

Survey unpacks April '94

1 Only 5 percent of voters who identified with a particular party "defected" by voting for another party on election day or did not vote. Six percent of voters took advantage of the double ballot to vote for a different party at the regional level.

2 Language and ethnicity were most significant for IFP supporters, who cited these concerns in 43 percent of cases as compared to 7 percent of FF, 1 percent of NP and less than 1 percent of ANC supporters.

3 Fifty percent of voters said that there was a candidate or leader who attracted them to a particular party; and 41 percent of Mandela's followers cited performance and achievement as opposed to 30 percent for De Klerk and 6 percent for Buthelezi.

4 Personal financial conditions did not appear to greatly affect voting patterns for any party. If anything, the ANC tended to draw a little less support from those whose situations had remained the same, and a little more from both those who were doing much better and much worse. The NP pattern was exactly the opposite.

MOST South Africans concluded that the h only in the most as a "racial census" they have argued but rather a registration of identity bolic ratification of the end of ap to reveal more about the demogr history than the preferences and

However, most of these judgements of national and regional election Thus far we have lacked data abo can determine whether affiliation the key motivation in voting beh

With this in mind, Idasa com company, Market and Opinion 5 of political attitudes relevant to consisted of 2 401 South African survey (Idasa executive director Hennie Kotze of Stellenbosch U beginning an extensive statistica are some preliminary insights.

The census/uhuru explanation elections in all "divided societies fixed largely by race or ethnicity beliefs or preferences. Analysts, t for governmental change becau independent or floating vote.

On this point, our sample reve pondents, 88 percent, identified percent of the public could be ca

Moreover, this high level of pa across racial lines. Some surveys pa campaign had showed that identifica board, and much lower for colour appears that the campaign may l behind one party or another.



DEMOCRACY WATCH

according to party. While the ANC was able to convert 97 percent of its identifiers into actual voters, the Democratic Party (DP) only kept 72 percent of their loyalists and the Freedom Front (FF) 69 percent. An additional 6 percent of all voters took advantage of the double ballot to vote for a different party at the regional level. At this point, however, the electoral situation does not appear to be very fluid.

Yet this begs the question of why people identify with the parties they do. Despite the census/uhuru explanation, most voters seem to have fixed their loyalties according to their larger preferences and beliefs. Moreover, policies and issues are usually not the only factors determining party loyalty in established Western democracies. Voters often legitimately consider candidates and party histories to form judgements about competence and ability to lead. This is clearly visible in our sample.

When we asked people why they felt close to the party they selected, only 9 percent of identifiers referred to racial bonds and only 3 percent mentioned ethnic ties. In contrast, 24 percent mentioned the party's performance and achievements (past performance 16 percent and expected future performance 8 percent); 16 percent mentioned ideology and 14 percent cited the party's policies. In addition, 9 percent mentioned the competence, trustworthiness or integrity of the party.

There were, however, some fascinating differences by party. For example, where ideology was mentioned by 21 percent of ANC supporters as important, only 7 percent of National Party (NP) voters listed it; 6 percent of ANC identifiers mentioned party competence, trust and integrity compared to 29 percent of NP loyalists. Racial links were mentioned by 39 percent of FF supporters (compared to 11 percent of ANC, 7 percent Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and 3 percent NP). Ethnic or linguistic links were cited by 43 percent of IFP supporters (compared to 7 percent FF, 1 percent NP and less than 1 percent of ANC supporters).

Interestingly, in response to a question about leaders, only 50 percent said there was a candidate or leader who attracted them to that party. Among those people, racial or ethnic factors were cited by only 10 percent. In contrast, 33 percent mentioned performance or achievement, and 22 percent ability and competence. Again, there were very interesting differences by party. A total of 51 percent of those who said they were attracted to the IFP by Mangosutho Buthelezi



those who voted ANC felt that the important problem (69 percent for 53 percent of NP supporters felt the important concerns; 57 percent of only 28 percent and 20 percent of percent of DP supporters felt that a this regard. Significantly, 49 percent could address their most important percent of DP and 26 percent of NP

What about voter interests? To test "pocketbook voting" we asked people situations and then compared that. Significantly, we found little relationship supported by 68 percent of those who getting much worse and 69 percent better. They took slightly less of that changed. But the point is that personal appear to greatly affect voting patterns. ANC tended to draw a little less support had remained the same, and a little doing much better and much worse opposite, drawing greater support if neither improved nor worsened. However that the effects were not great.

Yet when we asked people for their opinion of the country and general consistent relationships. For instance from those who said the nation's future the NP 20 percent. Yet among those the ANC took 73 percent and the NP much better among those optimistic the NP improved its share of the vote pessimistic. Significantly, evaluations seem to affect the probability of voting

These patterns are consistent with democracies. That is, personal "pocketbook" to affect how people vote, while the

race-based reactions to the former government (for example, all the blacks disliked the government, all the whites favoured it). Where our sample included 1 736 black respondents, 47 of those people felt that the De Klerk government had done a very good job. While that is admittedly a very small proportion, the larger point is that the ANC and PAC combined for only 18 votes from the entire category of people who felt this way of any race. In contrast, 559 blacks felt the government had done a very poor job: among all races in this category, the ANC and PAC combined for 506 votes. Thus, while very few blacks had positive evaluations of the government, far higher proportions of these people must have voted for parties other than the ANC or PAC than among those blacks who had negative evaluations of the government.

