial executive power to its opponents. This time the ANC has identified as its benchmarks for overall achievement in this election victories in both these provinces – these it views as requirements for the completion of South African “liberation”. Party elites will need to put extra effort into disciplining their activists. There already have been dangerous signals that we may witness a revival of ANC/IFP hostilities in

KwaZulu-Natal. The IEC would do well to make sure that its conflict resolution and party liaison structures are up and running in this province as soon as possible.

Good turnout is obviously desirable for a strong democracy. Turnout in 1999 was around 68 per cent of the eligible population and nearly ninety per cent of the registered electorate. The IEC should feel satisfied if turnout exceeds these figures. Since last year, it has succeeded in registering two million new voters: if these and most of those who previously voted attend the polling stations, turnout should be satisfactory. The ANC intends to work hard on mobilising its traditional support bases: this seems sensible and other parties that neglect their core support in favour of finding new followers risk decline.

Even so, it is in the general interest that parties acquire more diverse support bases: race still divides South

Africa's electorate with respect to political affiliations to a dangerous degree. The DA claims it is taking its prospects within the black electorate seriously: measure the depth of its commitment by the nature of its campaigning. A more positive DA electioneering style with messages that accord with the issue ranking amongst black voters will be a good indicator of its intention to win fresh support within black communities. A campaign that focuses on merely attacking the ANC will suggest a more defensive strategy in which black voters represent only a marginal preoccupation.

With regard to reporting, South African newspapers seem to contain less and less rural and provincial news. Major newspapers should try to overcome the tendency to report the election exclusively from the large cities. Where there is less media attention abuses are most likely to occur, but as well as this important issue it is also the

case that some of the most newsworthy campaigning will be in the more remote areas. For example, the ANC will be defending its position in the Northwest and Limpopo under new leadership: so far the press had paid very little attention to the political and social dynamics of leadership competition in those two provinces. Rural voters will still determine the outcome of the KwaZulu-Natal elections – electioneering in the countryside here deserves much better reporting than it receives, even in the Durban press.

Last point: the rules are more or less the same as in 1994 and 1999 but after successive legislative amendments and new sets of regulations there are more of them and their interpretation may be subject to more dispute. If you are a participant, or a reporter, or an observer, learn the rules before the game starts. EISA and the IEC are publishing a handbook in mid-February: place your order for a free copy now.

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

VOTER REGISTRATION N COUNTRYWIDE

A Focus on the
Independent
Electoral
Commission

Beth Strachan
EISA

Countdown to Registration: Getting ready!

On the 4th of September 2003, at the launch of the countdown to Elections 2004, the Electoral Commission announced the dates for the first period of registration for the 2004 National and Provincial elections – the weekend of November 8 and 9, 2003 was set aside and plans were in place to enable all eligible voters to register. The Chairperson of the IEC, Dr. Brigilia Bam outlined the challenges facing the Commission but claimed that access, especially for rural voters, had been improved and that all voting facilities and voting districts had been re-evaluated, resulting in the creation of an additional 2 000 voting districts. Where changes in voting district

boundaries had been considerable a door-to-door targeted campaign was undertaken by the IEC to ensure that voter registrations were correct. She emphasised that in the field of democracy development and education projects had already been implemented to teach learners about their right to register and to vote. On a technical note she confirmed that, following the recommendations made by the Electoral task Team appointed by the Cabinet in 2003, the Commission would continue with the electoral system used in the 1994 and 1999 elections, i.e. the Proportional Representation (PR) system. By the 9th of November the Chief Electoral Officer of the IEC, Adv Pansy Tlakula could claim that a total of 16821 voting stations had been put in place to register first-time voters and re-register those voters who had moved house. Others already registered could inspect their details on the Voters' Roll. Continuous calls were being made for verification of registration details on the IEC website at www.elections.org.za.

Registration: Getting Started!

First Registration Weekend, 8
– 9 November 2003

Results were as follows:

New Registrations

Results indicated a total of 1 433 490 new registration applications: 800 322 females (55.8%); 633 168 males (44.2%); youth between the ages of 18 – 25 (58.5%). In terms of the Rural/Urban/Metro classification these reflected Rural: 617 719 (43.09%); Metro: 405 540 (28.29%); Urban 410 231 (28.62%).

Re-Registrations

Re-registrations across voting districts, 1 634 966 applications
Re-registration within the same voting districts 446 916 applications

Total Registration Activity

The total registration activity of 3 515 372 applications did not of course reflect contacts made through the IEC website (53 914 enquiries over the weekend) or to queries handled by the Call Centre (199 062 calls answered between 1 October and 7 November, and 55 900 during 8 - 9 November period). Satisfaction was expressed by the IEC over the positive result of its communication campaigns, which had been directed at the youth of the country and at rural voters.

Registration: Continuing !

Second Registration
Weekend, 24 -25 January
2004

On the 17th of November the Electoral Commission confirmed that the second voter registration would take place on Saturday 24 January and Sunday 25 January 2004.

In preparation for this the Commission introduced new technical initiatives – an Integrated Voice Response (IVR) facility to the Call centre and an SMS facility as well as improvements to their www.elections.org.za web site. To encourage young people to register the Commission undertook a joint initiative with the Department of Education targeting Senior Learners, 16 years and older, with news letters in all eleven official languages to be read in school assemblies and discussed in class rooms in the week preceding the general registration weekend.

Prisoners, who qualified in terms of the Electoral Laws Amendment Act of 2003 might register and the IEC visited prisons in the period 13 to 15 January 2004 during which time 5 100 inmates were registered as voters. Regulations concerning overseas voting were clarified. Only two categories of overseas voters are provided for: those absent from the RSA on government service and members of their

households, and those temporarily absent from South Africa, on holiday, on business, studying abroad or taking part in a sporting event. Overseas voters must of course be already registered in the voting district where they normally stay. To reach as many people as possible information was being disseminated on registration procedures, and the qualifications required to register, through partnerships with community based multi-purpose centres, civil society organisations, political parties, youth formations, the farming sector, tribal authorities and government departments.

By Saturday 24 January 2004 the Commission had registered 19.4 million voters on the Voters' Roll – 1.3 million more than for the 1999 elections. By Sunday 25 January 2004 the IEC could report that it was clear that thousands of South Africans had heeded the call to register and that the level of engagement of young people had risen dramatically. Of new registration applications received 61.3% were in the 18 – 25 age group. The new electronic facilities had proved their worth.

Generally voting stations opened on time across the country, except for a few 'access challenges' mainly in

KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape where storms posed problems. Reports from informal settlements indicated lively participation.

An upbeat view was taken by IEC Chairperson Brigilia Bam following her visits to a number of voting stations in and around Gauteng where she had seen many potential voters waiting to be registered and it was clear the South African people had heeded the call to register.

Although the last general registration drive has been completed, continuous registration will take place at Municipal Electoral Offices (MEOs) countrywide and will only cease when the Voters' Roll closes on the day the President proclaims the election date.

This contribution is based on information from the Electoral Commission

SOUTH AFRICAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION BREAKS THE RULES AND ICASA TURNS A BLIND EYE

Raymond Louw
Editor, Southern Africa
Report, Johannesburg

Several months before South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the African National Congress insisted that the government set up the Independent Media Commission (IMC) to monitor the conduct of the state broadcaster and the civil service to ensure their equitable treatment of the contending political parties. One section of the IMC was assigned to monitor the SA Broadcasting Corporation to ensure that its coverage of the election gave equitable and fair treatment to the political parties in news and current affairs programmes and any other programmes which touched on the election.

The second section of the IMC was dedicated to watching the civil service to ensure that departments of

national, provincial and local government did not propagandise the work of the ruling party - then the National Party - or act detrimentally towards parties not in power but which were seeking election.

The focus of this group was mainly on the many publications produced by civil servants to publicise their departments, always done in a flattering manner. The heads of government departments, with one or two relatively minor exceptions, complied fully with the IMC rules and immediately ended the flow of all but absolutely essential publications.

The ANC was determined that the National Party should not benefit in any way from government propaganda or SABC bias in favour of it.

The work started before the election period proper - that is the short period leading up to the election from the time of the announcement of the election by the president. The IMC was mentored on the niceties of their duties by Canadians who had a wealth of experience in ensuring that Canadian politicians and civil servants scrupulously observed the rules.

The SABC rapidly fell into the spirit of the IMC's work and with only one or two exceptions, too, carefully followed the rules to be fair to

all parties. Rules for party political broadcasts were drawn up - three-minute talks on radio by each of the contending parties with the National Party and the ANC given maximum time and the then Democratic Party and Pan Africanist Congress sharing the next highest time allocation - and these rules, too, were carefully observed. The emphasis of the IMC was on fairness and equitability. The latter term did not mean equal treatment but fair and just treatment relative to the size of the party and the number of candidates it was fielding. After the election the parties accepted that the rules had been largely obeyed - an achievement the IMC believed resulting from all the role players being aware of its presence and that they were under scrutiny.

Once it assumed power, the ANC rapidly jettisoned the IMC concept, though it casually assigned IMC duties to other bodies such as ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of SA) and the IEC (Independent Electoral Commission). Given the other tasks entrusted to these bodies, there was little hope of them carrying out IMC functions as scrupulously as it did.

So now we are in another election period - not official yet, but to all intents and

purposes we are indeed in election mode and there is a strong feeling among the electorate and among newspapers that the rules of fair treatment should be applied especially to use of state resources including those of the public broadcaster, the SABC.

But the ANC began its election campaign early and made no bones about the use of state resources. In June last year, post offices throughout the country were flooded with pamphlets in all the official languages, "The Tide has Turned", extolling the achievements of the ANC as enunciated in speeches by President Thabo Mbeki, followed in September by a series of advertisements for the ANC co-operative partner, the New National Party, in Western Cape newspapers and in October with the highly publicised discussion document, "Towards a 10-year Review", which propagates the achievements of the ANC in government. Now, recently, we have had the SABC joining in the electioneering by broadcasting live on its most popular channel, TV2, a 90-minute programme dedicated to the launch of the ANC's election manifesto. The SABC, whose spokesperson Paul Setsetse uses much the same language and tactics that he used when

spokesperson for Penuell Maduna's Justice and Constitutional Development Ministry, claimed without a blush that the SABC was not favouring the ANC but recording the "first important presidential" speech of the year. He ignored the fact that it was an ANC rally and that Mbeki's speech was pure electioneering with not a hint of any important or statesmanlike policy utterances. He and the SABC news department on whose behalf he spoke also ignored the fact that the televised portion of Mbeki's speech lasted only 43 minutes, about half the time allocated to the programme, and that the rest of the verbal action came from political correspondents and an analyst who also found the speech an electioneering occasion. Mbeki started his speech with a ringing "Viva, ANC, Viva" and the sound track was only switched from him when he began handing out awards to ANC branches. The visuals were peppered with shots of "Vote ANC" posters.

