

Vote-switching in South Africa: Exploring the motivations of voters who switched from the ACDP and COPE to the DA in the 2011 Local Government Election.

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Keywords: South Africa, democracy, political representation, elections, opposition parties, voting behaviour, vote-switching, African Christian Democratic Party, Congress of the People, Democratic Alliance.

Abstract

The 2011 election results showed that most opposition parties are becoming less popular among the South African electorate. This study explores the motivations of voters who chose to switch their vote or support from the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and the Congress of the People (COPE) to another opposition, the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the 2011 local government election.

The study was informed by a qualitative research approach. Accordingly, an interview schedule was utilized as a research tool. This schedule contained questions prepared in order to acquire the necessary insight of voters who previously supported the ACDP and COPE (in the 2009 general elections) and moved to the DA in the 2011 local government election. In addition, interviews were conducted with party representatives from the ACDP and COPE in order to gain further insights into their perceptions of the key reasons for their party's poor performance in this election.

Popkin's integrated theory is used as a basis to make sense of the behaviour and movement of voters during the 2011 local government election. Popkin (1991) argues that voters utilise low-information rationality or "gut-reasoning" when evaluating political parties, their candidates and the issues they present. As will be shown throughout this thesis, Popkin's approach, where voters combine various sets of information obtained through daily life, the media and political campaigns, best explains the dynamics in the research findings. Based on the research findings, it appears that Popkin's approach is the most useful for understanding the reasons for the voter migration to the DA in the 2011 election.

The research findings indicate that the majority of opposition voters who switched over to the DA were mainly dissatisfied with the (poor) leadership and (bad) governance of the ruling party, the ANC. With the realisation that their own parties (ACDP and COPE) were electorally too weak to unseat the ANC, they decided to withdraw their support and vote for the strongest opposition party, the DA. Ultimately, these opposition voters developed very negative perceptions and views about the ACDP and COPE as a possible 'government in

waiting'. The research findings further reveal that the DA's leadership and governance (specifically in the City of Cape Town) seemed more attractive than other opposition parties in this election. In addition, the findings reveal that the DA had a strong electoral presence in most provinces and had sufficient access to the media to influence vote choices.

Moreover, the study found that opposition voters were more mobile and flexible in terms of their voting behaviour and political choices in the 2011 election. Those who previously supported the ACDP and COPE in 2009 found themselves switching off their traditional partisan predispositions (for example Christian ideology) and shifted to a rational voting behaviour. They paid attention to party leadership, party images, governance and service delivery, and election campaigns. The findings further show that some voters also took into account the media's responses to the parties' election strategies.



Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “*Vote-switching in South Africa: Exploring the motivations of voters who switched from the ACDP and COPE to the DA in the 2011 Local Government Election*” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university, and that all sources I have utilized or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Meshay Lee Moses

May 2014



Dedication

In loving memory of my late grandfather Theodore Peter Moses. I miss you dearly.



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Above all, I would like to give all honour and praise to my loving God who made everything possible.



List of abbreviations

ACDP	- African Christian Democratic Party
AIM	- African Independent Movement
ANC:	- African National Congress
ANCYL	- African National Congress Youth League
AZAPO	- Azanian People's Organisation
COPE	- Congress of the People
CODESA	- Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSATU	- Congress of South African Trade Unions
DP / DA:	- Democratic Party / Democratic Alliance
EISA	- Electoral Institute of South Africa
ID	- Independent Democrats
IEC	- Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	- Inkatha Freedom Party
FF+	- Freedom Front Plus
MF	- Minority Front
MNF	- Multiparty Negotiations Forum
NA	- National Assembly
NFP	- New Freedom Party
NP / NNP	- National Party / New National Party
PAC	- Pan Africanist Congress
PDP	- Peace and Development Party
PR	- Proportional Representation
RPPF	- Represented Political Parties' Fund
SACP	- South African Communist Party
UDF	- United Democratic Front
UDM	- United Democratic Movement
UCDP	- United Christian Democratic Party

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is a country that is deeply divided by ethnic, class, social, race, linguistics and religious cleavages. Due to the country's diverse population, it is important that voters feel adequately represented by available political parties. However, since the inception of the new democratic dispensation, the majority of political parties have performed relatively poorly at the polls. Despite the significant increase in the number of parties contesting elections at national, provincial and local level, the African National Congress (ANC) has remained undefeated since the democratic elections of 1994 and support for opposition parties has progressively diminished. The 2011 local government election was a clear example. In this election, the majority of electoral support went to the ANC while the remainder of votes were shared among the opposition parties. However, none of these opposition parties, with the exception of the Democratic Alliance (DA), were able to win more than 4 percent of the local votes (Taderera, 2011; Booysen, 2012). The smaller opposition parties either saw a sharp decline in their support or stagnated below 1 percent in 2011. One of the problems of South Africa's democracy is, therefore, the inability of opposition parties to provide a viable challenge to the ANC. Since adequate choice of political parties is an important component of a multi-party democracy, the primary purpose of this research is to investigate the underlying reasons for the inter-party movement of voters (supporters) from one opposition party to another and in particular, from the 'smaller' parties to the DA. In order to accomplish this, I chose to focus on two parties namely, the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and the Congress of the People (COPE) in relation to the DA.

1.2 Background

South Africa is well-known for its apartheid history of segregation and oppression along racial lines. Prior to the country's democratic dispensation, the political system was exclusionary; non-whites¹ were prohibited from participating in elections (Hendricks, 2005,

¹ Under the apartheid government non-whites were classified as Blacks, Coloureds and Indians (Henrard, 2002, p. 19).

p. 67). Nevertheless, following the fall of the apartheid system of governance, a new democratically elected government was established in April 1994. Since then, many attempts have been made by the government to encourage political representation and participation for all racial groups in order to enhance and promote South Africa's democracy. Accordingly, the constitution adopted in 1996 established the equality of all citizens and grants them the freedom to make political choices (Hendriks, 2005, p. 66). All citizens thus have the right to *form* a political party that represent the interests or aspirations of a particular constituency or group. Alternatively, voters have the constitutional right to feel adequately represented by *available* political parties during elections. Without a multitude of political parties, voters will have less choice at the polls. Given South Africa's diverse society and unique context many political parties are required to represent a country as diverse as South Africa.

Indeed, at the Multiparty Negotiations Forum (MNF) and Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) held in 1991, it was decided that a proportional representation (PR) electoral system should be implemented.² Decision makers at the time felt that the PR system would allow for diverse candidates, and facilitate a proliferation of political parties that would in theory foster electoral competition (Hendricks, 2005, p. 67). South Africa's choice of the PR system was partially based on the need for an electoral system that did not appear to advantage one particular party or group of voters. The PR system was also more likely (than alternative electoral systems) to encourage reconciliation and cooperation between competing political parties (Mattes, 2003, p. 52). Importantly, parties such as the National Party (NP) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) were in favour of the PR system. These two parties were worried that if the country adopted the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system (winner takes all) the ANC was likely to annihilate them (National Party, 1999; Johnson, 1993; Pottie, 2001).

