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The prospects for a vigorous parliamentary opposition in a democratic South Africa

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CHAPTER THREE

PARTIES ELECTORAL PERFORMANCES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

In this chapter, I will be concerned with the national elections conducted under the present democratic setting with the full analysis of the performances of both the opposition parties and the ruling party. The results of the elections will help us to understand if the opposition parties are performing well or need to re-structure their game plan if they are to be taken seriously. The results of all these elections will not be treated collectively since there were new entrants or "absentees" after the 1994 elections. In order to cover such "new parties", efforts will be made to sometime treat the elections individually so as to give adequate analysis to the results attained in that particular year. This will lead to sometimes making comparism between two elections such as 1994/1999, 1999/2004 or 1994-2004.

South Africa's non-racial democracy was established about twelve years ago following protracted constitutional negotiations over a period of four years. Although marked by much terrible violence, the transition was far from the racially charged civil war, insurrection or military coup which had been widely expected. The advent of democracy in South Africa and the agreement that it represented between elites within the black and white populations to build a common future, carried high hopes for the populace not only in the country itself but around the world as well. For South Africans, the new era appeared to offer the scope to build a new society, notwithstanding either the compromises needed to reach agreement on the constitution or the still-substantial presence of the old social order within the political system or continued fears that the underlying settlement could fall apart in the face of concerted action from white or black die hards.[68]

In an effort to offer explanatory values to the ANC's electoral victories in the period 1994 to 2004, this chapter will provide a general overview of the past elections in South Africa and from the analysis of the attendant results, would look at the voting trends and / or behaviour which will permit

[68] Hassim Shireen et al; 'Fragile stability: State and society in democratic South Africa', Journal of Southern African studies, volume 31, No. 4, Dec. 2005. P.682

a prognosis of the prospects of the opposition in South African politics. From the results of the elections, the interviews conducted and the general perception of the populace, we will be in a better position to understand the attitude of the electorate and perhaps the future voting pattern with regards to key issues such as economic policies, campaign strategies and alliances.

Elections are a critical ingredient for democracy since it is through this process that the citizens are accorded a rightful and democratic opportunity to make their individual choices as to who has the power to govern a country. This is why the voting behaviour would be taken into consideration. Voting behaviour refers to factors that determine the manner in which a particular group of people vote for a specific political party. It is determined by the political attitudes, assumptions, policy preferences and partisan loyalties of individuals and the political and institutional context within which they cast their votes in an election.[69]

For many, the South Africa's political transition was a "miracle", a description used by former President Nelson Mandela in his victory speech after the April 1994 election.[70] And indeed it did have this dimension, as attested by the last minute political maneuvers that allowed the election to go ahead, the all-out effort and commitment from the elites (Black and White) to overcome the logistical challenges etc. The dawn of the new era brought with it high popular expectations and against this backdrop, the African National Congress (ANC), with its liberation credentials, was voted into power by an overwhelming majority. A closer scrutiny of the voting reveals that the politics of identity remain the most convincing explanation; this will be validated upon a careful study of the past election results and the voting trends for the ANC and the other opposition parties with the available data and statistics from the Independent Electoral Commission.

The electoral strength of the ruling party had not been in doubt since the inception of the new democratic dispensation. Both the 1994 and 1999 elections saw the party (ANC) gaining electoral votes enough to form the government. The holding of the 2004 general elections, which co-incided with the marking and celebrations of the first decade of democracy, ensured widespread reflection

[69] The Democracy Encyclopaedia, 1995.
[70] Hassim Shireen et al; 'Fragile stability: State and society in democratic South Africa', Journal of Southern African studies, volume 31, No. 4, Dec. 2005. P.682

upon the achievements and limitations of the post-apartheid order.[71] As a result, in the run up to the 2004 elections, the opposition parties dwelt on the failures of the ruling party while the ruling party focused on its achievements. Predictably, despite the criticism leveled against the ANC, the party maintained its electoral dominance, which is now a source of major concern, with political theorists being divided on the issue.