Twenty-eight minutes of the remaining time was devoted to a question and answer session with Public Enterprises Minister Jeff Radebe, head of ANC policy and chairman of the ANC Manifesto Committee who used the occasion to expand on the virtues of the ANC.

The gala performance was accompanied by SABC statements that it would not accord the same treatment to opposition parties, a promise that it carried out a week later when the Inkatha Freedom Party launched its manifesto. The IFP received truncated TV coverage on the news services although Radio 2000, not one of the regular channels, broadcast a sound version of the event.

Opposition party complaints to Icasa were dismissed by that body on the ground that the event fell outside the "election period". It also stated that the SABC had not breached the Broadcast Act. Icasa, like the SABC, took no cognisance of the SABC's editorial code which enjoins fairness in the conduct of its news and current affairs programmes. By no stretch, even of Setsetse's imagination, can fairness be accorded a 90-minute electioneering programme devoted to the ANC and nothing equivalent to any other party. Perhaps the time has arrived for a new IMC to be set up - and a new Icasa.

PROVINCIAL ROUNDUP

GAUTENG

ELECTION MANAGEMENT

T
The Preparedness
of the
Independent
Electoral
Commission

Khabele Matlosa
EISA

Introduction

South Africa is one of the five (5) SADC countries that will hold their general elections in 2004. The other four countries are Botswana, Malawi, Namibia and Mozambique. The actual date of the 2004 South African election will be announced by President Thabo Mbeki when he addresses Parliament on the 11th February 2004.¹ The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has put plans in place to finalise the national and provincial voters rolls by the same date.² This article focuses attention upon the management of elections and how the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is putting in place the

requisite administrative arrangements in this pre-election phase. The discussion focuses on the registration process in the Gauteng Province. First, the discussion highlights the manner in which the registration process has been managed. Second, the discussion interrogates the registration trends and statistics and finally we conclude by teasing out the possible meanings of the provincial registration data in relation to the national trend.

Managing the Registration Process

One important aspect of the forthcoming election in South Africa this year is surely the manner in which it would be managed and administered. Both the election process and its outcome are highly dependent, among other things, on the manner in which the election is managed and administered throughout its three phases namely (a) the pre-election phase, (b) the polling phase or election day, and (c) the post-election phase. The management and administration of elections in South Africa is the sole responsibility of the Independent Electoral

Commission (IEC) established in terms of the 1993 Constitution. The vision of the IEC is “to strengthen constitutional democracy through the delivery of free and fair elections in which every voter is able to record his or her informed choice.”³ The IEC has to steadfastly adhere to this vision throughout all the three phases of the electoral process in order to ensure affective and efficient management and administration of the 2004 elections.

Our preliminary assessment thus far is that the IEC has started off well in discharging its overall mandate in this first phase of the election. Although, it is currently involved in numerous activities, the major activity has surely revolved around voter registration. It should be borne in mind that voter registration in South Africa is a continuous process in which voters are supposed to register or inspect the voters' roll at office of Municipal Electoral Officer during office hours within their localities. Over an above the continuous registration, the IEC organized targeted voter

¹ *Citizen*, 26 January 2004

² *Ibid.*

³ <http://www.elections.org.za>

registration campaigns on 8-9 November 2003 and 24-25 January 2004 with a view to encourage voters to exercise their democratic right to vote and thereby enhance popular participation in a democratic process. In both cases, about 17 000 registration stations were established by the IEC throughout the country to facilitate the registration process. And in both cases, the IEC recruited a total of about 50 271 people to assist with the targeted voter registration process. The IEC registration was boosted by President Mbeki's visit to the registration stations and during his visits to Khutsong and Carletonville, the President gave one simple message "go and register so that you can exercise your democratic right to vote."⁴ Undoubtedly targeted registration was successful and hence the IEC Chairperson, Brigalia Bam, proclaimed "as we enter the 10th year of our democracy, there can be no greater satisfaction than that of seeing each and every one of those who qualify to vote registering and not waiting for 2009."⁵ In fact, all the major political parties including the African National Congress (ANC), the Democratic Alliance (DA), the New National Party (NNP) expressed satisfaction with the

outcome of the targeted registration process.⁶

Registration Statistics

South Africa has a total population of about 44.8 million people. Of this, it is estimated that there are about 27 436 898 eligible voters. So far, the IEC registration process has captured about 19.4 million voters for the 2004 election. This is 1.3 million more above the 1999 election figure of registered voters and this suggests considerable success of the IEC registration drive for the 2004 election. In the Gauteng Province alone, about 4 803 770 voters have been registered and of these 2 433 718 are female voters while 2 370 052 are male voters. There are therefore slightly more female voters than male voters in the Province a trend that mirrors the national picture. At the national level there are 10 987 663 female voters compared to 9 042 560 male voters. Further more statistics at the Provincial level indicates that the voting population is larger among 30-39 age group (1 387 854), followed by the age group 20-29 (1 118 312) and the third largest age group on the Gauteng voters' register is the one between 40 and 49 years (1 042 652). Again, this trend is a replica of the national

registration figures in terms of the age mix of the registration process. Another interesting aspect of the Gauteng registration statistics which reflects the national trend is that the lowest numbers of registered voters is in the age groups 80-89 (59 743) and followed by the age group 18-19 (94 101).

Conclusion

It is only fair to conclude that the IEC has so far acquitted itself well in managing critical aspects of the pre-election arrangements in readiness for the forthcoming election in particular the registration process. It is possible that this observation applies throughout the country, but most certainly this has been the case in the Gauteng Province. The registration data presented above suggests a number of important features of the voting population in Gauteng Province. First, the gender mix of the voting population is slightly skewed in favour of women; in other words there are more female voters in the province than male voters. Second, if we define the youth age group as ranging between 18-29 years, evidence suggests that more young voters have registered to vote than is ordinarily observed; this suggests that voter apathy among the youth in the Province may not be as wide-

⁴ *The Star*, 26 January 2004

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

spread and pervasive as it is often suggested in the media. What remains to be seen, though, is whether these relatively large numbers of the youth who have registered will turn up to vote. In other

words, registering to vote is one thing, while actual voting on the day that President Thabo Mbeki would announce in Parliament in February is quite another. Third, it is also worth noting that the middle

age groups of 30-39 and 40-49 feature prominently on the voters register in the Gauteng Province as they do in the national register.

SNOOZE, YOU LOSE

Voter Education in Gauteng?

Sydney Letsholo
EISA

South Africa will be celebrating its ten years of freedom this year. This celebration will coincide with the country's general elections on a date to be announced. However, media speculation has it that President Thabo Mbeki will announce the election date on 11 February 2004. As the economic powerhouse of the country, the Gauteng province will brace itself for yet another vicious electioneering by registered political parties. It goes without saying, however, that this exercise would be futile without voter education. Various stakeholders that play an important role in this process include the media, political parties, non governmental organisations (NGOs) or civic organisations and most importantly the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC).

The media in the Gauteng Province has played a crucial role in voter education efforts. One mechanism that has been opted for is the usage of daily newspapers like the *Sowetan*, *The Star*; and the *Citizen* to disseminate information on the importance of voting. Since the beginning of 2004, these newspapers have published special articles that urge people to understand the complexities of democracy. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) on the other hand has been very vocal on matters of voter education. As in the 1994 and 1999 elections, the SABC has voter education programs that discuss pertinent issues that encourage participation in the electoral process. *Khululeka* ("be free"), which is screened on Wednesdays at 21h30 on SABC 2, is a voter education drama series that attracts numerous numbers of viewers. The series interrogates the voting procedures and highlights the importance of preserving democracy within South Africa. Furthermore, other

voter education programs are in the pipeline. For example, in February 2, SABC 1 will be screening another voter education program entitled *Walala Wasala, Siyavota Campaign*. Loosely translated, *Walala Wasala* means "you snooze, you lose". According to a recent media release by the SABC, *Walala Wasala* will change mind sets of apathetic and alienated young South Africans who are eligible to register and vote, to take part in the election process. The media release further asserts that this campaign will travel to all the nine provinces, including Gauteng, in 13 weeks. The SABC deserves thumbs up for these efforts!

Voter education initiatives in Gauteng, have not only been limited to the SABC but have also been complimented by various radio stations in the province. Y FM has been instrumental in getting leaders of different political parties to talk about voter education. Anchored by Thato "Fresh" Sikwane and his entourage, the *Unrestricted* show has thus far managed to invite the

Democratic Party's Tony Leon to the program. Plans are also in the pipeline to invite the leader of the newly formed Independent Democrats (ID), Patricia De Lille. Listeners are encouraged to participate in the discussions by calling in and ask whatever questions they might have. This youth radio station has played and will continue to play a socially responsible role for the masses of Gauteng by highlighting the importance of voter education.

The ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), used the funeral of Y FM's personality, Fana "Khabzela" Khaba on the 24th of January 2004 to talk about voter education. Speaking at the funeral, Gwen Ramokgopa MEC for health in Gauteng urged the masses to take forward the struggle for democracy for which Khabzela was renowned. "As someone who loved his country and its people", Ramokgopa urged the masses, "Khabzela" would have asked you to vote in the elections later this year". It goes without saying that this radio station has helped in getting the message across, and most importantly, to the youth of Gauteng. However, it is not only Y FM that has been involved in voter education campaigns. Worth mentioning are other radio stations like

Khaya FM and Metro FM. The masses of Gauteng are fortunate to have these radio stations talking about these crucial issues. All that is left now is for the people to exercise their democratic right and vote for the party of their choice. *Let the voting begin.*

NGOs like the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) have always been involved in voter education campaigns. In previous elections, both general and local government elections, EISA has had voter education programs such as "Masibambisane" (for local government elections), "Sondelani Sisovota" and "Make Yourself Heard" campaigns. For this year's elections, EISA's Conflict Management, Democracy and Electoral Education department has introduced a project entitled "One in a Million". This project, to some extent deals with issues of democracy and explains the need for people to participate in the electoral process. A workshop for high school teachers that took place recently in Klipspruit West High School is one example of the project. Similar voter education initiatives have been undertaken by other NGOs, for example the Joint Enrichment Program (JEP), the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and many

others. To some extent, NGOs do join hands with the IEC to work together to promote voter education. In an effort to increase voter turn-out in this year's general elections, the IEC has planned to join forces with churches, NGOs and youth organisations; and political parties. Time will only tell whether this exercise was worth the time and money.