In South Africa, citizens have an opportunity to elect their government every five years. Due to the country's (closed list) PR system, citizens vote for a political party and not an individual to represent them. The political party chooses the people that will become public

² The PR system is considered to give expression to, and be accommodative of, the voters' wishes. This is due to the fact that there are no 'wasted' votes; the number of seats allocated to parties in the national and provincial legislatures is proportional to the number of votes each party wins in the election (Mottiar, 2005, p. 2).

representatives in Parliament. Hence political parties hold seats in the national and provincial legislatures and not individuals. This electoral system is suitable to accommodate the diversity of South Africa's citizenry and is based on the values of representiveness, inclusiveness and fairness.³ More importantly, because South Africa was, and remains, a society characterised by its historical racial divide and apartheid experience, the adoption of the PR system offered the best chance for addressing ethnic and racial exclusivity. It allows social groups to gain some degree of parliamentary representation even with only a tiny share of the national vote. Additionally, under this electoral system many smaller parties that were unable to earn sufficient votes to win any geographical constituency, have managed to maintain a modest presence in Parliament (Moses, 2012, p. 1).

The PR system allowed for several types of political parties to be formed (but not necessarily to flourish) in the country. Typical examples of such parties include religious oriented political parties that promote either Christian⁴ or Muslim⁵ identities. Similarly, there are parties that represent specific ethnic (identity) groups such as the IFP which support base is predominately confined to Zulu-speakers living in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal and the Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus) that specifically appeals to the Afrikaner group.⁶ The Minority Front (MF) has a history of representing the Indian population (which consist approximately 2.5 percent of South African's population).⁷

South Africa has three spheres of governance: national, provincial and municipal. Elections are contested at all three spheres although attention is often focused on national elections.

Since its political transition, South Africa has held four successful national and provincial elections in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009. The fifth national and provincial elections were held in May 2014. Local government elections are held separately with four successive elections

³ The PR system is viewed as very democratic in the sense that Parliament was not only representative of major political parties, but also included small parties. Smaller parties are thus dependent for their survival on the PR system (Bosman and Du Toit, 2012).

⁴ The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and the United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP) are examples of parties that represent a Christian ideology.

⁵ The African Muslim Party (AMP) is one of the parties that promote Islamic values.

⁶ The IFP started as a Zulu cultural organisation that evolved into a political organisation in the early 1980's (Hendricks, 2005, p. 77).

⁷ However many of the political parties have names that provide no cues to their ideological, religious or programmatic sentiment (Africa and van Rooyen, 2012, p. 193).

in 1995, 2000, 2006 and 2011. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced that 121 parties contested the local government election in 2011 compared to 97 parties in 2006 and 79 in 2000. The 2011 election also saw an increase in small community based parties and independents. Independent candidates increased from 663 in 2006 to 754 in 2011 which represent a 14 percent increase since the 2006 local elections (Africa and van Rooyen, 2012, p. 192). The significant growth in the number of parties and independents is, some would argue, good for political representation and participation. It certainly indicates that South Africa has a multitude of platforms for citizens to express themselves politically.

Nonetheless, the prospects for adequate political representation appear to have progressively diminished since 1994 due to the relative weakness of opposition parties to make an impact at the ballot box. As Hendricks (2005, p. 66) argues, South Africa has a wide array of opposition parties but very few viable alternatives to the incumbent ruling party. In theory, democracy relates to the existence and viability of opposition parties as vehicles for people to express themselves politically. However, the reality is that the continued dominance of a single party and the poor performance of opposition parties in South African elections continue to pose various challenges for democracy in the country. In the section that follows, a discussion of the significance of opposition parties is made.

1.3 Overview of the importance of opposition parties

Opposition parties are regarded by many as being critical to democracy (Dahl, 1971; Doorenspleet, 2003; Scheiner, 2006). They provide a meaningful link between the interests and needs of the public and the government. Hence they have a continuous engagement with government in all matters of public concern (Makara, 2009 p. 51). In some instances, opposition parties are the only political voice of marginalised, minority or excluded groups in society.⁸ More importantly, they can act as a contact point with the public, making them the most practical forum for political representation and participation. In this regard, Dahl contends that:

⁸ However, it should not be assumed that a governing party cannot represent the electorate. While opposition parties must be a check on government, it is not always natural that governments are out to marginalise, exclude and suppress parts of the population.

In any given country, the greater the opportunities for expressing, organising and representing political preferences, the greater the number and variety of preferences and interests represented in policy-making in democracy (Dahl, 1971, p. 26).

From this perspective, opposition parties are considered as key representative institutions that can enhance the democratic experience of citizens. Bule (2011, n.p.), argued that opposition parties are fundamental because they are the “living expression of the concept of choice”. The concept of choice is one of the key features of democratic elections; citizens have the political right to select a political party or candidate of their choice to represent them in public affairs. Moreover, opposition parties are a vehicle and source of information.⁹ They provide voters with information about the voting process in general, and more specifically, about the election management process (Molomo, 2003, p. 302).¹⁰

1.4 The basis for the study: weak opposition parties in South Africa

The basis of this study is that despite the increase in the number of opposition parties contesting elections, their support base has steadily been eroded. The African National Congress (ANC) has remained the most dominant political party since 1994. Given the continued dominance of one political party, meaningful electoral competition is often unrealised because opposition parties are unable to widen their appeal among South African voters. For example, after the 2004 election, Naidu and Manqele (2005, p. 207) state that “the smallest parties on the South African political landscape seem trapped in what has become a fish bowl of opposition politics”. Other scholars have also expressed their concerns about the bleak performance of opposition parties. After the 2009 elections, for example, Schulz-Herzenberg (2009a, p. 27) reported that “the size of the opposition bloc vote contracted from 32.1 percent of the electorate in 1994 to 17.2 percent in 2004, rising again to 20.1 percent in 2009”. Hence only a small percentage of voters opted for an opposition party between the 1994 and 2009 elections while the majority supported the ruling party (ANC). This is what

⁹ It is however important to note that it is not only opposition parties that provide the above mentioned services. All parties, even governing ones, can provide the services mentioned.

¹⁰ The significance of opposition parties in democracy is explored in greater detail in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

makes Booyesen (2009, p. 85) lament that the 2009 elections were a “mirror image” of non-performing opposition parties.

The 2011 local government election was no exception. In this election the majority of electoral support went to the ANC. However, a number of voter trends in relation to voting behaviour and opposition parties emerged in this election. For instance, none of the opposition parties, with the exception of the Democratic Alliance (DA), were able to increase their support base. The DA was the only opposition party that saw an increase from 14.8 percent in 2006 to 23.9 percent in the 2011 election. The other opposition parties either saw a decline in their votes or stagnated below 1 percent.

Thus, the main competition was around the ANC and the DA in 2011. Many political commentators felt that this election was mainly a two horse race, with only two real players among the 121 parties that contested (Alexander, 2011; Böhler, 2011; Sithole, 2014). Sithole (2014, p. 1) argues that the South African electoral space is often expressed as a contest between two parties with a sprinkling of a number of smaller parties as a sideshow. Therefore, it would appear that most of the smaller opposition parties are on the downward trend. To illustrate this point, out of the 121 parties that contested, only five of them earned more than 1 percent of the votes in 2011.¹¹ Most importantly, only two of the five parties won more than 4 percent of the municipal votes, that is, the ANC and DA. This election showed that the majority of opposition parties received a far lower percentage than in the 2006 and the 2009 elections. Consequently, Hendricks (2006, p. 83) and Matlosa (2010, p. 2) have argued that elections in South Africa will remain characterised by the domination of one party and the proliferation of smaller fragmented (and weakened) opposition parties.