As Giliomee and Simkins suggest: "A ruling party with a large and seemingly permanent majority can offer much-needed political stability and predictability in economic policy. If it is inclusive in its recruitment, representative of a large section of society and pluralist in its functioning, it can impart a great degree of legitimacy to a new regime".[72] But equally having observed that this seemingly great strength of the dominant party can be its weakness, they were quick to point out that "by making the power and coherence of the dominant party the chief condition of national survival, the party blurs the distinction between the ruling party and the state".[73]This was also the view of Arian and Barnes in their proposition on this issue. In a pioneering article on the dominant party as a neglected model of democratic stability, they stated that the dominant party is a much better stabilizing mechanism than fragmented parties; and also a dominant party which combines its rule with political competition and a large measure of civil liberties can serve quite well as a necessary platform for a durable democratic system.[74]

These proponents overlook the fact that this obviously can open the door to large-scale corruption and the suppression of dissent and affect genuine democratic competition by the opposition. In such situations, what is generally witnessed is a greater unwillingness to disperse power, a readier inclination to de-legitimize opponents and a more widespread abuse of state patronage than in systems where there is a periodic changeover of government. That is why theorists like Przeworski and Limongi insist on alternation in office before classifying a regime as democratic. Insisting that there is a good case for considering a regime as not democratic if "tenure in office ended up in the

[71] Southall, R. & Daniel, J.; 'State of Parties Post-Election 2004: ANC Dominance and Opposition Enfeeblement' in State of the Nation.
[72]Giliomee Hermann and Simkins Charles (eds.), *The Awkward embrace: One party-Domination and Democracy*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1991. P. xv
[73] Ibid
[74] Arian and Barnes cited in Giliomee Hermann and Simkins Charles (eds.), *The Awkward embrace: One party-Domination and Democracy*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1991. P.3

establishment of a non-party or one-party rule".[75]South Africa has not degenerated to that level at this time, but the fact remains that if such issues are not adequately guarded against, we might come to that point at the long run.

A general overview of the elections shows that the ANC's proportion of the vote increased from 62.65% in 1994 and 66.35% in 1999 to 69.69% in 2004; increasing its national representation from 252 to 266 to 279 in the current parliament. And although its national vote of 10.88 million was well down from the 12.24 million votes it received in 1994 (when voters were not pre-registered and the only qualification to vote was possession of an I.D book), it received another 277,000 votes compared with 1999 (when voters did have to be registered and the franchise was restricted to citizens). Yet what gave the ANC particular pleasure was its performances in the provincial elections in Western Cape and KwaZuluNatal, where in the previous contests it had been outsmarted by the opposition. All failing to secure outright majorities in both provinces, it now established political control over all nine provinces.

The formation of party alliances in the run-up to the last election was noteworthy. Some, if not all, of these alliances involved parties that did not even share any common political ideologies, such as the ANC – NNP and the DA – IFP alliances. But they almost share similar manifestos that addressed the same issues. The DA's campaign strategy was once again subject to public outcry. The party slogan "South Africa Deserves Better" was interpreted by many analysts as attempts to ridicule the efforts of the ANC led government in the past ten years to better the lives of South Africans.[76]But political commentators have asserted that the South African electorate has over the years moved away from using such rhetoric to win their votes. All these influenced electoral outcomes.

[75] Przeworski Adam and Limongi Fernando, "Modernization: Theories and Facts" quoted in Giliomee Hermann and Simkins Charles (eds.), *The Awkward embrace: One party-Domination and Democracy*, Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1991. P. xvi

[76] Letsholo, Sydney 2005, 'How the ANC won the 2004 Elections: Perspectives on voting behaviour in South Africa', EISA occasional paper number 31, April 2005.Pg12

The April 2004 elections reinforced two defining trends in South Africa's ten year old democracy: the ANC extended its wide electoral lead over other political parties and the institutional foundations of democratic contestation and constitutional government continued to strengthen.[77]