Jwale ke nako, the time has come for the Gauteng masses to practically translate the lessons of voter education into a reality by voting in the country's general elections in 2004!

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

APATHY TO BE THE BIG WINNER IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Michael O'Donovan
Independent Political Analyst

Political Parties

One upshot of increasing democratic consolidation is the rapid rise in the number of political parties that are registered to participate in the upcoming elections - at last count there were 143 registered political parties. Of these only four are focussed on the North West Province these include the United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP) and the NoordWes Forum. The small number of parties focussing on the province strongly reflects the dominance the ANC enjoys in the area. In 1994 the African National Congress (ANC) won 83 percent of the votes cast. The second biggest party was then the National Party (NP) with under 9 percent of the votes. By 1999 the NP share of the vote had dropped from 9% to 2% of votes cast. Over the period the ANC experienced a slight reduction

in support as its share fell from 83% to 79% of votes. The main beneficiary of the reduced support levels were the Democratic Party (DP) and Lucas Mangope's UCDP. The DP's share of votes rose from under one percent of votes to over 3 percent. More pronounced was the experience of the UCDP which suddenly presented itself as the second biggest party - albeit with only 10% of votes. The UCDP did not participate in the 1994 elections and its subsequent emergence as a political factor bode well for regional political parties. The UCDP experience (coupled to the IFP's success in KwaZulu Natal)⁷ suggested that political parties with regional focus could compete, if not against the ruling party, then against opposition parties with national pretensions. In 1999 the UCDP with 124 874 votes polled almost three times the number of votes won by the Democratic Party (42 593) and four times the number of votes won by the NNP (29 931).

⁷The 80% of the votes cast for the UCDP were from the North West Province, similarly 52% of UDM votes were from the Eastern Cape. Although the IFP has a strong national presence 87% of all votes cast for it were from KwaZulu Natal.

Whether or not there is much prospect for regional parties depends largely on how voters rate the performance of the ruling party, how viable the alternatives are seen and, more to the point, how disillusioned voters react. Indications are that voters, as a rule, are reluctant to vote for a rival to "their" party even when disillusioned with its performance. Consequently disillusioned voters are more likely to abstain from voting thereby limiting the prospects of much change in support patterns. Voter registration trends already hints at what may happen in the North West Province

Voter Registration

In 1999 the registration rate among the voting age population in the North West equalled the national average - 69%. Since then, at a national level, enthusiasm for voting has barely dropped with 68% of the voting age population having registered. In North West Province the drop has been far more marked - now only 57% of the voting age population in that province has now registered to vote. The drop is even more marked given the IEC's attempts to address poor registration among marginalised population like

the youth and rural poor. While the province has its fair share of youth (who in keeping with expected trends remain somewhat “apathetic” about electoral politics), and more than its share of rural poor. Because of poor services and economic hardship the latter's participation in elections has been low. This shortfall has been identified and targeted by the IEC. However, given the IEC's attempt to make up the rural deficit the drop in registration rates in the North West is all the more disappointing.

The declining registration rates reflect the disappointing economic conditions in the province. For example despite a thriving mining industry centred on platinum, employment opportunities have failed to grow as fast as the population which is currently growing at 2.8 percent per year. South African platinum production has now surpassed gold in terms of value. Half of all the countries jobs in the mining sector are now located in North West Province. Unfortunately the growth in mining employment has been offset by poor or negative growth in other sectors. Over the past five years or so the economically active population has been growing at just under 3 percent per annum. During the entire

intercensus period (1996 to 2001) the total number of jobs in the province grew by the same amount i.e. jobs are growing at about one fifth the rate of the population. An inevitable product of this is increasing unemployment and ever greater dependence on the state for essential services. This dependency makes it increasingly likely that disillusioned voters will simply abstain from the elections rather than support parties other than the incumbent. This severely limits the prospects for much change in the political landscape of the province.

Campaigning

These factors also point to a likely focus on the upcoming elections. Opposition parties will capitalise on disillusionment regarding job creation and associated issues (like crime). In turn, the ruling party is likely to emphasise its role in the expansion of civil liberties and the provision of essential services. The latter will now also list anti-retroviral provision for some HIV/AIDS sufferers, drought relief and avidly accelerated land redistribution and “job creation” programmes. Obviously these are essentially a reflection of the concerns of the national parties. Whether or not those parties with a regional focus are able to better target the

provinces population through parochial issues remains to be seen.

KWAZULU-NATAL

A GROWING COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY Kwazulu- Natal in Focus

Shauna Mottiar
Independent Political Analyst

A vital criterion in determining the democratic consolidation of a political system is the occurrence of free, fair and frequent elections. Critics of what is termed “electoral democracy” hasten to point out that genuine consolidation of democracy has to extend beyond elections and the turn over of power to encompass elements of liberal democracy. Components of liberal democracy however take time to become enshrined in a political system and in a fairly new democracy such as South Africa’s election periods can be illustrative with regards consolidation of civil liberties and constitutionalism.

The KwaZulu-Natal province is a case in point. The last two general elections have seen it remain an Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) stronghold.

During the run up to the 1994 election KwaZulu-Natal presented itself as “the most serious instance of political obstruction of free electioneering”⁸ Free canvassing in the province was impossible – a point highlighted when two African National Congress (ANC) canvassers were murdered by IFP members. By the 1999 election however the IFP attempted to transform its image from that of a Zulu nationalist and traditionalist party to a party promoting pluralism, freedom and ethnic identity.⁹ In spite of this however, canvassing by the ANC (the IFP’s strongest opposition) was reported to have been “discreet” in areas of IFP domination.¹⁰ The launch of the 2004 IFP election manifesto stressing the need to address issues of HIV AIDS, economic growth, unemployment, crime, corruption and poverty could signal an IFP move to advocate pressing social issues such as HIV AIDS which have been brought to the fore by a generation of new social movements such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). The ANC

meanwhile launched its election manifesto in the KwaZulu-Natal province but it was amidst reports of vandalism disrupting its campaign. The *Natal Witness* recorded that scores of ANC electioneering posters were destroyed by people clad in IFP T-Shirts.¹¹

Notwithstanding these early signs of campaign disruption no one is expecting severe political violence or intimidation around voting in KwaZulu-Natal. This may signal a growing commitment to democracy and democratic processes whereby opposing parties are content to conduct themselves within South Africa’s democratic political framework and accept the outcome. Furthermore the prominence given to the issue of HIV AIDS in the IFP election manifesto is interesting. I would argue that pressure and lobbying from a growing band of social movements, in this case the TAC, is beginning to have an effect on South African political life. The TAC has been very active in the KwaZulu-Natal province and has lately established links with the provincial department of health. This means that an element of

⁸ Lodge, T, *Consolidating Democracy: South Africa’s Second Popular Election*, (1999), Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, p7.

⁹ Ibid, p84.

¹⁰ Ibid, p122.

¹¹ *The Witness*, Friday January 23, 2004.

participatory democracy is being established in the country where citizens are utilising civil society organisations to voice their needs and it is beginning to have an effect on policy.

Apart from what has been termed a behavioural internalisation of democracy whereby no significant actors are spending significant resources to achieve their objectives by non democratic means – there is also a constitutional internalisation to be considered.¹² This, to a degree, was illustrated by the anti defection clause being reviewed last year at the constitutional court which resulted in the passing of the floor crossing legislation. This legislation compounded the somewhat uncomfortable ANC/IFP coalition agreement. The ANC was forced to relinquish a retrospective clause in the draft constitution fourth amendment bill that would have given it control of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature in order to prevent the province's premier from tabling a dissolution motion. This would have resulted in the need for fresh provincial elections. The ANC claimed that it had chosen to act responsibly and avoid chaos in the province and, laudable as this may be, critics were

quick to point out that the ANC was said to have been considering an invocation of Section 100 of the constitution providing for national supervision of provinces to prevent dissolution of the provincial parliament. Consolidating a democracy constitutionally infers that governmental as well as non governmental actors are subject and habituated to the resolution of conflict within the bounds of democratic laws and procedures. While the floor crossing legislation was passed in this manner, threats by the ruling party to invoke further and severe powers may be considered contrary to the spirit of constitutionalism.

Subsequent to the floor crossing debacle, the ANC has made clear its intention to win control of KwaZulu-Natal in the upcoming election. The legislature is currently finely balanced between the ANC and an IFP/Democratic Alliance (DA) coalition. The IFP took a majority in the province in the 1994 election with 50.3% of the vote giving it 41 seats in the legislature. In the 1999 election it lost a substantial amount of support to the ANC gaining only 41.91% of the vote and 34 seats. The ANC increased its support in the province between 1994 and 1999 with 32.2% of the vote and 26 seats and 39.47% of the vote and 32

seats respectively.¹³ The outcome of the upcoming election for KwaZulu-Natal has been described as “too close to call”.¹⁴ Loss of the province for the IFP would mean jeopardising its future as a political force in South Africa (it is currently recognised by some opinion polls as South Africa's third biggest political party and second most popular among black South Africans). It has long been asserted that despite displaying features of a modern political party, the IFP is still perceived as a Zulu nationalist party with much of its support based in rural parts of the province. Political theorist Steven Freidman points out that the IFP should be concerned about declining support from outside its rural constituencies owing to the level of urbanisation that is taking place in South Africa. He adds that being a regional political party is not so much of a problem for the IFP as is the prospect of becoming marginalised.¹⁵

Alongside the behavioural and constitutional aspect of consolidating a democracy exists an attitudinal aspect. This involves the majority of public opinion, even in the midst of crisis and dissatisfaction with

¹² Linz, J and Stepan, A, “Toward Consolidated Democracies”, *Journal of Democracy*, April 1996.