The domination of a single party could imply shrinkage of political choice for voters and a lessening of opportunities for voters to be represented by a political party that adequately advocates their interests. As stated above, South Africa is underlined by a racially and ethnically diverse society and thus a multitude of political parties is necessary to

¹¹ The five parties which won more than one percent of the votes in 2011 are ANC, DA, IFP, COPE and NNP. Their electoral results will be further explored in Chapter Three.

accommodate this kind of diversity. It would therefore seem that more than one political party is needed to adequately represent differing interests of the electorate.

Interestingly though, the 2011 elections witnessed voter migration, particularly from the ‘smaller’ opposition parties to the DA. A large percentage of opposition voters *chose* to switch to the DA as they could see engagement between a stronger consolidated opposition party as an asset rather than a liability. Two parties that were significantly affected by the migration of opposition voters to the DA include the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and the Congress of the People (COPE). The ACDP and COPE lost most of their 2009 supporters to the DA during this election (Greiben, 2012, p. 346).¹²

COPE performed relatively well in its first election in 2009. Support for the party however plummeted in the 2011 election; the party only managed to receive a meagre 2.33 percent of the vote compared to the 7.42 percent in 2009. The ACDP, on the other hand, has suffered many electoral losses since 1994. Although the ACDP has obtained seats in some municipalities, it has been unable to make inroads into the larger voting bloc. It is therefore clear that these two opposition parties are facing an electoral crisis. Consequently, if the ACDP and COPE wish to survive or increase their support base, they may need to come up with new political ideas and programmes that would appeal to the broader South African population.

1.5 Research aims

The 2011 local election results showed that most opposition parties are becoming less popular among the South African electorate. Therefore, the primary aim of this research is to investigate the underlying reasons that opposition voters decided to move their support away from “smaller” opposition parties in the 2011 election. In order to realise the aim, the study focuses on two political parties namely, the ACDP and COPE and their dwindling voter-base.

¹² The estimated percentages of voters that crossed over to the DA are discussed in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

This study simultaneously explores the reasons why the DA managed to attract support away from the ACDP and COPE in the 2011 election. Ultimately, the key focus is to examine how these parties are currently perceived by voters.

1.6 Research question

Keeping the above in mind, the study aims to address the following question: Why did voters who previously voted for the ACDP and COPE decide to move their support from these parties in the 2011 local government election?

The sub-questions that will assist in answering the overarching research question include:

- What is the significance of opposition parties in democracy?
- What are the underlying problems and challenges opposition parties face in terms of maintaining and increasing their electoral support?
- Do voting behaviour theories explain the voter behaviour and movement between parties?
- What are the key reasons for poor performing opposition parties in South Africa?
- Looking at the ACDP and COPE in particular, why were they unable to attract support in the 2011 elections?
- What were the key reasons that made the DA more attractive than other opposition parties in the 2011 elections?
- Based on the poor electoral performance of opposition parties (excluding the DA), is South Africa moving towards a two-party system?
- What is the future for smaller opposition parties such the ACDP and COPE?

1.7 Research design

According to Durrheim (1999, p. 32), a research design is a framework and plan that guides the research activity to ensure that conclusions are reached. In this vein, a research design addresses the key question of what type of study will be undertaken by the researcher in order to provide accurate and acceptable answers to the research problem. Moreover, a research design is a plan used by researchers to obtain or select research participants and collect information from them (Burger, 2005, p. 11). Since the main concern was to have an in-depth understanding of the voter exodus from the ACDP and COPE in the 2011 election, this dissertation adopted a qualitative interpretative approach.

1.8 Methodological approach

1.8.1 Qualitative approach

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study. Qualitative research refers to research which produces descriptive data that generally comprise people's own written or spoken words. The purpose of a qualitative analysis is to discover the underlying, deeper meanings of human experience (Buso, 2002, p. 16). In support of the choice of this design, reference is made to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 271) who argue that qualitative studies involve describing the actions of the research participants in great detail, and to understand the social phenomenon in terms of the participants' own beliefs, history and context. In addition, Neuman (1997, p. 329) argues that qualitative research is primarily interested in recording what people say (with words, gestures and tones), observing specific behaviours, and studying written documents or examining visual images.

Correspondingly, Fink (2003, p. 16) states that a qualitative survey collects information on the meanings that people attach to their experience and on the ways they express themselves. Fink (2003, p.16) further states that, "qualitative surveys provide data to answer questions such as: 'what is X, and how do different people, communities and cultures think and feel about X, and why'". The researcher therefore opted for a qualitative design because it was found suitable to address the subject of why voters decided to move away from smaller

opposition parties to the DA in the 2011 election. A qualitative research design allowed the researcher to gain deeper insights into the reasons why some opposition voters moved their support away from the ACDP and COPE. This is ideally what this research wanted to achieve. It wanted to understand how opposition voters currently perceive parties such as the ACDP and COPE.

The type of qualitative design used for this study is the interpretive research approach. Many scholars have argued that qualitative research is called interpretive method (see Newman, 1997; Burns, 2003; Gorski, 2005). Interpretive research aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action (Durrheim and Terre Blance, 2002, p. 6). This particular model was adopted because the research consists of people's personal experiences and insights in relation to the two opposition parties selected. Hence the researcher adopted an interactional epistemological stance towards their experiences (or reality) and used methodologies such as in-depth interviewing. An epistemological stance specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the subject being researched (Durrheim and Terre Blance, 2002, p. 6). The researcher tried to understand their perceptions and evaluations about the ACDP and COPE and empathetically interpreted the meaning of what was said.

1.8.2 Theoretical approach

Reviewing the literature outlined different theories on the topic at hand and provides the theoretical background to the research namely, to make sense of the poor performance of opposition parties and the potential reasons for the voter migration from smaller opposition parties to the DA in the 2011 election. In this regard, I adopted the integrated theory of Samuel Popkin (1991) that recognises that voters do reason about parties, candidates, campaigns and issues. The central insight of Popkin's theory is that voters observe who and what parties stand for and what the government can do and should do. Hence, voters' perceptions of the government, parties and candidates affect their assessments and preferences in elections (Popkin, 1991, p. 7). As will be seen in my findings (see Chapter Four) the theoretical approach used by Popkin appears to be the most useful for understanding the behaviour and movement of voters in the 2011 local election.

1.8.3 Data collection methods

To source primary data, I conducted a series of in-depth interviews. Interviews are extremely useful in qualitative research. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006, p. 116), “an interview involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions relating to the research problem”. As McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 350) indicate, in-depth interviews are open-response questions to obtain data of participants; how they conceive their world and how they explain or make sense of important events in their lives”.