Table Showing Overall National Results, 1994 - 2004

	1994	1999	2004	1994%	1999%	2004%	1994 Seats	1999	2004 Seats
ANC	12,237,655	10,601,330	10,878,251	63.12%	66.35%	69.69%	252	266	279
DA	338,426	1,527,337	1,931,201	1.75	9.56	12.34	7	38	50
IFP	2,058,294	1,371,477	1,088,664	10.62	8..58	6.98	43	34	28
NNP	3,983,690	1,098,215	257,824	20.55	6.87	1.5	82	28	7
UDM	-	546,790	355,717	-	3.42	2.28	-	14	9
ID	-	-	269,765	-	-	1.73		-	7
ACDP	88,104	228,975	250,272	0.45	1.43	1.60	2	6	6
PAC	243,478	113,125	113,512	1.26	0.71	0.73	5	3	3
UCDP	-	125,280	117,792	-	0.78	0.76	-	3	3
FF+	424,555	127,217	139,465	2.19	0.80	0.90	9	3	4
FA	-	86,704	-	-	0.54	-	-	2	-
AEB	-	46,292	-	-	0.29	-	-	1	-
AZAPO	-	27,257	41,776	-	0.17	0.27	-	1	2
MF	13,433	48,277	55,267	0.07	0.30	0.35	0	1	2
OTHER	145,683	28,866	112,861	0.0	0.2	0.75	0	0	0
VALID VOTES	19,533,498	15,977,142	15,612,667	100	100	100	400	400	400

Source: http://www.elections.org.za/results

http://www.eisa.org.za/results

The table above clearly illustrates the electoral feat of the ANC since the 1994 elections to 2004. The ANC has managed to increase its electoral percentage with each election, but the steady progress of the DA is also worthy of mention. Although there is a huge gap between the ANC and the DA in terms of national results, the latter solidified its position as the main opposition party and this has nothing to do with its "coalition for change" alliance with the IFP. The DA mainly profited from the demise of the NNP.

[77] Alence, R. 2004; 'The 2004 Elections and Democratic Governance in South Africa', Election Update, No.7

One can fully understand the ANC's victory in the strength of its own campaign and the weaknesses of the opposition. The party started on a strong base, as the historic standard-bearer of democracy and as the party of the racially oppressed black majority, of the working class and of the wider poor. Yet these were all advantages that might have been imperiled by various aspects of its performance in government since its inception. Whilst none have questioned its majority status, various commentators have accused the ANC of misusing its dominance to secure unjustified party advantage (as through the introduction of floor-crossing legislation, as earlier stated in this paper, opposition members joined their ranks and enabled it to once unseat the DA as government of the Western Cape). The rate at which politicians defected to the ANC was a source of concern as many within the NNP, PAC, UDM, IFP and more so from the DA moved to the ANC; this for instance changed the power balance in the Western Cape. And these politicians arguably brought with them sizeable amount of support to the ANC. It was in this context that its huge electoral victory was explained by some authors and commentators.

Generally, the South African national elections can be interpreted from the point of the normalization of the electoral process to the institutionalization of democratic politics with the dominance of the ruling party; but to what extent can this lead to democratic consolidation? As can be seen from the outcome of the past elections, the electoral dominance of the ANC was first manifested in the 1994 polls and this has seen a steady increase since then. The party reproduced its political hegemony during the second democratic election of 1999 by taking 66.35% of the total valid votes and 266 parliamentary seats, while the second best party, the Democratic Party (the current Democratic Alliance – DA) attained a mere 8.56% of the votes which resulted to 38 parliamentary seats. Compared to the 1994 elections, the DA increased its election results in the 1999 election which denied the ANC of a hope for the targeted two-thirds majority. Apart from the ANC's return to power, another significance of the election was that the DA became the country's main official opposition party, having surpassed the NNP.

The 2004 general elections will be remembered most for the fact that the ANC for the first time secured over two-thirds of the seats in the National Assembly and control over all the provincial legislatures. The significance of this is that a two-thirds majority enables the ANC to unilaterally

change the constitution. The ANC also controls provincial legislatures. This means that the party also controls the upper house of parliament (NCOP). The party increased its share of the national vote from 63% in 1994 to 67% in 2004, while winning a plurality of the votes in all nine provinces and a majority of the ballots in seven (Western Cape and KwaZuluNatal were the exceptions).