¹³ Independent Electoral Commission website – www.elections.org.za

¹⁴ *Mail&Guardian*, January 16-22 2004.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

incumbents, holding the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life.¹⁶ Elections therefore would be the ideal way for a citizen to access a democratic procedure either to express support or dissatisfaction with the ruling party/opposition. Voting statistics and patterns may go some way to illustrating citizens attitudes to democracy. KwaZulu-Natal has 5.5million potential voters but only 3.4 million have so far registered to vote in the 2004 election. This figure however is higher than that appropriated in January 1999 when the province recorded 2000153 registered voters.¹⁷

Voter inclination aside, it goes without saying that election preparations are vital in ensuring free and fair elections. According to the province's Chief Electoral Officer, Mawethu Mosery, 3558 voting stations staffed by 10674 personnel have been secured throughout the province for the purpose of voter registration on January 24 and 25. He added that 2000 voter education sessions had been held throughout the province in preparation for registration and some 53 000 posters distributed. The voting youth had also been targeted in the province with the

Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) conducting a series of youth talks in collaboration with the Youth Commission and the Youth Council. Mosery claims that "given our logistical preparedness we have no doubt that we will effectively service the KwaZulu-Natal voters. The only challenge we have is to encourage those who are apathetic to go and register as voters."¹⁸

THE END OF KWAZULU-NATAL AS WE KNOW IT?

Election Preparations in the Context of a Possible ANC Victory.

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One of the greatest challenges to democratic South Africa has been the rivalry between the ANC and IFP in KwaZulu-Natal. This is a rivalry which, even prior to the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, descended into violent conflict for control of the province. It was a rivalry that, by the eve of the 1994 ballot, had spurred on the IFP to embrace a militant Zulu nationalism. Today however, this party rivalry has found more constructive expression in the legislatures, governments and elections of our democracy. An important reason for this was the IFP's successes at the KwaZulu-Natal polls in 1994 and 1999. Along with inclusion in national government, these triumphs gave the party a major stake in the new political system. In 2004 the IFP might well lose this stake if, as appears likely, the ANC

¹⁶ Linz, J and Stepan, A, op.cit.

¹⁷ Lodge, T, op.cit. p39.

¹⁸ Khumalo, C, "IEC in KZN Urges Voters to Register", BUA News Online

wins KwaZulu-Natal. This scenario poses three questions: Is the ANC likely to win KwaZulu-Natal? What will this mean for the ANC-IFP rivalry, and how is this being expressed in the preparations for the 2004 election? I will deal with each question in turn.

Why the ANC are Favourites in KwaZulu-Natal

As illustrated below, the ANC has done better in every election since 1994 while the IFP has done worse – the one exception being the 2000 local government elections. However, the reason for this was that the low turnout of urban ANC supporters in this election. If the ANC campaigns properly in 2004 there is no reason to assume that they these voters will not return.

Party Percentages in Elections in KwaZulu-Natal 1994-2000

Party	9 9	9 6	9 9	2 0 0 0
IFP	50.3	44.5	41.9	48.83
ANC	32.2	33.2	39.4	33.79
N/NP*	11.2	12.7	3.3	*
DP*/DA	2.2	3.3	8.2	13.3
MF	1.3	2.3	2.9	1.26

* In 2000 the DP, NNP and Freedom Alliance were conjoined as the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Not only has the ANC done better in KwaZulu-Natal

elections since 1994, but it has done so at the expense of the IFP by taking away its rural voters. Thus where the ANC won less than 20% of the rural vote in 1996 to the IFP's 77%, by 1999 the ANC had improved to 27.54% as against the IFP's 65.98%. Indeed in 2000 the ANC retained the same overall support in rural areas, even doing better in the midlands and the south of the province.

The ANC's real loses were in the towns where its supporters failed to turnout. This had the effect of pushing up the IFP and DA's percentage of the vote. While some might read the 2000 results as a protest against the ANC, I think this presumes too much. It is worth remembering that 2004 is a national election, not a local one, and this is the first time the ANC could win KwaZulu-Natal. With the stakes raised, the abstemious ANC urban voters should return.

The reason behind the ANC's success in rural areas has much to do with the decline of political violence. The party was able to get access to rural voters for the first time in 1996 and more so than in 1999 and 2000. Further the ANC has a great advantage over the IFP in that it is the party associated with delivery. The small improvements that have come to most rural areas

whether a school or a clinic have come under ANC government, in stark contrast to the enduring poverty of thirty years of KwaZulu Administration associated with the IFP.

Nevertheless, for the ANC to win KwaZulu-Natal in 2004 will require a carefully thought-out, vigorous and focused effort. That the party is committed to this at the highest level was reflected in the decision to launch the national election campaign in Pietermaritzburg, the ANC's proposed capital for KwaZulu-Natal. There are obstacles to the ANC's success however, not least the rivalries between ANC leaders in KwaZulu-Natal. Some observers have even questioned whether all provincial leaders stand to gain by the ANC winning KwaZulu-Natal as the status of some rests on their 'peacemaking' role with the IFP. If the IFP loses KwaZulu-Natal, especially if it loses badly, then that role becomes redundant. Murmurs of internal rivalries aside though, the ANC is well-placed in the province.

In contrast, the IFP is at its lowest ebb since 1994. Not only has the party lost popular support, but it has steadily shed leadership too. The most recent example was the floor-crossing debacle in the

KwaZulu-Natal legislature of early 2003. Here five members of provincial parliament, including several from the IFP, crossed the floor to the ANC on the assumption that the national government was going to amend the floor-crossing legislation to legalise their move. In response the IFP premier, Lionel Mtshali, threatened to dissolve parliament and call an early election, a move with huge financial and logistical implications. Faced with these costs the national ANC backed down, and the parties agreed to keep the *status quo* until the 2004 election. While the IFP may have shored up its provincial government until then, the message is clear: the rats are deserting the ship.

What Happens if the ANC Wins?

If the ANC wins KwaZulu-Natal, or forms a coalition without the IFP, does this mean a return to violence and confrontation? I think not – at least not on a significant scale. One reason for this is that it is much harder to prosecute violence and intimidation than it used to be. Since 1994 the country has seen the slow return of law and order with security forces governed by a democratic constitution. Moreover, since 1994 we have a far more

transparent public realm where the media, NGO's and even intellectuals can expose and embarrass political leaders in front of voters. Today parties are far more compelled to behave themselves than in the past.

In addition, both the ANC and IFP have enjoyed a stake in the new system. Where the ANC won power nationally, the IFP won KwaZulu-Natal. An important part of this 'charming' process was the ANC's voluntary inclusion of the IFP in national government and especially the recognition awarded to Mangosuthu Buthelezi. It was not for nothing that both Mandela and Mbeki periodically made Buthelezi acting President. Key here was the realisation that where exclusion prompts rebellion, inclusion breeds compliance, and a compliant IFP is at a disadvantage. This is because, while the party wants to reach out to conservative-liberals of all races it has less offer them than other parties, especially those like the DA and ANC which have a significant national presence. Further, the IFP's militant Zulu nationalism of the negotiations period has scared off many potential voters. Indeed the IFP finds itself in a catch 22 situation.

Election Preparations

That an ANC victory, or at least dominance, in KwaZulu-Natal will not result in renewed violence and confrontation is indicated by the general peaceful and orderly nature of election preparations to date. For instance, both Mbeki and Buthelezi have affirmed the importance of tolerance and peace during elections at their party campaign launches. In more general terms though, the organisation of the election is proceeding as expected.

At the time of going to press the IEC in KwaZulu-Natal reported that voter registration figures were at about 3.6 million, roughly the same level as in 1999, and they anticipated that the final weekend of registrations would push this figure even higher. According to the 2001 census there are an additional 2 million voters in the province, but even in 1994 only 3.6 million voted, so the IEC is happy with registration levels. More significantly, the key political parties indicated that the process of voter registration was generally free and fair, although a few incidents of intimidation were reported by the IFP. Of course all parties want their supporters to register so they share a common objective around voter registration.

In respect of party registration the story is the same - so far this has gone smoothly. The IEC does anticipate that the nomination of party candidates which happens two weeks after the announcement of the election date might be more technically challenging however. Lastly, the IEC reports that voter education is proceeding well, with most effort going into fieldwork based programmes which create dialogue and interaction with ordinary people. In KwaZulu-Natal the IEC has 230 people doing dialogue sessions at community meetings in every municipality, and they estimate to have held 15000 sessions to date.

In sum then, election preparations confirm the view that the intense rivalry between the ANC and IFP for victory in KwaZulu-Natal will not spell a return to violence and confrontation. As the election nears and tensions rise local conflicts might erupt, but not as an organised and deliberate overall party strategy. Compelled and charmed into the post-apartheid political system the IFP and the ANC are competing the way parties do in democracies all over the world: fairly and freely. We might finally be standing on the brink of a new era in KwaZulu-Natal politics.

NEWS FLASH! MORE PARTIES CONTESTING THE POLLS

As South Africa gears itself for its third democratic elections this year – also its 10th anniversary of democratic rule – a record 144 political parties have registered with the Independent Electoral Commission to contest the election.

Although the total far exceeds the number of parties that had registered prior to the 1999 elections, not all of those registered will make it to this year's election.

The IEC says they were in no position to know how many parties would finally contest the elections. That would depend on how many submit their election lists and pay the required fee after the election date is proclaimed by President Thabo Mbeki.

Only a few parties contest the election at national level while many are locally based parties who are likely to contest at municipal level and some try their chances at the provincial level.

Prior to the 1999 elections the total number of parties that had registered with the IEC numbered 50 and those who survived and contested the national seats were only 16
Sowetan 30 January 2004

**MORE THAN 20 MILLION
ARE READY TO VOTE**

More than 20 million South Africans are now listed on the national voters' roll, the Independent Electoral Commission announced yesterday.

This was after 1,3 million people registered as voters last weekend, chief electoral officer Pansy Tlakula said in Pretoria.

Another 1,8 million people who had changed their addresses since the last election, made use of the opportunity on Saturday and Sunday to re-register in their new voting districts.

This was the last time the IEC had opened voting stations for voter registration, but citizens could still register at their municipal electoral offices during business hours every weekday.

The IEC could be contacted toll-free on 0800-11-8000 for the addresses of local electoral offices.

Voter registration would close on the day the President proclaims an election date.