More specifically, a semi-structured interview was conducted. In the sense that, a list of questions were drawn up prior to the interviews. Bless *et al* (2006, p. 116) explain that often there is a need for more specific and detailed information. In this case, a semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to have a fixed list of questions to be answered by all interviewees. However, a semi-structured interview also allowed the researcher to formulate other questions depending on the responses of the participants. Hence although the questions were structured, the researcher could still discover new aspects of the research problem or question by exploring in detail the explanations provided by the participants. In that case, the researcher could probe for more information on important points raised in the interviews.¹³

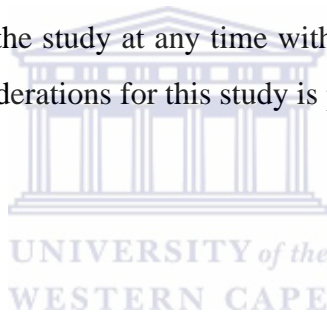
The interview process began with prior arrangements made with the participants in order to determine the date, time and place of the commencement of the interviews. As Gubrium and Holstein (2001, p. 90) state “once the researcher identifies a respondent, she or he must then ask them if they will agree to be interviewed, a process that usually accompanies obtaining informed consent”. The researcher presented the consent form to all participants (see Appendix B) and was only able to commence with the interview after the participant agreed to the terms of the form and signed it. All interviews were done individually which involved the researcher and the designated participant. The interview did not require more than sixty

¹³ Semi-structured interviews also allowed for more freedom and self-expression by the participants. They felt free to share additional information were restricted to a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. It also enabled the researcher to raise additional information which could result in future research.

minutes of the participant's time. However, some interviews took longer than the estimated time.

1.8.4 Ethical issues

Most importantly, in order to avoid unethical research practice, I paid careful attention to ethical guiding principles for research. In this regard, the interviews were informed by the following research principles: privacy; anonymity; confidentiality (Neuman, 1997, p. 452); truthfulness; and voluntary participation (Durrheim, 1999, p. 66). At the beginning of the interview process, I promised to protect all participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.¹⁴ The names of the participants were not recorded during the interviews. I also informed the participants that their contributions will be locked away at all times and will be destroyed after the research is completed. All the participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. A detailed discussion about the ethical considerations for this study is provided in Appendix C.



1.8.5 Selection of participants

In total seventeen interviews were conducted with voters who had either switched from the ACDP or COPE to the DA. Eight interviews were conducted with respondents who previously voted for the ACDP and nine interviews were conducted with voters that formerly supported COPE in the 2009 general elections. Interviews were conducted with party representatives from the ACDP and COPE in order to gain further insights into their perceptions of the key reasons for their party's poor performance in this election.

Given the difficulty of obtaining appropriate respondents, I decided to use the snowball sampling technique for the selection process of voters. Snowball sampling is most commonly used when the members of a special population are difficult to locate (Babbie and Mouton, 2001, p. 16). I thus relied on the help of others to identify possible participants. Welsh & Corner (1988, p. 193) explain the snowball sampling technique as follows:

¹⁴ It should be noted that the researcher gave the participants the option whether they want their names to be revealed or not. Participants stated that their names should not be mentioned in this study.

...when one member of the target population is found, he/she is asked to name other members of the target group who are then interviewed and asked to supply additional names, and so forth.

Likewise, Katz (2006, p. 4) states that snowball sampling is a nonprobability method for developing a research sample where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances.

I identified voters (who previously voted for ACDP and COPE) by contacting existing members of the DA to find out who are their newest members and if these members were previously either ACDP or COPE supporters. These DA members provided the researcher with names of people that moved to the DA from the ACDP and COPE in the period between the 2009 and the 2011 elections. Also, while conducting interviews with the party officials, the researcher asked them to identify voters that previously supported their party. However, the party officials were not obligated to give names.

In terms of party representatives, I interviewed one political representative from each party. As previously indicated, the main aim was to gain insight into their perceptions of the key reasons for their party's poor electoral performance in the 2011 local government elections. The respondents were as a result purposefully selected. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p.126), purposeful sampling is when the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. MacMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 126) further contend that, "on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research". Hence preference was given to key informants who, on account of their position, had more information than any other people. I selected active party representatives from ACDP and COPE in Parliament or the provincial legislatures.

For the ACDP, I contacted their parliamentary offices in Cape Town to find respondents for the interviews. The researcher managed to get a member from the Western Cape Provincial

Legislature. It should be noted that this party official is the only ACDP member in the Western Cape Legislature. He was very open to the purpose of the research and was willing to conduct an interview with the researcher. This party official was easy to approach and shared the key problems and challenges South African opposition parties are currently facing. This interview extended far more than an hour initially intended as maximum.

For COPE, the researcher contacted (by telephone and email) their parliamentary offices in Cape Town. Party officials had demanding schedules and because of the unavailability of most COPE representatives in Parliament, responses from officials were delayed. The COPE representative, on the other hand, did not agree to an in-depth interview but felt more comfortable responding to a mailed questionnaire. In this vein, the researcher used semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix F).

1.8.6 Data analysis

Field notes and recordings were used to collect data from the interview sessions. The researcher transcribed each interview on a word document verbatim in order to have complete and accurate information. The tape recorder (and written notes) allowed the researcher to capture the exact responses given by the participants. However, the problem with verbatim transcription is that it was very time consuming, but on the other hand, it prevented important information from getting lost.

After the interviews were transcribed, I developed an organizing system of the data, involving segregation of information from the interviews into smaller pieces containing some descriptive meanings. These data parts were called data segments and contained one piece of relevant information each. Thereafter, in order to get a sense of the whole data, the researcher read each of the data segments and wrote ideas about the data. In addition, in order to generate the patterns and categories from the data, the researcher read each data set and asked herself these questions: “What is this about?”, “What were they talking about” and so on. During this process, data that were not relevant to the research were discarded and only relevant data were developed into patterns and categories. Moreover, the researcher

compared the patterns and categories generated from the data with the ones predicted from the theory and literature.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Many challenges and limitations were faced when the researcher conducted the fieldwork. Firstly, the researcher aimed to interview at least 20 voters who switched their vote to the DA in 2011 (10 voters who formerly supported the ACDP and 10 voters who previously supported COPE). Nevertheless, the researcher only managed to interview eight voters who had crossed over from the ACDP and nine voters were interviewed that had withdrawn their support from COPE. At the same time, the researcher found it difficult to get hold of party representatives for interviews. Initially, the researcher aimed to interview two party officials from each party. Unfortunately the researcher only managed to interview one party representative, each from the ACDP and COPE.

Secondly, party representatives are very often times loyal members of their respective parties and this could have possibly influenced the quality of their answers to the interview questions. Hence, the second set of interviews that were conducted with the voters generated the most useful data for this study. This is so because these respondents felt no sense of loyalty to the political parties selected and thus provided a detailed data on their motivations for moving away from the ACDP and COPE, and why the DA was more attractive in the 2011 local election.

Thirdly, time and availability of respondents were a concern for the researcher. Owing to the fact that most respondents targeted had full-time jobs, they were not always available during the week for interviews. For this reason, the researcher had to conduct interviews over weekends or after hours in order to ensure that participants were at home. Besides, some participants lived far from the researcher and travelling for a long distance was often required. There were cases when some participants would cancel interview appointments at the last minute. Hence time and availability of the participants were a huge constraint for the research process.