In contrast to the ANC's consolidating hold on the electorate, the opposition share of the vote has declined since the inception of the "new democracy" in 1994. Yet, whether or not the opposition is becoming more fragmented depends on the timeframe that one considers. The largest increase in the number of represented opposition parties occurred between 1994 and 1999, and there has been a slight concentration of the opposition vote behind the largest opposition party between 1999 and 2004 (though in a smaller number of votes overall). Since 1994, the number of opposition parties represented in the National Assembly has doubled. Many opposition parties that previously earned seats in most provincial legislatures now win seats in just a few; and the ANC's share of the seats in several provincial legislatures has increased. See table below;

Provincial Seats Won 2004.

Party	EASTERN CAPE	FREE S T	GAUTENG	KZN	MP'LANGA	NC	LIMPOPO	NW	WC
ACDP	-	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	2
ANC	51	25	51	38	27	21	45	27	19
DA	5	3	15	7	2	3	2	23	12
FF+	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
ID	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
IFP	0	0	2	30	0	0	0	0	0
MF	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
NNP	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5
PAC	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
UCDP	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
UDM	6	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1

Source: South African Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)

As a block, the opposition has been unable to maintain its share of the vote so that the largest opposition party in parliament in 2004 (DA, with 50 seats) has over one-third fewer seats than the largest opposition party held in 1994 (the NP, which held 82 seats). The share of the vote held by opposition parties 30.3% is now distributed among 20 parties contesting the election and 13 of these gained entrance into parliament, up from just 6 opposition parties in 1994, and 12 in 1999. At the same time, however, the largest opposition party in parliament has gotten larger, in terms of absolute number of votes, seats and share of the poll, since 1999 (although still much smaller than the equivalent party in 1994). The "leader of the opposition" following the 2004 polls, the DA, holds 12.3% of the vote (50 seats), while in 1999, the largest opposition party (the Democratic Party, the predecessor of the DA), held less than 10% of the vote and just 38 seats.

Other trends among the opposition saw the NNP decimated; its share of the national poll reduced to just 1.7% down from 6.9% in 1999 and 20.6% in 1994. The party that dominated electoral contests for fifty years is no longer represented in any of the provincial legislatures. The UDM increased its position to fourth in the National Assembly despite losing more than half of its members of parliament during a period of floor-crossing in late 2003 which weakened the party's ability to wage an election campaign. The Independent Democrats (ID), in existence for less than a year prior to the elections, broke into the national political arena with a larger vote share than even the NNP.

Another notable issue to consider in these election outcomes is that the ANC's increased share of the vote must be considered against declining registration and turnout. These declines have occurred in a context of an increasing population, raising the absolute numbers of both eligible and registered voters. According to a political observer, "this increase is especially important since the 2004 figures are based on the 2001 census, which more accurately captured African and township dwellers than had the 1996 census, on which the 1999 registration figures were based".[78]

There were five million new voters and over two million more registered to vote in 2004 than in 1999; yet the ANC only increased its absolute number of votes by 276,921 ballots. This means that

[78] Piombo, Jessica; 'Politics in a stabilizing democracy: South Africa's 2004 Elections', Strategic Insights, volume 3, issue 5, May 2004.

the party won a larger share of the poll, but this should be interpreted as a decrease in "real" terms; if turnout had increased proportionate with the increase in population, the overall number of ballots cast would have been larger but there is a decline in voter turnout. Therefore, the ANC's 70% could very well be an artifact of turnout.

At this point, one can only speculate as to which categories of eligible voters declined to exercise their rights. The decreased share of the vote earned by the opposition parties would suggest that it is their voters who stayed at home. At the same time, the fact that the ANC's absolute votes slightly increased (only 276,000) also indicates that while the ANC prevented many in its traditional support base from voting elsewhere, it also did not motivate a large number of its potential supporters to actually go to the polls. The lower turnout was more noticeable amongst the white and coloured community, with many former NNP voters deciding not to vote; but by contrast Africans both in rural and urban communities showed a little more interest. The opposition parties have seen a steep decline in the votes cast in their favour amongst their core constituencies, while at the same time failing to extend support into new demographic groups. This is reflected in very low levels of turnout amongst minority voters.