Tlakula said people between the ages of 18 and 25 comprised nearly 60% of new registrations last weekend.

“There are perceptions of apathy among young people, but our figures point to the contrary,” she said. “But there is still scope for improvement.”

Sapa 30 January 2004

FREE STATE

ELECTORAL PERSPECTIVE S ON FREE STATE PROVINCE

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Introduction

In order to report on current events in the Free State leading up to the 2004 elections it is important to provide a brief review of past elections in this region.

A Comparative Review of the 1994/1999 Elections

In comparing the 1994 and 1999 election results in the Free State, there were a few interesting developments which occurred mainly within the context of opposition parties. The ANC still enjoys an overwhelming majority but an interesting point to bear in mind is that even though the ANC increased its majority from 77% in 1994 to 81% in 1999 there was a decrease in votes from 1,038 million in 1994 to 881381 in 1999.

The election results are tabulated as follows:

Party	Vote Cast		Seats	
	'94	'99	'94	'99
ANC	1,038 (76.6%)	881 381 (80.8%)	24	25
DP	7 664 (0.6%)	58 163 (5.3%)	0	2
FF	81 662 (6.0%)	22 996 (2.1%)	2	1
NNP	170 452 (12.6%)	56 740 (5.2%)	4	2

(Jones, B and Ballington, J. 1999: 26)

The above table, therefore, indicates that there have been some interesting developments and shifts in power among the opposition parties in the Free State. The Democratic Party has increased in support since 1994 and gained 2 seats in the legislature, while the NNP saw a decrease in support from 4 to 2 seats in 1999. The FF also experienced a decline in support from 2 to 1 seats in 1999. The ANC increased its support from 24 seats to 25 seats. Gender representation in the Free State was calculated at 23% in 1999. The prospects for 2004 will now be discussed.

Prospects for 2004

A recent study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) regarding possible results for the 2004 election, produced some interesting projections as far as the Free State was concerned. The study

concluded that 81,6% of the vote would go to the ANC, followed by the DA with 10,7% of the vote, AZAPO with 2% and the NNP with 1% of the vote. This prediction would give the ANC 25 seats in the legislature, the DA 3 seats and the NNP would lose the two seats it had won in 1999. AZAPO would gain one seat, up from none in 1999.

The study makes no mention of the FF that had occupied seats in the legislature since 1994, while AZAPO had never really featured strongly during previous elections. The FF commented that they were very upbeat regarding their chances in the election, especially seen in the light of the positive results of a number of by-elections held in the province since 1999.

A Markinor/SABC study conducted during October and November 2003 provided very similar results. The ANC was predicted to garner 78% of the votes, with the DA following on 9 % and the NNP on 2%. The UDM, ID and ACDP were all predicted to win 1% of electoral support, with no mention made of either AZAPO or the FF.

The HSRC study concluded that 96,2% of ANC supporters were black, with 3,1% coloured and 0,7% white. Female voters predominated in the ANC, making up 64% of its voters, while 46% of the DA's voters were female, with the majority of its support falling in the 35 – 49 year age group.

Voter Education

Enquiries made to the provincial co-ordinator of SANGOCO revealed that no NGOs had been contacted by the IEC to become involved in the presentation of voter education programmes. This could be a worrying factor as NGOs and CBOs had always formed the backbone of voter education programmes in the Free State during previous elections. Voter education and its impact will remain sensitive topics, especially in the light of the small numbers of people usually reached during voter education drives.

The following figure throws some light on IEC funded voter education workshops held in the run-up to the 1999 election:

Number of IEC-projects in the Free State province:

Potential voters	1 786 371
Contracts awarded	27
Workshops	505
People reached	23 417
Ave. workshop size	46

(Camay, P. & Gordon, A. 2000:130)

Serious attention will have to be given to the topic of voter education in the province in the run-up to the 2004 election, especially in the vast rural hinterland of the province.

A representative of the DA commented that voter education was primarily the task of the IEC and that the DA was not currently concentrating on voter education except in the Eastern Free State. A representative of the ANC in the Free State stated that the party had initiated its own voter education programmes throughout the Free State.

An IEC correspondent indicated that due to a lack of funds the IEC will not be employing NGOs for the purpose of voter education but that the municipal officers have recruited IEC fieldworkers who were trained by the IEC. There were 149 fieldworkers recruited in the Free State for this purpose.

Party Registration

The political parties are finalising the compilation of their candidate's lists. The IEC representative indicated that no significant changes are expected in the 2004 list of political parties as compared to the 1999 lists.

Voter Registration

Before the first voter registration weekend held on 8 and 9 November 2003, it was estimated that about 65% or 1,1 million of the 1,7 million eligible voters in the Free State had been registered. The number of polling stations in the province had been increased to 1 062 in order to avoid the long queues encountered during the 1994 and 1999 elections. Polling stations have been distributed among 291 wards under the control and supervision of 189 area managers. The bulk of these area managers are made up of municipal officials, with only four municipal managers among their number.

Shortly before the registration weekend, Mr. Chris Mepha, the provincial electoral officer, commented that polling stations were very accessible as most of them were situated at schools. Only 98 polling stations were of a temporary nature and of these, 43 were in the areas of Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu. He further mentioned that the IEC planned to concentrate on the 193 polling stations with a registration figure of lower than 60%.

During the registration weekend of 8 and 9 November 2003, approximately 278 933 voters

(84 600 on 8 November and 194 332 on 9 November) were registered by the IEC. This not only included voters registering for the first time, but also voters who had located to new towns and had to register in new wards. A further 278 000 Free Staters also used the opportunity to check their information on the IEC's voters' lists.

The Mangaung and Matjabeng areas of the province were the only areas to lag somewhat with registration, even though they had large numbers of eligible voters. In Mangaung 68 151 voters were registered and 59 121 checked their details with the IEC and in Matjabeng 33 193 voters registered and 27 103 checked their details with the IEC.

Some of the problems encountered and reported by the ANC, DA and FF during the registration weekend included polling stations opening late, broken scanners, too few or no registration forms and stickers, language problems, too few or no Afrikaans forms, a lack of well trained IEC personnel, lost names on registration lists and user-unfriendly voting stations. Access to the website of the IEC was also limited due to overloading.

Thousand of Free Staters again made use of the second

voter registration weekend of 24 and 25 January 2004. The IEC reported that 306 486 new registration applications had been received nationally and that 345 922 applications for re-registration had been received. Interestingly enough 61,3% (187 887) of the new applications received were in the 18 – 25 age group – an age group that were earlier described as apathetic towards the elections and politics in general. Perhaps some of the requests from prominent politicians and political parties for the youth to register had not fallen on deaf ears.

Some of the problems encountered in the Bloemfontein area included computers that were off-line, broken scanners and limited IEC staff members at crucial voting stations. The latter problem was rectified with the reallocation of personnel from other voting stations in the area.

The DA voiced its concerns regarding changes in ward demarcations that had not been communicated to voters or that had not been followed by re-registration of voters. Further concerns during this registration weekend included inadequate numbers of Afrikaans forms, untrained IEC personnel and voting stations opening late. At St. Michaels School in

Bloemfontein, an ANC party agent wearing an ANC T-shirt was apparently allowed to fill in forms for potential voters, with the electoral officers nowhere to be found. This incident was reported to the IEC in Mangaung.

General Perspectives

The voter registration process has been completed and the IEC expects that the results should be in by the week ending on the 31 January. Political parties now anxiously await the final election date and the election timetable to be compiled by the IEC. The political parties are currently focused on candidate nominations and campaigning processes. There are numerous factors, which will influence the outcome of the 2004 election results, such as insufficient voter education, voter apathy and changes in the internal dynamics of political parties. During consultations with the various political parties, institutions and stakeholders the feedback and perspectives concerning the forthcoming elections were positive and they are all committed to the entrenchment of a democratic culture in the Free State province.

OPERATION REGISTRATION

An Assessment of Voter Registration in the Free State

Dr Choice Makhetha

University of the Free State

The spirit of elections is gaining momentum and excitement is building up in the air. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has been working around the clock to make sure that the Voters' Roll will be in place on time, for the 2004 general elections.

For an election to take place there has to be a common voters' roll. Voters act as responsible citizens to ensure that they can vote when the time comes. They register as voters so as to exercise the right; the power to influence policy is in their hands.

The power of a vote is tremendous and until voters realise that, and use it to their benefit, democracy will continue to be tested. Public participation is one of the pillars of a democracy. It needs to be strengthened by getting people involved in matters that affect them, starting with voter registration.

The weekend of 24th and 25th January 2004 was the last chance for people to register as voters, and the turnout was impressive. In the Free State, more people registered, particularly women and the youth. This was expected because of the effort made by the IEC, and the partnership formed with the different stakeholders, especially the different political parties and the Free State Youth Commission, not leaving out the Provincial departments.

For a young democracy like South Africa, this is a positive step. It shows that the people are starting to value the power of a vote and they realise that the right to vote is not just a right, but it carries with it a sense of responsibility and responsiveness. It also indicates a great improvement on public participation in general.

In October 2003, the Independent Electoral Commission, in the Free State, held an "Election Indaba". All stakeholders were invited and the response was enormous. Political parties pledged their support to the IEC for the whole election process. These parties promised to urge and remind their members to register as voters and check if their particulars were correctly recorded. The provincial departments assured the IEC

of the assistance where necessary. The SAPS made a full presentation of how they were going to provide security throughout the process. On the other hand, the Youth Commission had a responsibility to explore strategies on how to attract the youth. Music would be one method of entertainment. The IEC came out confident of the co-operation they were going to receive. Voter awareness program rolled out, covering all the 20 municipalities in the 5 districts of the Free State. The IEC had the slogan "Rocking the Free State!" and it really worked for them. Pamphlets and other campaigning materials were distributed and that was a success.

At this particular "Election Indaba", the Provincial Electoral Officer, Chris Mepha, stated that there were 1,8 million eligible voters in the Free State and about 1,1 million had already registered. Therefore, there was about 700 000 still to register as voters. These figures indicate the level of commitment shown by voters. In 1999, there were 1 225 730 registered voters in the Free State and 90% thereof voted. For the 2004 elections, there number is bound to increase. Democracy is strengthening in many ways. Voters are ready and prepared to participate in issues that affect their

livelihoods and they have taken a bold decision to make a contribution to this democracy. They want their voices heard and this is the way to go.