The fact that the study only involved participants located in the Western Cape, more specifically who reside in the City of Cape Town, Worcester and Oudtshoorn participated in the fieldwork process, the findings of the study may not be generalised. This is compounded further by the fact that most of the participants targeted all reside in the Western Cape Province where the DA is very popular and the governing political party which in turn might easily influence voter shift. In this vein, this could have clouded voters' evaluations and judgements of other opposition parties such as the ACDP and COPE.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One, the introductory chapter, presents the overall research theme and articulates the main research question and aims. This chapter provides the rationale for the study and gives a brief overview of the importance of opposition political parties in a democratic dispensation. In particular, this chapter illustrates the weak and fragmented position of South African opposition parties and the implication this has for political representation and participation. In the sense, that weak opposition parties lessens the political choices of voters at the polls. This chapter also presents the research design and methodological methods used in this study.

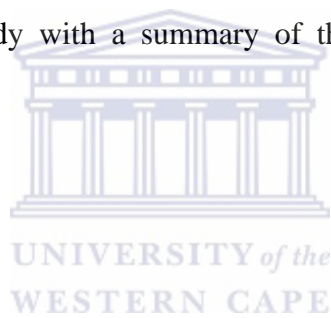
Chapter Two provides the theoretical and conceptual framework upon which the study is anchored and consequently provides an indication of the research scope. This chapter also locates the significance of political (opposition) parties and provides an understanding of their key roles and functions in democracy. The chapter further provides the underlying reasons why most opposition parties seem unattractive to voters. More importantly, in order to make sense of the voter migration to the DA in 2011, this chapter also looks at voting behaviour theories - party identification, sociological model, rational choice, dominant-ideology and Popkin's integrated theory. The aim is to see whether voting behaviour models can explain the voting behaviour and movement of voters between elections.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the South African political context. In this chapter the dominance of the ANC and the positive and negative implications of a dominant party system

are explored. This chapter also includes a detailed discussion of South African opposition parties such as the DA, ACDP and COPE which are the key actors in this study. This is followed by the electoral trends from 1994 to 2011 that illustrate the weak and fragmented position of most opposition parties. Lastly, this chapter also analyses the poor performance of opposition parties since 1994. It investigates the underlying reasons for their dwindling ability to attract sufficient support from the electorate.

Chapter Four contains all the relevant findings of the in-depth interviews. The aim of this chapter is to analyse and interpret the motivations of voters who switched from the ACDP and COPE to the DA in the 2011 local elections. This chapter also gained insight from the perspective party representatives for the poor electoral showing in 2011.

Chapter Five concludes the study with a summary of the main findings and provides a response to the research question.



Chapter Two: Democracy, opposition parties and voting behaviour

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the term democracy and more specifically, explains the key roles and functions that opposition parties perform in society. The chapter also explores different party types and different party regimes which include: one party system; two party systems; multiparty systems; and dominant party systems. Research has shown that party systems greatly influence the way parties operate and how effective they perform their functions in a democratic society (Matlosa, 2005; Reitzes; 2011).¹⁵

Moreover, this chapter discusses at the weakness of opposition parties, particularly the reasons for their poor performance during elections. As previously mentioned in the introductory chapter, opposition parties are important vehicles for the functioning of the whole democratic process. Democracy needs strong and sustainable political (opposition) parties with the capacity to represent citizens and provide policy choices that demonstrate their ability to govern for the public good. Lastly, this chapter examines theories of voting behaviour that explain the manner in which a particular group of people vote for a specific political party. Voting theories also give detail to some of the motivations behind vote switching (the movement between parties during elections) which is the primary focus and aim of this study.

2.2 Theorising democracy

Democracy has its roots in the Greek term *demokratia* which means “a political system where the majority of people, not aristocrats rule or govern” (Harrison, 1993, p. 3). Similarly, O’Neil (2007, p. 135) states that the word democracy comes from the Greek words *demos* (meaning ‘the common people’) and *kratia* (meaning ‘power’ or ‘rule’). Therefore, the basic

¹⁵ Even though the basic roles and functions can be applied to all political parties, various party types are formulated on the basic characteristics of parties. Consequently, the nature of the party system determines the roles and efficiency of parties.

definition of democracy places the people at the centre and focuses on the participation of people in state activities. In simple terms, democracy is the rule of the people, by the people, for the people (Birch, 1993; Kiiza, 2005). There is however no single definition of democracy once you move beyond the 'rule by the people' (Catt, 1999) because a number of scholars have presented different theoretical views and explanations for democracy.¹⁶ As Connolly (1983, n.p.) has argued, "conceptions of democracy have been and will likely always be debated; no single formulation will triumph".

It follows the above that, democracy may be one of the most contested and controversial concepts in political theory.¹⁷ However while democracy remains a contested concept, democracy is considered the best system of governance which is characterised by credible and fair competitive elections, freedom of expression, speech and association, as well as effective representation and responsiveness to citizens (Reitzes, Larsen and Fakir, 2011, p. 5). The four characteristics identified by Reitzes *et al* reflect some of the basic dimensions of democracy. Other scholars such as the political theorist Robert Dahl argues that there are a minimum of eight conditions for democracy and these include: elected officials; free, fair, and frequent elections; freedom of expression; alternative sources of information; association autonomy; inclusive citizenship; political competition; and institutions that ensure a horizontal division of powers to hold government accountable (Dahl, 1971, p. 3).¹⁸

Democracy is designed in such a way that ordinary citizens have the right to be part of the collective decision making of state affairs. This would entail a direct (participatory) democracy where the people govern themselves or an (indirect) representative form of democracy where a government is chosen by the people, and as such, deriving its legitimacy from the people. Catt (1999, p. 13) adds that a direct democracy involves all the people in deciding on individual issues through voting on specific questions that are posed for them,

¹⁶ Research has shown that philosophers, historians and political scientists have different views and opinions about the meaning of democracy and ambiguity arises when the concept democracy has to be defined.

¹⁷ Democracy Development Programme (DDP), Research Unit for the Good Governance Africa Sector Network' Conference: April 2008, Addis Abba.

¹⁸ Political theorist Robert Dahl tried to introduce the term *polyarchy* in the hope of gaining a greater measure of conceptual precision for democracy (Schmitter and Karl, 1996; Saoana, 2011). In his book *Polyarchy, Participation and Opposition*, Dahl uses the concept polyarchy in an attempt to make a distinction between the ideal (democracy) and what in practice exist (polyarchy). The term polyarchy is derived from the Greek words that mean 'rule by many'.

most commonly a referendum. Thus, in a direct democracy every single member of the population has an equal say in every single decision. As Arblaster (1987, p. 18) argues, “direct personal participation of the citizen body in the government of the city” was the central feature of this kind of democracy. Likewise, Rousseau argues that citizens should be directly involved in the creation of laws of which are to govern their lives. However, Rousseau did not believe in a representative government, because he did not think that men’s wills could be represented by others. He viewed party organisations as “sinister interest” prone to undermining, perverting, or usurping the will of the majority (Rousseau, 1913, p. 121).

Scholars such as Rousseau (1913) considered direct democracy as a form of governance that properly represents the will of the people because citizens actively participate in governing their own political affairs. However, this type of democracy has some challenges as it may only work well in very small populations. The community must be small enough for its citizens to meet and make decisions directly, such as in community town-hall meetings. Also, a direct democracy requires time and a homogenous society that is willing to debate issues face-to-face and strive for a solution that is acceptable for everyone (Catt, 1999, p. 46). As the group gets bigger, individuals find it harder to speak and decision-making becomes difficult. As a result, many modern states favour the use of representative democracy to deal with a larger electorate.