Then we asked people about a series of issues which we felt were the most prominent in the parties' campaigns (protecting property rights, securing an Afrikaner homeland, confiscating land for redistribution, protecting minorities, creating a strong opposition, affirmative action, choice of language and culture in schools, and using taxpayers' money to build houses and provide health care). For NP and ANC voters, the extent of people's agreement or disagreement with these campaign issues was strongly and consistently related to

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how they voted. For IFP voters, this relationship was much more tenuous. On several issues, the extent of agreement or disagreement was unrelated to voting IFP. Where there was a strong relationship, however, was on teaching in one's language and culture, building homes and providing health care. This question is a bit more difficult to answer for the rest of the parties given how few respondents supported them. Even here, however, one can see that a vote for the FF was

their parties; rather, this indicates a relationship between how people think about issues and how they vote, a relationship ruled out by proponents of the racial census thesis.

Next, we tried to examine the relationship between ideology and voting. We measured this in two ways. First, we asked people to place themselves on a "left/right" scale. Interestingly, 32 percent of the sample were unable to do this because they were unfamiliar with the concepts; significantly higher proportions of IFP and ANC voters were unable to do so. Among those voters who could locate themselves, ideology was clearly related to voting behaviour for ANC, NP, FF and DP voters. There was much less of an association for IFP and PAC supporters.

Second, we posed a set of six questions tapping attitudes toward change, individual responsibility and state intervention in the economy. Far higher proportions of people were able to express opinions here. Again, consistent and strong relationships are evident among ANC and NP voters on all six of the questions. We could see relationships on four of the items for FF voters, on three for IFP, and two for the DP and PAC.

Finally, we asked people for their views on whether different parties represented the interests of all South Africans or only one group. Between 98 percent and 86 percent of ANC, DP, NP and IFP voters said that their party represented all South Africans. Significantly, 44 percent of FF voters and 46 percent of PAC voters said their parties represented the interests of one group only; virtually all those PAC supporters said the party represented blacks or Africans; 85 percent of those FF voters said it represented the interests of whites, 15 percent said Afrikaners or Boers.

While this has only been an initial scan of our results, an early (and tentative) conclusion would seem to be that most parties were supported largely because of the ideas and policies they represented, or because of their past achievements and performances. This is especially true of the great majority of voters who supported the ANC, NP and DP. There were, however, much larger proportions of voters concerned with race and ethnicity

C Freedom Deputy Speaker appointed has announced during the next year.

This time (December) consult the task that in terms once the will be given comment.

Nevertheless arrangements thing, civic included that the v important This would government democracy product.

It also has draft bill v opposed to be serious ways:

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● The public would only develop a sense of ownership and understanding of the Act if it was involved in shaping it; and

● There were significant dangers in the Act being drafted by mostly lawyers. The task group at present consists mainly of lawyers and two representatives of the South African Communication Services.

The FXI said lawyers could not be expected to know about the development and information issues of South Africa. Issues such as illiteracy, poverty and lack of education and infrastructure in large parts of the country would significantly affect the exercise of people's right of access to government information.

The creative suggestions and solutions are most likely to emanate from civil society and special interest groups. An obvious example is illiterate people: if information can only be obtained on the basis of written requests, millions of South Africans will be excluded from practising their constitutional right to information.

The FXI also argued that a divergence of views was implicit in democracy – even if these complicated the drafting of the Act – and that the government should be willing to accommodate a process that would allow different views to be aired and considered. The FXI indicated it was confident that the involvement of civil society and other groups would not significantly slow down the drafting of the Act. Previous consultation processes co-ordinated by the FXI showed that complex issues could be resolved within a few months.

Lastly, the FXI argued that the government faced a golden opportunity to facilitate the drafting of legislation which could be truly African in character, and not simply a reflection of some of the better aspects of laws

from other countries. If a system could be found which allowed poor and developing communities to meaningfully exercise their rights, such an Act could be an example for the rest of the developing world to demonstrate that democracy is not only a luxury for the rich and privileged.

Although not raised in discussion within the present task group, the FXI is also concerned about the limitations of the right of access to information as contained in the interim Bill of Rights. At present there is not automatic right of access to official information. In order to obtain this information the relevant people have to show that they need the information in order to defend another right recognised in the Bill of Rights.

The FXI believes that the government is only the custodian of official information in the name of the people, and that the information belongs to the public. Furthermore, taxpayers pay for the collection and storage of this information and for the function of government. The article in the interim Bill of Rights dealing with access to information must therefore be amended in the future Constitution.

If we have a right enshrined in the Constitution (albeit imperfectly), why do we need a further law to exercise this right? The reason is mainly that constitutional rights do not really have any content unless a specific law gives them content. The only other way to give the right content and meaning is to litigate it in the Constitutional Court.

Interestingly the right of access to information is one of the most heavily litigated constitutional rights in South Africa so far. But it could take years of litigation to build up a jurisprudence to serve the information needs of the South African public adequately. In the meantime, citizens could

find their being blo is unclear procedur exist. A la procedur informati governm supply in

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Right to know