As stated earlier, the 24th and 25th January 2004 weekend was the last opportunity to register as voter. This last round turned out as a success. Management of registration stations was very efficient, as reported by the IEC. The process was smooth and peaceful. Political parties gave full co-operation, as promised and that made the job even more manageable.

For the whole registration process, 1063 registration stations were open and 3186 registration officers were appointed. The issue of distance travelled to registration points was also considered. That was to ensure that all the points were accessible, to achieve maximum registrations.

Among the challenges facing the IEC, is the need for constant campaigning; educating and making people aware of the importance of registering as a voter and eventually voting. New voters would actually benefit from such campaigning and more people would be more informed.

At the end of registration, on 25 January 2004, 259 022 voters had registered the two days, and 250 272 had come to check whether they were correctly registered. The Free State province gained tremendously from this last round. Although the final figure is not out yet, it shows that a high percentage of voters have registered. Now, the challenge is to get all the registered voters to actually vote.

It is necessary to continue in the fight against voter apathy and voter uncertainty. Communication should reach the people. Better ways of communication should be used to educate the illiterate communities and those in the rural areas. Voter education and political education are necessary to deepen and strengthen democracy. Voters should be clear about the rules and all that is required of them and also know the political parties and their manifestos. An informed society, prepared to participate and influence policy, can make such a contribution towards sustaining democracy. Political parties, the IEC and other stakeholders, should share in this responsibility of educating the masses. These feelings were also shared by many political parties in the Free State, as they expressed some of their frustrations.

There has been a request, that the IEC should not be dormant (hibernate) after the elections. Democracy would benefit from continuous education efforts, if only enough resources were availed for that purpose. By the time the election is proclaimed, all the participating parties should have two copies of the common voters' roll. This is to ensure that the process is efficient.

The IEC has worked very hard to remain within schedule. For registration to take place, a lot of preparation is done. Staff had to be appointed and trained. The necessary materials had to be printed, for campaigning and the general administration on the days of registration. All the logistics were covered and the process still managed to run smoothly. The role of IEC in the whole process of elections is critical. It needs to have the following: the objectivity and fairness required for the role, the clarity when it comes to regulations governing the electoral process and the commitment to serve the country and the province. The stakeholders in the Free State, acknowledged the top quality service received from the Provincial Electoral Officer and his team. Political parties appreciated the accessibility and efficiency of the team.

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The quality of service was confirmed by the great support the IEC received throughout the registration process.

WESTERN CAPE

LOOKING BACK AND STEPPING FORWARD IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Cheryl Hendricks

Centre for Conflict Resolution

South Africa is in the voter registration phase of elections in gearing up for its third National Democratic elections. Political parties eagerly await the date on which these elections are to be held. It is to be announced by the President on the 11 February 2004. The weekend of 24 and 25 January is that of the second voter registration drive. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) hopes to substantially reduce the shortfall between 27.4 million eligible voters and the 19.4 million that have registered thus far. Political campaigning has, however, begun with political parties releasing their manifestos, election jingles blaring through our stereos, mass rallies being held and party placards decorating our lamp posts. What does the electoral landscape look like for the Western Cape?

The Western Cape Province is that area bounded by Vredendal to the North West, Beaufort West to the North East and Plettenberg Bay in the East. It consists of 25 municipalities and 5 demarcated municipal areas (DMA's). The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) has divided the province into 330 wards. The IEC, in consultation with political parties, has delimited 1348 voting districts in the province. For the voter registration campaign, the IEC trains 3 persons per voting district whilst 10-12 persons are required for the national elections. Thus far, 2 067 505 persons out of a potential of 2 982 399 have registered in the Western Cape. The IEC has conducted an intensive voter registration campaign using advertisements in the media, primarily targeted at the youth, flyers, billboards and house to house visits. It has to contend with what is commonly referred to as "voter apathy" (especially amongst the youth), high levels of people movement which affects their voting district, and the fact that many still do not have their identity documents despite Home Affairs speedily processing these for free.

Institutionally, the IEC has developed a reputation for competence and delivering elections that are "free and fair." In 1994 their challenge was to speedily institutionalise an independent electoral body and hold elections in a highly politically charged atmosphere. During the 1999 elections they had to sell the use of a new technologically sophisticated election system to the people and educate them with regard to process. In 2004 their greatest challenge is to get voters to the polling booths in high percentages. The IEC has over the past few years been engaged in voter education. Through the IEC's Electoral Democracy Development and Education unit they have targeted educators training them to impart to learners the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to consolidate democracy. They have also trained many community representatives to conduct voter education employing the strategies of house visits and public meetings that are geared at informing people of their right and necessity to express their preference for governance. The populace is largely familiar with the procedures of voting. However, a question mark can still be

placed on their ability to make informed voting choices.

The Western Cape has acquired a politically conservative reputation because of voting patterns in the 1994 and 1999 elections. The province consists of 4 524 316 million people, 2 438 963 Coloured (54%), 1 207 422 African (27%), 832 947 White (18%) and 45 026 Asian (0.9%) according to Census 2001 (which is known to have many flaws but comprises the statistics with which the IEC is working). This is a unique demographic pattern for South Africa and voting patterns, which in previous elections were largely race based, are a reflection of this distribution of the people in the province. In the 1994 provincial elections the National Party was able to secure nearly two thirds of the White and Coloured votes giving them a majority of 53% and therefore control of the provincial legislature. The ANC was only able to attract 33% of the votes, whilst the Democratic Party lagged far behind with 6.6%. In the 1999 elections, the New National Party's (NNP) proportion of the ballots dropped substantially to 38%, whilst the DP increased theirs to 12%. They formed an alliance, the Democratic Alliance (DA), and together were able to hold onto the Western Cape. The

ANC, too, increased its share of the vote obtaining 42% of the ballots cast for provincial elections. Support for the New National Party has been on a steady decline in the Western Cape. According to a Markinor Survey conducted during October and November 2003, the NNP's support is now around 15%. The DA support has increased to 16% and the ANC dropped to 32%. The ANC and NNP, however, entered into an alliance in October 2001 and, with their votes pooled together, they hope to retain control of the Western Cape. The New National Party's dwindling support base can be attributed to its lack of a charismatic leader, lack of a principally based identity (as indicated by its alliances) and to its blurring of the distinctions between itself and the ANC. It had largely obtained a substantial support base in the province through appealing to ethnocentric attitudes. With the race-card no longer its trump card, the NNP will struggle to retain its previous support base.

The Western Cape remains a highly contested area. The ANC has announced that it is going all out to secure the two "renegade" provinces, Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal. The ANC, NNP and DA remain the major political parties competing for political power in the province. They

are, however, now joined by two new parties, the Independent Democrats (ID), formed by Patricia De Lille, a former Pan African Congress leader and the New Labour Party (NLP) of Peter Marais, former premier for the NNP. The ID is likely to put in a strong showing (the Markinor survey, cited above, places their support at 10%) attracting many of the people who previously voted NNP and DP. De Lille is known to be a black woman with integrity and admired for her role in exposing the corruption around the arms deal. Marais has been surrounded by scandals of sexual harassment and corruption, but has secured a captured audience as he is campaigning during church services on the Cape Flats.

The ANC has already entered election mode in the province with a slightly tarnished image. During the drawing up of the party list a report was released noting that there were 3 factions within the regional branch, namely, the "Africanist Agenda," "Christian Nationalists" and the "Middle Path" allegedly headed by the provincial ANC leader, Ebrahim Rasool. Lynne Brown, the speaker of the provincial assembly was placed at the top of the "Africanist Agenda" faction's list. Although it is proclaimed that the differences have been

resolved and Ebrahim Rasool is the candidate for premier for the Western Cape, Trevor Manuel, at a recent rally in Athlone, lambasted the ANC representatives in the region for “factionalism” and “tribalism” and for seeking to enrich themselves at the expense of the majority (cited in the *Weekend Argus*, 10 January 2004). The differences between the factions appear to be more around strategy for the elections, key of which is who should be the in the leadership position to attract the “coloured vote”. It is believed that more Coloured women vote for the ANC and the elevation of Lynne Brown could be seen in the light of this. Furthermore, the recent leaks that the ANC has not paid its accounts and the suspension of its provincial spindoctor, Gert Witbooi, for leaking this to the press does not bode well for its campaign.

The major issues in the Western Cape resemble those of the rest of the country, crime, corruption, unemployment, user-fees, housing, aids and access to land. These are then also highlighted in the party manifestos. The ANC, riding on the jubilation of 10 years of democracy largely attributed to its liberation struggle and governance, has outlined that its objectives

over the next five years will be geared towards ensuring continued growth of the economy; to create more than a million jobs; to complete the land restitution process; to provide access to services; to deploy more police; to foster accountable governance; to create more synergy between the three levels of government and to continue to strengthen its ties with the rest of Africa and the world. The DA, feeling somewhat outmanoeuvred by the ANC’s public broadcasting of its manifesto, is concentrating its efforts on showing the discrepancies between ANC party promises in 1999 and its delivery; the AIDS issue, where it can capitalize on the blunders made by the ANC led government, and on fighting crime. The ID has launched an access to education initiative in which it is assisting parents whose children have been barred from school because of an inability to pay the fees. The NLP asserts that it will sell state land to people at 1966 prices, while the NNP is seeking to broaden its base into the other provinces where it hopes it can “share the government in Kwa-Zulu Natal” and distance itself from the “fight back style of opposition” to more of an approach of “sharing” (cited in *Weekend Argus*, 19 January 2004). These campaigns will gain more substance and

vigour as we move into the election phase. Who will sway the hearts and minds of the masses in the Western Cape we have yet to see. For, unlike other provinces, the outcome of the elections in the Western Cape is far from pre-determined.

EASTERN CAPE

REFLECTIONS, PROJECTIONS ON THE EASTERN CAPE

Dr Thabisi Hoeane
Rhodes University

Introduction

As the election date nears, it is pertinent to reflect on the process and its likely outcome. This Eastern Cape review is an appraisal of the 1994/1999 elections and projections for 2004 focusing on the issues that are likely to dominate party political campaigns. It also discusses the electoral framework in the province.

Review of 1994, 1999 and 2004 Projections

A specific feature of South African electoral politics is that it could be described as a process that offers much of the same. Although this should not be overstated at the risk of over simplification and a misreading of salient trends, it largely holds true with the exception of the Western

Cape and KwaZulu Natal Province.