Votes Cast for Opposition Parties in Three Elections

Year	ANC	All other Parties	DA/NNP+FA	IFP
1994	12,237,655	7,295,843	4,322,116	2,058,294
1999	10,601,330	5,375,812	2,712,246	1,371,477
2004	10,878,251	4,734,416	2,189,025	1,088,665

Source: Compilation from IEC figures.

From the figures as shown above and the analysis therein, it's contingent of the subjective weaknesses of opposition parties. Electoral participation amongst the minorities would only be expected to pick up once the long awaited "re-alignment of opposition politics" delivers a political vehicle that inspires re-engagement with the vote.

Significantly, the analysis of the electoral trends in South Africa since the current democratic dispensation shows that the opposition is not doing well; notwithstanding the slight incremental

advantage the Democratic Alliance (DA) recorded in 2004. Starting from 1994, the NP emerged from the elections as the second largest party in parliament, with representation in all nine provincial legislatures. The "New" NP was reduced to third largest national party in 1999 with its support base concentrated primarily in the Western and Northern Cape provinces. It retained members in all nine provincial legislatures, seven out of nine provinces it held only three or fewer members. The NNP's performance in 2004 proved disastrous as the party won seats in only two legislatures (Western Cape and Northern Cape) and became the fifth largest party in the National Assembly. The NNP's poor performance can be attributed to many factors, but the most striking is the fact that it engaged in so many coalitions and alliances since 1994 that sometimes contradicted its original stand or party ideology. But the last straw that broke its back seems to have been the coalition arrangements that the party worked out with the ANC in 2001, giving the ANC entrance into the Western Cape provincial government. This deal put the party back into a close relationship with the ruling party and which gave room for suspicion of the NNP as a genuine opposition party. In 1996, the NP had withdrawn from the Government of National Unity purely on the grounds of this, accusing the ANC amongst other things mainly of intolerance of the opposition; so it should have been no surprise that it faced similar problems in the 2004 campaign. Therefore, it came as no surprise when the party disbanded after the floor-crossing period in September 2005.

The transformation of the Democratic Party from a liberal English dominated voice for freedom into its current conservative form (the Democratic Alliance) took analysts more by surprise than did the decline of the NNP.[79] After the elections in 1994, the DA had seven representatives in the National Assembly and as a result, operated as a moderating voice in parliament; attempting to persuade the much larger parties to adopt DP policy perspectives. This tactics was later changed in 1998 as the party was beginning to position itself for the 1999 elections. At this time, the DP began to take a much more aggressive stance, becoming a vocal opposition party and in the process attracting the wrath of the government. In the course of its meteoric rise, the DP first pursued the NNP's Afrikaner support base in its campaign for the 1999 elections, then created an alliance party with the NNP (as

[79] Piombo, Jessica; 'Politics in a stabilizing democracy: South Africa's 2004 Elections', Strategic Insights, volume 3, issue 5, May 2004.

Democratic Alliance) in June 2000;[80] and following the withdrawal of the NNP from the alliance in 2001, the DP maintained the name as the DA. The DP officially became the DA at all levels of government in April 2004. In its present strategy of "aggressive opposition", the party alienates many South Africans, as it became perceived by many as a conservative protector of minority interests that simply opposes all ANC propositions on principle; notwithstanding the party's claim that it represents the interests of all South Africans. This goes to explain the low margin in its electoral progress, bearing in mind the decline and demise of the NNP.