South Africa is a representative democracy. This means that citizens do not govern the country themselves, they elect (vote for) other people to represent them in government. Representative democracy is thus characterised by people choosing representatives to make decisions for them, and those chosen are accountable to the people for those decisions. Catt (1999, p. 13) contends that this form of democracy relates to “the election of an elite group who are given the task of making decisions on behalf of the people”. Similarly, Manin (1997, p. 175) argues that representative democracy establishes a political regime in which elites are chosen to make decisions and those decisions are made subject to the verdict of the people.

2.3 Party systems

In Chapter One, it was pointed out that South Africa's multiparty system has evolved into a 'dominant party system' in which the majority of opposition parties are fragmented and unable to effectively compete for power. This section will thus focus on the relationship between party systems and political (opposition) parties.

Firstly, the most common way of distinguishing between various types of party systems is by reference to the number of parties competing for power in a given country (Matlosa; 2008, p. 9). As earlier noted, the four major party systems in today's democracies are one-party systems; two party systems; dominant party systems; and multiparty systems. These systems are discussed below:

With regards to one-party systems, only one political party exist and enjoy a monopoly of power.¹⁹ Other parties are thus banned and are not allowed to compete for governmental power. The ruling party becomes the permanent government; it dominates the political landscape and exercises hegemony over all organs of the state.

In a two party system, as the term suggests, two parties are dominant and tend to take office alternatively in more or less a regular fashion (Mair, 1990; Sadie, 2006). Both parties are more or less of equivalent size and have a roughly equal prospect of winning state power and the political supremacy of two dominant parties is assured (Mair, 1990, pp. 420-422). However, it should be noted that in a two-party system there can be more than two parties but only the two major parties enjoy sufficient electoral strength to form the government. Smaller parties only have minor political strength and have no representation in legislatures. Matlosa (2008, p. 11) explains that under a two-party system, the larger party is able to rule alone (on

¹⁹ Most of the post-colonial leaders chose to rule in a similar style to that of colonial rulers by regulating the majority of the people and isolating the opposition groups. For example, Makara (2009) states that, on attaining independence, many of the ruling parties of the day either outlawed opposition parties, criminalised their activities, or their contribution to the national debate were belittled and disparaged. From the late 1960s until the early 1990s at least four-fifths of the African continent was ruled by authoritarian regimes.

the basis of legislative authority) and the other party provides checks and balances, as well as, serves as a “government in the wings”.

Furthermore, a dominant party system is a system where one party is consistently elected (in at least three consecutive elections), and gains an absolute majority of legislative seats from a stabilised electorate (Sartori, 1976, p. 205). Sartori goes on to argue that “while opposition parties exist, elections are free and fair, and dissent is tolerated, party rotation in government does not occur” in a dominant party system. This is supported by Langeran (2010, p. 1) who points out that most dominant party systems hold fair but uncompetitive elections which result in only one party repeatedly and continuously winning national power. Thus, the important factor is not the number of parties that exist, but rather the distribution of power among parties.

Many scholars like Southall (2005), Brooks (2004) and Lanegran (1991) have written about the negative implications of a dominant party system in a democracy. However, a few scholars point to the stabilizing effect that a dominant party system has on young democracies in the developing world (Carothers, 2002; Du Toit, 1999; Pempel, 1990). They argue that dominant party systems may be better in preserving stability and promoting socio-economic development. For example, the ANC in South Africa and the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in Botswana have played a crucial stabilising role during the establishment of new democratic regimes in both countries. On the other hand, other scholars consider dominant party systems to be inimical to democratic consolidation. For example, Doorenspleet (2003, p. 185) argues that meaningful electoral competition in such a system is constrained. Doorenspleet (2003, p. 185) further notes, for a democracy to function well, competition needs to be stiff between two or more political parties. A multiparty system is therefore more desirable for democracy.

Multiparty systems are characterised by competition between more than two political parties. As Sadie (2006, p. 216) explains, in multiparty systems popular support is divided among several political parties contesting for power. A classic example is Germany where two major parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), have ruled the country through political coalitions which also involved smaller parties. Mauritius

has also been familiar for its multiparty system where the alternation of state power has been a regular occurrence. In an ideal multiparty democracy, prospects for a one-party system, two-party system or a dominant party emerging are considered relatively small.

Nonetheless, in multiparty systems there are numerous cases where one political party dominates and stays in power for decades. South Africa, Namibia, Nigeria, Botswana and Zambia are well known for their multiparty democratic system. However these countries are characterized by one-party dominance and weak opposition parties. Opposition parties, especially in the aforementioned countries, have remained unsuccessful to break the electoral dominance of incumbent parties with the exception of Zambia in which the Patriotic Front (PF) party managed to unseat the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) after staying in power for 20 years. However, the trend has been that one party dominates for decades. For instance, despite the range of parties in Botswana, the BDP has ruled the country since 1966 (Teshome, 2009; Lotshwao, 2011). Namibia's democracy is also characterised by one-party domination; the South West African People's Party (Swapo) has enjoyed uninterrupted control of political power since the country's first election (Teshome, 2009; Moses, 2012). The ANC has won four consecutive elections since South Africa's transition to democracy. Dominant parties have thus become popular phenomenon.

From this perspective, party systems can ultimately impact the quality of democracy. For example, in Chapter One, it is argued that a dominant party system is not healthy for South Africa's multiparty democracy. This is so because most opposition parties, especially parties operating in dominant party systems, find it difficult to grow electorally. Nevertheless, dominant party systems are not the only reason for fragmented and weak opposition parties. Other factors have also contributed to their poor performance. The potential reasons for the weak performance of parties will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.4 Understanding political parties and democracy

Looking back in history, political parties have not always been with us. Their existence can be traced to the second half of the twentieth century to what is commonly referred to as the

“third wave” of democratization (Huntington, 1991; Matlosa, 2005; Silah, 2007). Parties in the organised modern sense first emerged in the United States as a consequence of specific constitutional arrangements and laws that provided for or encouraged competitive elections (Sadie, 2006, p. 203). In countries such as Britain, the suffrage was expanded and groups were organised to contest elections. Similarly, political parties in Africa became a prominent feature of post-colonial political contestation in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s (Salih, 2003; Matlosa, 2005; Salih, 2006). However post-colonial rulers banned political parties for decades in the 1960’s and parties were only unbanned in the 1990’s with the independence of African states (Mozaffar, 2005; Carbone, 2007).

The term political party has been defined by many. The *ACE Encyclopaedia* defines a political party as “an organised group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions that seek to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected into public office”. Other sources have given fairly similar definitions in which political parties are seen as groups or organisations that are seeking to occupy decision-making positions of authority within the state in order to control the resources and personnel of government (*Democracy Encyclopaedia*; Sadie, 2006; Heywood, 2002). Moreover, Maliyamkono and Kanyangolo (2003, p. 41) define a political party as “an organised association of people working together to compete for political office and promote agreed-upon policies”. Scholars like Salih (2008, p. 20), point out that political parties are representative institutions that endow the regime with legitimacy. They provide ideologies that represent social, economic and political interests.