This view embodied in predictions in the 1994, 1999 and now the 2004 elections, primarily is that the dominance of the ANC is guaranteed.

The exercise, it is argued, rather than being a contest between competitors with the likelihood of the incumbent party being defeated, revolves on how much power the ANC is to gain and to what extent opposition parties can retain their support.

This view is accurate when applied to the Eastern Cape as the ANC is tipped to retain an overwhelming majority with the opposition weakening.

For opposition parties, especially the official opposition, the United Democratic Movement (UDM), the challenge is how effectively it will retain its tenuous support, given the heavy losses it suffered in floor crossing in 2003 that nearly caused its national annihilation.

In 1994, the ANC won 84 % with the NP second at 10 %. In 1999, the ANC lost a staggering 10% - by both national and provincial

standards - but still registered a massive 74% majority. This decrease was due to the emergence of the (UDM).

The following figures from SABC/Markinor 2004 and HSRC 2003 surveys underline that this trend will continue in 2004.

Table 1: Projected figures of Eastern Cape Provincial Results (December 2003/January 2004)

Political Parties	SABC/Markinor %	HSRC %
ANC	71	84.2
UDM	10	6.8
DA	7	5.7
NNP	2	1.6
PAC	2	*

*Less than one per cent.
(SABC/Markinor Opinion 2004, released January 2004, and HSRC, South African Social Attitudes Survey, released December 2003)

The HSRC estimates the ANC will regain its strength of 1994, at 84%. The UDM will remain as the official opposition, albeit at a reduced percentage of 10 % (SABC/Markinor) and 6.8 % (HSRC) as against its strength of 13.6 % in 1999. The DA and NNP will remain weak, especially the latter.

The PAC's waning fortunes, and its possible disappearance

from the South African political radar screen is likely to continue, with the HSRC according it less than 1% support.

The significance of these figures is the absence of the IFP as a player in Eastern Cape politics, which quite remarkable given its national profile. It appears that the trend that the IFP concentrates on KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng will continue in 1994.

The Issues in 2004

The ANC's dominance results largely from the failure of opposition parties to articulate policies that are different from that of the ruling party. This is especially so with regard to economic policy, which is arguably the most likely terrain on which South African voters can be offered choice.

The Eastern Cape's legacy is serious poverty and the administrative problems that resulted from the establishment of new government systems out of the amalgamation of the former Bantustans of Ciskei and Transkei with the Cape Provincial Administration.

This led to serious dislocation in government, exemplified in problems such as corruption, maladministration, unemployment, the

retrenchment of workers, especially civil servants. However, opposition parties have been unable to take advantage of these problems and the critical issue to address the reasons why.

Regarding the UDM, which arose as the main challenger to the ANC in 1999, its problem was its identification with the former Transkei Bantustan. Furthermore, the preponderance of former white NP ministers in its upper echelons fueled its unpopularity. Ironically, this worked as a double-edged sword for the party. At a positive level, the UDM gained support from those areas of the former Transkei by chiefly extolling the credentials of Bantu Holomisa as leader under the homeland system. This was especially so in urban areas such as Umtata, where it won a majority. This was due to support from the former recipients of Bantustan political patronage, especially civil servants who were retrenched under rationalisation of the bloated civil services of Transkei and Ciskei by the ANC. The negative aspect of this image stressed these successes conjuring up the Bantustan system and its vagaries, especially for people in rural and peri-urban areas who were not recipients of Bantustan patronage. Thus the ANC was to gain from this,

by empathically emphasising Holomisa's Bantustan background.

Another shortcoming the UDM, was its inability to draw a distinct policy from that of the ANC. Analysts have pointed out this limitation in most South African opposition parties. It focused on minor differences with the ANC over issues like corruption, maladministration and so on, which were clearly not the creation of the ANC, but an apartheid legacy.

The UDM's economic differences with the ANC are over implementation, not basics. The underlying message is that most South African parties have moved to the centre in terms of economic vision, and do not challenge the ANC fundamentally - despite the criticisms on policy implementation.

This means there is little to choose between opposition parties and the ANC. And the latter, because of its incumbency, strength and liberation credentials, gains most voters' support.

The other central issue of Eastern Cape politics centres on traditional leaders and which party best represents their interests. Although Holomisa effectively exploited this in 1999, the

ANC also came across as very strong in this regard.

The projection of powerful political families such as the Mandela's, who have strong traditionalist roots coupled with their liberation credentials, made for formidable adversaries.

On liberation politics, the ANC has a well-entrenched legacy of legitimacy around families such as that of the Sisulu and Mbeki clans, for example, who were maximally used to projects the progressive credentials of the ANC in the province.

Thus, although other electoral issues like crime, jobs, corruption are going to present themselves in the campaign, it is likely to be dominated once again by debates over traditional leaders and liberation credentials.

Because of the ANC's strong background on both fronts, it is highly unlikely, as opposition polls indicate, that the UDM is going to make significant inroads into its support. In fact the UDM will be fighting for its survival in this election, rather than consolidating its power, and let alone displacing the ANC.

Focusing on historically white parties, they have arguably given up on the Eastern Cape.

At best, the NNP is concentrating on winning the Western Cape, at worst being in coalition with the ANC. The DA is aligning with the IPF in KwaZulu Natal against the ANC and is preoccupied on maintaining its support in the Western Cape. The IFP is clearly not interested in the Eastern Cape, whereas the small parties are highly unlikely to worry the ANC.

The Electoral Framework

The acerbic criticism against the handling of the 1994 election by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which improved its performance in 1999, is likely to dissipate in 2004 both nationally and provincially.

In the Eastern Cape, the preparations for the election given that the second phase of the drive is not factored into this analysis, look quite impressive.

With respect to the enthusiasm of voters, despite the misgivings of apathy, the situation is very appealing. By the second election drive, the IEC had registered 2.76 million voters out of an estimated 3.6 million voters - 77 per cent of those eligible. Thus the situation can only improve.

The importance of these figures is their gender and

youth dimensions. In gender terms, the current figures indicate that close to half a million more women (450 000) have registered than men. What is going to be interesting is to see how political parties are going to factor issues affecting women into their campaigns.

In terms of the youth, the Eastern Cape's figures emphatically rebuff the apathy argument. Although registration figures do not translate into election turnout, the way the youth have responded is quite dramatic.

They show that the 20-39 group comprises 45% of registered voters. Strikingly, it is the 20-29 age group - the very group that various analyses stress is not interested in politics that shows the most enthusiasm to vote - comprising 25% of registered voters.

Hence the media, analysts and public commentators should seriously revisit this challenged notion that South African youth are politically apathetic.

In terms of the IEC itself, it has deployed 12 342 personnel at 4118 voting stations for the second registration drive which is an impressive figure. Given that about 800 000 eligible voters still have to register, it is not

unreasonable to conclude that this target, coupled with the enthusiasm displayed by voters, will be achieved.

Thus, although depressingly the election is regarded as a foregone conclusion, the province can draw deserved comfort from the positive trends indicated in the civic responsibility of its citizens to register, especially the youth. If only the contest was going to be about real choice...

NEWSFLASH!

ANC TO INTENSIFY EC CAMPAIGN

By Eric Naki, Political Editor

EAST LONDON - The African National Congress in the Eastern Cape is to intensify its election campaign in the province and has deployed top-level leadership to mobilise voters in the region until the election. This was one of the decisions taken at the party's two-day provincial lekgotla held here at the weekend.

The meeting came out with a two-month programme of action in which members of the national executive committee and provincial leadership are deployed to visit all the regions of Amathole, Cacadu, OR Tambo, Chris Hani, Ukhahlamba, Alfred Nzo and Nelson Mandela. Provincial spokesperson Phaki Hobongwana said NEC members Saki Macozoma and Lindiwe Sisulu also attended. Hobongwana said the movement reviewed the work that had been done already. He said in all the areas visited people inquired about various issues which were clarified including land reform, affirmative action and cultural heritage.

The party's election report was endorsed as good progress. "We have to ensure that we mobilise all our structures and the masses of the province behind the ANC." Hobongwana expressed concern over the last voter registration figures which were below 80percent in the municipal areas of Mquma, Buffalo City, Nyandeni, Nelson Mandela Metro, Mbashe, Camdeboo, Blue Crane, Ndlambe, Baviaans and Koukamma. "These areas we still need to target to ensure that more people register." The lekgotla agreed that all municipalities should be pushed to register beyond 85percent of the potential voters. In the run-up to the elections, the ANC will put much energy on undecided voters by addressing their concerns while it mobilises all its members to go to the polls. The organisation resolved to try to break new ground by addressing racial and class patterns in its support. Party liaison committee representatives will be instructed to engage the Independent Electoral Commission in addressing problems encountered during the January 24-25 registrations.

Hobongwana said that, during the action programme, which runs until mid-March, themes to be addressed include consolidating the ANC social base, reaching undecided voters, mobilising unregistered voters to register, popularising the ANC manifesto, focusing on sectors and holding community meetings and organising rallies in Umtata.

Hobongwana said the lekgotla resolved that it is the leadership's responsibility to keep the momentum high as the election nears and to synchronise the organisation's work at all levels. "No-one must fall behind; we need everyone in the forefront," he said.

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Daily Dispatch, 3 February 2004 - <http://www.dispatch.co.za/2004/02/03/Easterncape/eec.html>

MPUMALANGA

THE ELECTION ARENA

Mpumalanga
Province in
the Spotlight

Thabo Rapoo
Centre for Policy Studies

Background and Context

As the 2004 general elections approach, the Mpumalanga province appears comparatively stable, both politically and economically.

During the period leading up to the 1999 elections, the province was wracked by internecine political infighting within the ruling party, compounded by pervasive administrative corruption and widespread negative media coverage. Intervention from the ANC national leadership led to the first Mpumalanga premier Matthews Phosa being deposed, and instead, imposed a former homeland leader, Ndaweni Mahlangu. This did not appear to stem the internal party strife. Neither did it sort out the resultant instability within the institutions of governance. In fact, the arrival of the new premier resulted in even more factional strife within the provincial ANC. The new premier's unpopularity with

some factions in the party's provincial structures saw him unable to gather enough support to win the party's chair position. Also, soon after Mahlangu became premier, the province descended into further political instability and administrative chaos, culminating in a R318 million debt in 2000. The national treasury had to intervene early in 2001 to halt the rot by bailing out the province to the tune of R300m.