The IFP emerged from the 2004 elections as the third largest party in the National Assembly, holding same rank as in 1994 and 1999. The IFP's bid to increase it performance in the provinces in 1999 had failed and after the 2004 elections its presence outside KZN declined considerably. The big changes for the IFP after this election were that the party lost control over the KZN provincial legislature and failed to secure ministerial position in the new cabinet. Both of these are highly significant for the party, as KZN is the IFP's stronghold and the party previously retained national relevance by serving in the cabinet. The ANC gave Buthelezi's portfolio As Minister of Home Affairs, which he held from 1994 to 2004, to his former deputy minister. Equally of significance is that, for the first time the ANC eclipsed the IFP as the largest party in KZN, challenging the party in its sole remaining area of influence. This was not acceptable to the IFP and it immediately launched a court case to protest the certification of electoral results, claiming that it had launched complaints with the IEC about the conduct of poll in forty-seven electoral districts.[81] The party argued that approximately 367,000 votes in KZN had been tampered with, exactly enough to overturn the ANC's plurality in the provincial poll. A week later, in the "interests of national unity", the IFP dropped the court case. Overall, the IFP emerged from the 2004 as a much reduced political force, with a tenuous position in its traditional stronghold and needing to resort to tantrum tactics to retain influence in the national scene.

Small parties that broke into the national scene in 1999, such as the United Democratic Movement (UDM), had briefly raised the possibility that a non-racial (or multi-racial) opposition party had

[80] This party only existed at the local level, as the parties were prevented from merging at the national and provincial levels by constitutional provisions that then existed against floor-crossing in the national and provincial legislatures.
[81] Piombo, Jessica; 'Politics in a stabilizing democracy: South Africa's 2004 Elections', Strategic Insights, volume 3, issue 5, May 2004.

finally arrived. Yet in 2004, the UDM performed very poorly and has been reduced to a primarily black, Eastern-Cape based organization. The one sign of hope in the elections was the rise of the Independent Democrats (ID), a political party formed in April 2003, which just one year after its formation earned a number of votes equal to the NNP. Led by fiery politician and ex-Pan Africanist Congress member Patricia de Lille, this party has the potential to become a multi-racial voice for the poor, if it can build an organization that does not sustain itself solely through the charisma of its leader. Christian parties such as the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), though representing a small percentage of the overall vote, continue to perform relatively well among the opposition. The ACDP has consistently increased its vote share since 1994.

Some authors have posited that the politics of ethnicity and race serve as some of the major explanations for voting behaviour in the South African party politics. According to them, evidence since the 1994 elections shows that the ethnicity and racial arguments do rear their head, especially after testing the performance of South Africa's so-called ethnic/racial parties with the accuracy or relevance of the theory.[82] For example, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), led by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP) led by Lucas Mangope, the United Democratic Movement (UDM) led by former ANC member Bantu Holomisa all had appeal to specific ethnic groups. The IFP's major source of electoral support is based largely in the province of KwaZuluNatal. The party is at its strongest in this province, especially in the rural areas where respect for traditional authority is still strong. The party's strong ethnic appeal is also deeply rooted in Zulu nationalism[83]. The UCDP's electoral target was the Setswana speaking people of the former Bophuthatswana, while Holomisa targeted the Xhosa-speaking people, the majority of which are in the Eastern Cape. The ANC is perhaps the only party which has support across the ethnic boundary (as the election results shows) and has rightly refuted the claim that it is an ethnic party. From the election results where the UCDP garnered 0.78% and the UDM received 3.42% of the national vote while in 1994 and 1999 elections, the Freedom Front (FF) attained 2.17% and 0.80% of the national vote respectively,[84]shows the influence of ethnic factor in the South African voting pattern.

[82] Letsholo Sydney, 'How the ANC won the 2004 Elections: Perspectives on voting behaviour in South Africa', EISA Occasional Paper Number 31, April 2005.
[83] http://www.ifp.org.za
[84] Letsholo Sydney, 'How the ANC won the 2004 Elections: Perspectives on voting behaviour in South Africa', EISA Occasional Paper Number 31, April 2005.