Indeed, political scientists have long recognised the importance of political parties in democracy (Kelsen, 1929; Sartori, 1968; Rosenblum, 2000). Political parties create political environments for citizens to actively participate in the democratic process. For this reason, Schattsneider (1942, p. 1) notes that it is impossible to have democracy without political parties. He argues that political parties create representative democracy and for this reason, political parties are an important aspect of democracy. A similar position was adopted by Linz and Stephan (1996) about the relevance of political parties in modern democracies. They noted that political parties are fundamental in the democratic context mainly because in the

past no form of non-party representation was able to establish a democratic government (Linz and Stephan, 1996, p. 4).

Other scholars have also emphasised that democracy cannot function without political parties. Makara (2009, p. 44), argues that “political parties are presumed to be central to the democratization of any state” and Matlosa (2007, p. 10) once stated: “a democracy is unthinkable without competing parties. Competing political parties are the agents of democracy”. This general conception of the significance of political parties in democracy is reiterated by public opinion. According to Dalton and Weldon (2005, p. 933), analysis of survey data from thirteen states revealed that three-quarters of respondents thought that political parties were necessary for a well-functioning democracy. This finding is not surprising as political parties are important representative channels that voters use to strengthen their voice in government.

While political parties can also exist in non-democratic states (Weiner, 1967, pp. 1-2), it is impossible to have a representative democracy without parties contesting for state power (Matlosa, 2007, p. 2). Political parties are thus necessary organisations for a representative democracy to work effectively.

From the above theoretical discussions, it is evident that political parties are among the most important organisations in modern democracies. Therefore, their value should not be underestimated. It is for this reason that Dahl (1798) views the existence of political parties as very nearly the most distinctive characteristic of democracy itself. Likewise, Reitzes *et al* (2011, pp. 11-19) stated that political parties are the foundation of democracy; they are the sole participants in elections and the exercise of majority rule. As such, parties are particularly known for being crucial actors in elections, for example, they nominate candidates for public office, run highly visible and organised election campaigns, and building support among broad coalitions of citizens and groups. They also integrate multiple conflicting demands into coherent policy programmes (Norris, 2005, p. 3). In this regard, parties have a very broad impact on the political system, government and decision-making. Therefore, the subsequent section introduces the classic roles and functions that parties perform in society.

2.5 Roles and functions of parties in democracy

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, political parties perform many important tasks in society. Generally, they are expected to fulfil two fundamental roles in the political process namely, to form the *government* and secondly, to serve as an *opposition*. Matlosa (2008, p. 5) summarised the primary functions of political parties in the following table:

	Interest articulation	Interest aggregation	Recruitment
Government	Implement policies	Sustains electoral support for government	Fills government positions
Opposition	Develop alternatives	Gain electoral support for chance in government	Builds pool of competent candidates

Table 1: Primary functions of political parties in democracy

2.5.1 Recruitment of political leaders

A fundamental role of political parties is to seek control of the governing apparatus by proposing candidates for office. Both government and opposition parties are responsible to prepare, select and recruit candidates for governmental and parliamentary positions (Canton, 2007; Teshome, 2009). Parties, especially those in government, are important for preparing the head of state (president), deputy president, ministers, assistant ministers and members of parliament. Many of the parties' internal structures (such as youth groups, women movement, and internal party offices) are created to identify and nurture future candidates for elections and political positions. This emphasizes the political leadership function of parties in government. At the same time, opposition parties are expected to select a pool of competent candidates to stand for the next election. Opposition parties also prepare and train party members that might take over leadership positions within the party or that might have been elected into national, provincial or local legislatures. Related to this is the training of political elites about the democratic process. It is crucial for political parties to produce democratic leaders, and in this way, enhance and build democratic governance within the country

(Matlosa, 2008, p. 5). Political elites should be educated on the norms of democracy and the principles of their party (Weissenbach, 2010, p. 11). This is the responsibility of both the incumbent party and opposition parties to provide the necessary political training for their members. The training may accompany a long career starting in party activism, followed by party office holding, and then finally elective holding (Weissenbach, 2010, p. 11).

2.5.2 Articulation/aggregation of interests and policies

One of the key functions of both the governing party and opposition is to articulate the interests of the electorate. Both have the duty to convert people's demands into political ideas and programmes. They give voice to their supporters' interests by taking a stand on political issues and by expressing the views of their supporters within the governing process (Weissenbach, 2010, p. 11). As Sachikonye (2005, p. 2) notes, "parties aggregate demands into coherent political programmes; they then translate these programmes into effective collection action through elections and legitimate control of political office". Opposition parties, more specifically, have the responsibility to develop alternative ideas and policies for the electorate. Through developing alternative policies, opposition parties can become an 'alternative political voice' for voters that are not satisfied with the policies and programmes implemented by the ruling party. However, in order for opposition parties to succeed in organising public demands, they must be effective articulators of their policies and ideas. Opposition parties need to strive to formulate coherent sets of policy options with the aim to gain sufficient support to change the government. Even if they fail to become the governing party, they must be able to ensure that their supporters' demands are considered by the government of the day.

2.5.3 Political representation and participation

According to Hirst (1990, p. 25), political representation guarantees that the institutions of the state, such as parliament, express the will of the people. In this regard, political parties are seen as a "linkage mechanism" in passing public opinion from the electorate on to government officials (Lawson, 1988; Salih, 2007). Representation also entails the idea of accountability, whereby the political party is held accountable for the ways in which it acts in

the name of those it claims to speak for (Friedman, 2006, n.p.). This is what a representative democracy is all about. Without political parties, governments and legislatures have little chance of representing the wider society in a meaningful way. As Sartori (1976, p. 25) points out, parties are first and foremost channels of expression that “link people to a government”. Likewise, Sadie notes that no institution comes to mind that could better represent people more effectively than political parties.²⁰ In government, political parties play the representation role by directing public policy-making in line with the interest of the electorate. In opposition, parties act like watchdogs over government policies to ensure that the interest of the electorate is fulfilled. Again, the fundamental function of the opposition is to ensure that the electorates’ views are taken into account by the government in terms of public policy formulation.

Furthermore, one of the fundamental goals of all political parties is to provide citizens with opportunities to participate in the political system. They are constructed in such a way as to enhance and promote effective political participation of citizens in government institutions. Additionally, political parties provide citizens with opportunities to influence and share control over state decisions and resources that may personally affect them. In other words, in order for a democracy to work effectively, parties have to introduce mechanisms and make spaces available for political participation in state affairs. As Dahl (1986, p. 196) has argued, “for to deny any citizen adequate opportunities for effective participation means that their preferences cannot be known, or cannot be correctly known and hence cannot be taken into account”.

2.5.4 Political education and mobilisation

Political parties also provide people with important political information; they educate, inform and influence the public through information that they share. Sadie (2006, p. 204), for instance, argues that parties teach their members “how to play the political game in democracy”. They therefore educate their party members and potential voters about the

²⁰ Sadie advocated that the principle of representation and participation in democracy hinges on the existence of political parties. She further claimed that “the representation of people, who are the source of government power, can only be effected by elections of representatives” (Sadie 2006, p. 202).

electoral process, voter participation and party campaigning. Voter education also allows parties to mobilise support during an election period. There are two kinds of voter mobilisation namely, direct and indirect voter mobilisation. The direct process involves the party working actively in neighbourhoods to get them to vote. This includes public meetings, rallies, house-to-house visits and motivating citizens to become involved in the campaign itself. On the other hand, some parties use the indirect approach such as advertisements (posters, banners and billboards) and the use of the media to canvass sufficient support.