However, the political problems besetting Mpumalanga do not seem to have affected the electoral dynamics of the province significantly. For instance, the failure to create conditions for stable governance in the early years of the province's existence has clearly not hurt the ANC's electoral prospects in the province. The province remains an electoral stronghold for the ruling ANC, which has run the provincial government with overwhelming majorities (80.7% in 1994 and 84.9% in 1999) since 1994. Recent opinion polls by the HSRC and Markinor/SABC predict another crushing victory in the 2004 elections for the ANC in the province.

A number of factors explain this situation. Firstly, the institutional weakness of the opposition parties in Mpumalanga is a critical factor. Added to this is the newly formed cooperative alliance between the ANC and the NNP, which only serves to weaken the critical voices of the opposition even further. They have failed to capitalise on the ANC's internal political problems in the province and the widespread coverage of corruption and mismanagement of state resources. For instance, there are only four opposition parties represented in the provincial legislature – the UDM, DA, NNP and Freedom Front. All four have very small electoral support bases, especially within the black majority that constitutes approximately 83% of the province's population. The white, mainly Afrikaans speaking, voting population makes up about 11% of the electorate. This is where most of the electoral support of the DA, Freedom Front and NNP will come, with the DA likely to take the biggest share. The ANC and UDM draw their support almost exclusively from the black majority in the province. Coloureds and Indians constitute a very small proportion of the voting population and, according to

the HSRC South African Social Attitudes Survey (2003), they are likely to vote for the opposition, especially the DA and NNP. Another party that shares a common and predominantly black electoral support base with the ANC is the IFP (not represented in the legislature).

Secondly, voting in Mpumalanga is racially divided, with the predominantly white political parties drawing their support from within the small white electorate, whilst the black political parties draw their electoral support from the majority black electorate. This trend was clearly evident in the previous two elections and is likely to hold for the next election. It means that the major predominantly white opposition parties in the province are unlikely to make serious inroads into the ANC's support base. This is compounded by the electoral weakness of the predominantly black opposition parties such as the UDM and the IFP in the province. This leaves the ANC largely unchallenged, especially among the black voters, in Mpumalanga.

The third important factor is simply the incumbency factor. The advantage of having been in power for almost ten years, combined with a weak opposition not only within Mpumalanga but also

throughout the country, could instil a sense of fatalism among the electorate, and generate a view that there is no alternative to the ANC. Also, the ANC in the province has begun to focus energies on development and speeding up the delivery of basic social services in spite of the recent revelations of chaotic administration and near collapse of service delivery in the health sector. The ANC has been able to maintain close ties, and a significant presence in local communities throughout Mpumalanga, through a network of community based Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs). As a ruling party, the ANC appears to have used its comparative institutional and organisational advantage over other parties to strengthen its reach into the province's rural communities to establish its foothold. For instance, since 2000, the party has established more PCOs throughout the province than any other party and these structures have enabled the party to engage in a variety of community development activities including campaigns for ID registrations and encouraging people to register for social welfare grants and other social support programmes.

Despite the recurrent political squabbles and factionalism

within the provincial ANC, and the ever-present spectre of official corruption and mismanagement in the provincial government of Mpumalanga, political stability and confidence appear to be slowly returning. In a recent interview with the *Sowetan*, premier Mahlangu reflects on his tenure of office and appears upbeat that Mpumalanga has turned the corner. He points to a number of factors to explain what he sees as a turnaround: the fact that a new and decentralised financial management system has been put in place to overcome the financial problems that characterised the early days of his administration; the creation of an anti-corruption Toll Free line in the province and the increasing prosecution or dismissals of corrupt administrative officials in the province. He believes that more resources will now be redirected to building and upgrading the province's infrastructure. In addition to all this, it has recently been revealed that Mpumalanga's economy is one of the fastest growing in the country, with a strong contribution from the tourism sector. All this appears to have engendered a new sense of confidence within the ANC in the province. In a recent interview with SAFM, ANC Mpumalanga provincial Secretary Lucas Mello argued

that the party has done enough over the past nine years to secure a comfortable victory in the 2004 general elections.

For the ANC in Mpumalanga, it is not whether or not the party will win but by what margin. Also, the size of the victory will be determined by voter turnout as well as how satisfied the voters are with the party's service delivery track record in the province. The party is well aware of the potentially deleterious effects on voters of the continuing internal squabbles within the party leadership in the province. Also, effective service delivery at local level in the province continues to encounter serious setbacks due to severe lack of institutional capacity, skills shortages, poor financial management and corruption in many local authorities throughout the province. These issues may weigh heavily on the minds of voters in the province as the election looms larger, and could affect voter turnout. It would appear therefore that the loyalty of the ANC's support base should not be taken for granted, especially if the party's provincial list conference held in Badplaas, Mpumalanga, in October 2003 is to be taken as an indicator. For instance, the party delegates placed the current provincial premier in second place, below the MEC

for social services, Siphoswe Masango. Some commentators take this to indicate a certain level of discontent among the party faithful in the province. The placing of the sitting premier in second place (as well as in first place on the party's province-to-national list) may be a message to the national leadership that someone with a strong local support base within the party should replace the current unpopular premier.

Election 2004: Activities and Processes in Mpumalanga.

By all accounts, Mpumalanga's preparations towards the 2004 elections appear to have been smoother than in 1999. In terms of voter registration, the IEC also appears reasonably satisfied. The IEC's Mpumalanga Provincial Election Officer, Steve Ngwenya, expressed satisfaction with the turnout during the first round of registrations on November 8th and 9th in 2003. The IEC indicated that a total of 317 687 people registered at 1128 (up from 1 023 in 2000) stations throughout the province during the first round. Also, a total of 1.5million people have registered in the province so far, 200 000 more than in the 1999 election.

Media reports and other accounts suggest significantly higher levels of voter registration occurring especially in the rural areas of the province than in urban areas. This is not surprising however. It could merely reflect a national trend reported in recent opinion surveys that suggest that South Africans in the rural areas are responding in larger numbers to voter registration campaigns and show more willingness to vote in the next general election than those in the country's urban areas. However, it is also important to note that since 2001, there have been well-coordinated voter education and awareness campaigns in the rural areas of Mpumalanga to encourage potential voters and members of the rural communities in general to apply for identity documents as well as to register for voting.

In addition to the critical role played by the IEC and political parties in voter education and registration campaigns in the province, a number of other key players have been involved. These include the government's communication and information service (GCIS) as well as the provincial Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. For instance, this department has conducted largely effective voter education campaigns in

Mpumalanga, enlisting the assistance of well-known artists and performers to take voter education messages mainly to the rural villages and farm areas. This appears to have had a positive effect on intended audiences. The IEC in Mpumalanga has also indicated that the farming community in the area, especially Agri-Mpumalanga, has made positive contributions to the voter education and registration campaigns. Some of the key stakeholders from organised farming in the province have been willing to share platforms with IEC officials to drive the message home. In addition, the IEC indicates that unlike in the 1999 election where they were largely hostile and uncooperative, the Traditional Authority structures in the province have played a very critical role not only in allowing voter education activities in their areas but also by encouraging their subjects to register.

This picture contrasts significantly with the picture in the period leading up to the 1999 elections. For instance, chaotic planning and logistical problems at voter registration stations characterised the preparations for the 1999 elections in Mpumalanga, including the voter registration process. In fact, the IEC in Mpumalanga

enlisted the logistical support and assistance of the South African National Defence Force in the 1999 voter registration process. A number of areas such as Lydenburg, Ogies and Middleburg were affected by logistical problems at voter registration stations, with many stations failing to open due to late or non-arrival of voter registration officials and volunteer workers.

While it appears that these problems have largely been overcome by the IEC, the current preparations for the 2004 general elections are not completely without problems. For instance, in addition to the low response rates from the urban areas, the IEC says that lack of enthusiasm from the youth in the province is one of the major challenges for the second round of voter registration set for 24th and 25th January. Most of the registered voters in the province are in the 26-35 years age groups. Extra effort and a number of innovative strategies were therefore being employed to lure the youth to register. For instance, joint efforts with the Department of Education in the province have been undertaken to target schools and learners in the 16-18 years age group. In addition, letters written in 11 official languages were being mailed to the schools in the province

to be read at morning assemblies and gatherings, and for discussions with pupils in classrooms to urge the youth to register. It's not yet clear so far how effective this highly targeted strategy has been. Also, a significant number of people across Mpumalanga are still without ID documents, but most of these appear to be applicants who have not bothered to collect their identity documents from Home Affairs offices across the province. The IEC puts the figure for uncollected ID documents at 20 209.

In terms of political party activities and registrations, the ANC launched its election campaign in Mpumalanga on Sunday, 18th January with enthusiastic attendance by its supporters. The launch was held at Kwaggafonteing stadium (Kwandebele) and addressed by Minister of Agriculture & Land Affairs Thoko Didiza. The major opposition parties in the province have not yet formally launched their election campaigns, which could give the ANC a slight advantage start in the electioneering process. It may be significant also that Didiza, a member of the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) deployed to Mpumalanga, was accompanied by another NEC member and Minister for

Local Government and Provincial Affairs, Sidney Mufamadi (deployed to Limpopo). Over the past two years, Mufamadi has been credited for engaging effectively with traditional leaders regarding government legislative reforms affecting their powers. It is believed that this has secured the support and cooperation of traditional leaders in Mpumalanga for the upcoming elections. His presence at the launch may therefore be calculated to sustain this goodwill towards the ANC government from traditional leaders - one of the significant organised interest groups in the province

Also, it is not yet clear how many political parties have registered to contest the 2004 provincial poll in Mpumalanga. During the

1999 elections 13 political parties were registered, even though only five did well enough to secure seats in the 30-member provincial legislature. The list of formally registered political parties will be released on 4th February when the IEC in Mpumalanga formally launches this year's election campaign process in the province.

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Date: Monday 9 February 2004

Venue: EISA Office, 2nd Floor, The Atrium, 41 Stanley Avenue, Auckland Park

Time: 15h30

RSVP: Nkgakong Mokonyane on (011) 482-5495 or nkgakong@eisa.org.za before the 7th of February 2004.

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