It is also often argued that race determines the outcome of the voting behaviour of South Africans. Indeed the race argument raises many questions regarding its accuracy in trying to explain the electoral preferences of South Africans. Democracy requires political preference to be based on choice after a consideration of policy alternatives, as opposed to automatic choices based on strong group-based or symbolic sentiments that have little direct bearing on good government.[85]One argument put forward by Andrew Reynolds is that the 1994 election was no normal ballot exercise; the election was about ending white minority rule, bringing political stability, peace and creating conditions for national reconciliation and improving the quality of life of the majority.[86] The 1994 elections were not only significant in terms of launching democracy in post-apartheid South Africa, but also had profound effects on the conceptualization of voter behaviour and the reconstitution of the state.[87] Although in essence, much of this explanation ignores other factors that could have contributed to the electoral outcome to such a degree that the very same account is further used to explain the outcome of 1999 elections. Among the political parties that have always been perceived to be racially exclusive are the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), the Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA), the VF/FF (which as earlier noted can be regarded as an ethnic party); and the Afrikaner Eenheids Beweging (AEB).

The election table below shows the outcome of the results for these racially exclusive parties in 1994 and 1999. In these elections, the PAC obtained 1.25% and 0.71% of the votes cast respectively. The figures clearly indicate a sharp decrease in terms of electoral support for the party. Furthermore, the same is noted for the VF/FF whose figures of electoral support decreased between 1994 and 1999. After obtaining 2.17% in the 1994 election, the percentage subsequently decreased in 1999 with only 0.8%.

[85] Mattes, R. Paper presented to the Research Colloquium of the South African Political Sciences Association, North-West, 6-7 October 1994.
[86] Cooper, S. 'The PAC and AZAPO' in Reynolds Andrew, *Election '94 South Africa: The Campaigns, Results and Future Prospects*, Cape Town, David Philip, 1994.
[87] Ramutsindela, M, 'Identity and Voting Trends in South Africa', in Public Attitudes in Contemporary South Africa, HSRC, 2002.

Table Showing: Election Results for the "Racially Exclusive" Parties in 1994 and 1999.

Party	1994 Election No of votes cast	1994 Election % of cast votes	1994 Election No. of seats	1999 Election No. of votes cast	1999 Election % of votes cast	1999 Election No. of seats
PAC	243 478	1.25	5	113,125	0.71	3
SOPA	-	-	-	9062	0.06	0
AZAPO	-	-	-	27,257	0.17	1
VF/FF	424, 555	2.17	9	127,217	0.8	3
AEB		-	-	46292	0.29	1

Source: http://www.elections.org.za/results

The reason SOPA, AZAPO and the AEB were not considered for the 1994 election is either because they decided to boycott the election or they had not as yet been established. However, having said that, the participation in the 1999 election did not bear much fruit as their electoral performance was not at all convincing. SOPA, AZAPO and the AEB managed to accumulate 0.06%, 0.17% and 0.29% respectively.

From the table above, the argument can be drawn that the "racial" factor cannot be adjudged to be very influential in determining the electoral outcomes. If that was the case, all these "racially exclusive" parties could not have performed very poorly as they did. More so, using that (racial factor) could mean undermining the in-roads made by such parties like the ANC and the DA in the Coloured dominated areas. This is not saying that racial factor should not be considered but rather it is not such a determining factor as to ignore other variants. There is some apparent racial and ethnic voting, but the evidence is elsewhere, that is the ANC reliably gets majority of African vote, the whites reliably vote for white – led parties and anti-ANC while IFP's support is overwhelmingly Zulu.

Another crucial point in determining the voting patterns of South Africans is the issue of party leadership. Here, the impact and legacy of Nelson Mandela and the charismatic Thabo Mbeki (as some would say) is given prominence. Until now, some people still feel that a vote for the ANC is a vote for Nelson Mandela, notwithstanding he is no longer in leadership position; while, the same cannot be said about the opposition parties. The popularity of the leaders of the opposition cannot match that of the ruling party who still rely much on the "liberation struggle" credentials; and the ruling party can boast of more credible, tried and tested leaders (both in the upper echelon and the middle cadre) than the opposition parties, many of which are 'one man bands'. As a corollary to this, the leaders of the opposition tend to pursue shadows at the expense of thorough policy formulation against the ruling party. This is especially true with regard to economic policy, which still remains the most important policy terrain which opposition parties have failed to exploit in challenging the ANC.[88]

Since 1994 to 2004, the campaign strategy of the ANC has been improving. The last election was entirely different as first, the party launched its campaign in the "enemy territory" in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZuluNatal and second, the party deployed its high ranking officials in a door-to-door campaign; which of course worked very well for the party as it reflected in the results that followed. On the contrary, the opposition can hardly be said to put their acts together. The fragmentation and the intra-party politics of opposition parties have both contributed to electoral defeats. In an attempt to woo electoral support, opposition parties divert from pertinent issues that concern the well being of the country. The DA adopted "politics of fear" and mudslinging in their elections campaigns. Its "Fight Back" slogan was perceived to mean fighting back the country's transformation and in addition the campaign was adjudged to have a hidden racial agenda; while its politics of fear concentrated only on warning the electorate on the dangers of an ANC two-third majority, thereby ignoring the cogent issues such as the economy.

In as much as the DA struggled to assure the electorate that the party was open to membership by all South Africans, constant references to Zimbabwe, ruling party non-delivery and the "whiteness" of their party leadership made it difficult not to perceive it as playing the race card or as subtly

[88] Hoeane, Thabisi, 'Under Strain: The Racial/Ethnic Interpretation of South Africa's 2004 Election', Journal of African Elections, Vol.3, No.2.

appealing to race sentiment.[89]This perception of playing the racial card is a hindrance towards gaining a broader acceptance amongst the electorate. But from the standpoint of a objectivity, the DA cannot be held liable for this alone as almost all the parties use the issue of race as a token for electoral support when the chips are down; however, this works mainly for the major parties and could be detrimental to the opposition. This racial polarization was roundly condemned by the President, Thabo Mbeki when in his speech he remarked that: "To celebrate our first decade of liberation, the majority of our people voted against the perpetuation of the racial and ethnic division of the past. Through the ballot box, they have spoken out loudly against all attempts to persuade them that they belong to separate compartments, with competing interests".[90]This shows that at least outwardly, it is not commended by the president, but whether the leaders don't run foul of this is another issue altogether.

In conclusion, it could be said that the three parliamentary elections so far (1994, 1999, and 2004) did not show any remarkable changes in the trend. The liberation struggle credentials of the ANC were unquestionable. It is logical that the majority of the people who through the system of apartheid, were disenfranchised by the minority would ultimately vote for the party that brought about a change in their lives. Notwithstanding that the election manifestoes of almost all the parties address the same issues (as HIV/AIDS, crime, health, unemployment, corruption etc), majority of the people still identified with the ANC as the real champion of the liberation. The concept of party identification denotes the long-term feelings of positive attachment which many electors develop for a political party; such that if ANC voters feel deeply dissatisfied with the party's performance, they tend to stay at home rather than transferring their support to another party.[91]

From the analysis thereof, it could be deduced that for the time being, there is stabilization in the South African democracy occasioned by past successful conduct of the elections. But due to the declining fortunes of the opposition and the continued dominance of the ruling party (ANC), there are worrying signs that this may be creating voter apathy, which may not be favourable to the consolidation of democracy in South Africa. Some argue that the country's rates of participation are

[89] Hendricks, C., 'On the Campaign Trail in the Western Cape', Election Update 2004, No.6
[90] Thabo Mbeki cited in Letsholo Sydney, 'How the ANC won the 2004 Elections: Perspectives on voting behaviour in South Africa' in EISA Occasional paper, Number 31, April 2005.
[91] Lodge, Tom; 'The Context: How the System Works', in Election Update, No.1

not unusually low when compared against other countries in similar situations. Yet the increasing centralization and dominance of the ANC remains a concern from the standpoint of democratic transparency, although some will equally view this as a stabilizing factor in the post-apartheid South Africa. But the main concern is that the continuing "irrelevance" of the opposition may become a threat to democratic stability, for as the voters de-align from the ANC, if they do not find an alternative political home through which to express their political aspirations, the party system could become divorced from the realities of political life. In a system run on party-list proportional representation, this discontentment could ultimately prove destabilizing if not properly checked.