2.5.5 Ensuring responsibility and accountability

Parties controlling the government (whether alone or in a coalition) should provide mechanisms for ensuring political responsibility and accountability. This makes it easier for the public to decide who should get the credit or the blame for the governments' policy choices and outcomes (Weissenbach, 2010, p.14). Ensuring political responsibility and accountability is a key responsibility of opposition parties. As previously indicated in Chapter One, opposition parties are channels for maintaining policy oversight and demanding accountability from the government. As Schrire (2001, p. 11) indicated, "one of the key values of democracy is the degree to which the government are held accountable to the citizenry" and "[a]n opposition is a necessary condition for democratic accountability". Opposition parties also take on the role to monitor government performance and to expose the misuse of state resources and corruption. In this way, opposition parties have the responsibility to question the actions and outcomes of government decisions with the aim to promote responsiveness and accountability within the governing process.

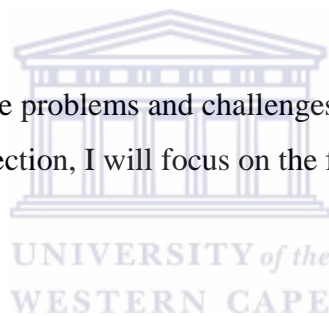
From the foregoing discussions, it is evident that political parties (in government and those serving as opposition) have valuable roles in fostering democratic governance and ensuring that they, as a group, are responsive to societal needs. If they fail to perform their roles, true democracy has little chance of surviving (Silah, 2004, p.10).

2.6 Problems and challenges facing opposition parties

Despite their significance in the democratic process, opposition parties are confronted with a number of challenges and problems that hinder their electoral growth. These problems and challenges take various forms. For instance, people in many parts of the world hold opposition parties in low esteem, due to their weak capacity to address social demands (Burnell, 2006; Matlosa, 2008). The lack of public trust and confidence in opposition parties also manifest itself in their poor electoral support at the polls. Numerous scholars have spoken about the different factors that might contribute to the weakness of opposition parties. These factors can be broadly classified as organisational or internal challenges and contextual or external challenges.

2.6.1 Organisational factors

Organisational factors speak to the problems and challenges which are encountered within the party as an organisation. In this section, I will focus on the following organisation challenges:

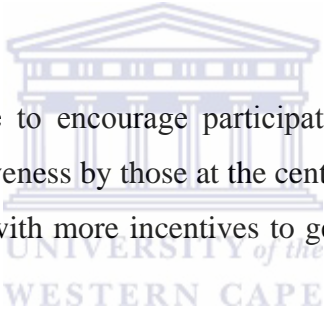


- Top-Down organisation
- Poor membership and recruitment
- Poor party leadership and image
- Personalistic party image
- Failure to produce alternative policies
- Lack of mass base
- Forming coalitions and alliances
- Lack of public trust in political parties
- Lack of communication between parties and voters

2.6.1.1 Top-Down organisation

First, political parties are often constructed as top-down organisations, displaying little internal democracy. Internal party democracy, as understood in liberal democracies,

emphasizes the need for the participation of party membership and lower party structures in the decision-making processes of the party (Ware, 1979; Theorell, 1999). According to Scarrow (2005, p. 5), participation in decision-making allows for the selection of more capable leaders, the adoption of responsive policies, as well as, the development of a democratic culture. Internal democracy is particularly important to promote checks and balances against poor policies and leadership. Internal democracy thus ensures that party members and lower party structures can voice their opinion relating to the overall functionality and performance of the party. However, the concept of internal democracy has not been implemented by many parties, but rather exists in theory. Over the years, parties have become less tolerant of party debates and have imposed the party's will on members and structures (Burnell, 2004. p. 17). Burnell further notes that some parties are increasingly less participatory and more likely to be divorced from their members and society. He states the following:



...efforts should be made to encourage participatory organisational structures that engender greater responsiveness by those at the centre of the party, and which provide people at the grass roots with more incentives to get involved and give their support (Burnell, 2004, p. 17-18).

In this sense, parties should pay adequate attention to their party structures in order to maintain a good relationship with existing members. Adequate mechanisms and measures need to be in place for members to fully participate in the decision-making process of the party as opposed to imposing decisions on them.

Linked to the above, is the lack of participation and representation of women and the youth in party structures.²¹ In this regard, Burnell (2004) argues that most parties show little awareness of equitable participation of women alongside men in decision-making. He argues

²¹ This is despite the fact that globally, regionally and nationally it has been accepted that women's access to, and participation in, decision making is a fundamental right (Sadie, 2006, p. 213). The UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAC) states that parties shall ensure that women, on equal terms with men, have the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of government policy. Moreover, women have the right to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.

that the under-representation of women in parties, to some extent, helps perpetuate the decline in party support. In most democracies, there are no legal barriers to women standing in elections. However, very often not enough resources are made available for female candidates to participate in candidate selection (Burnell, 2004, p. 18). Similarly, other scholars have spoken to the underrepresentation of the youth and how this trend may impact party support. Teshome (2009, p. 292), for example, contends that women and the youth are widely underrepresented in many African opposition parties. This is supported by Matlosa (2008, p. 24) who points out that: “just as there is a failure in gender representation, parties fail to integrate the youth into the larger political direction of parties”. Poor representation of women and the youth can negatively impact their participation in party politics.²² Opposition parties, in particular, fielded fewer women candidates compared to the ruling party. Realising this as a weakness, most political parties had a regulated quota system for women. The ANC supported a 50 percent quota, while opposition parties like UCDP have ensured that women make at least 30 percent of election candidates (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, 2009; Hassim and Smith, 2012). One could argue that allowing more women candidates could help opposition parties to appeal to a larger portion of women voters. However, it has been reported that most South African opposition parties have fallen short of achieving gender parity in terms of candidates, especially in local government elections (Morna and Mbadlanyana, 2009, p. 19).

2.6.1.2 Poor membership and recruitment

It has been observed that some parties do not place enough emphasis on retaining existing members and recruiting new members. In terms of recruitment, Matlosa (2008, p. 24) argues that “there is a sense of laxity” within the parties, especially in-between elections. Matlosa further notes that recruitment drives are crucial for party support. He notes that recruitment activities should be undertaken in order to renew the general public trust and public image of parties. Parties should not simply just rely on their reputation to attract new members. However, parties should continually mobilise membership and keep the party machine active during and in-between elections (Matlosa, 2008, p. 24).

²² In South Africa, for instance, the number of women in party leadership position was very low in the early 1990’s. Women leadership was not given much consideration under apartheid.

Parties also tend to hibernate. Many parties appear or become active during an election, and disappear when the election is over (Teshome, 2009, p. 287). In this regard, it is difficult for voters to hold parties accountable for poor performance if parties appear and disappear from one election to the next. In addition, parties have been criticized for not having reliable, up-to-date records of existing members. Magolowondo (n.d., p. 5) argues, while parties have supporters, it is difficult to identify actual party members beyond those who hold positions within the party. She further explains that data on membership hardly exists in many instances or, where it does exist, it is not reliable. Therefore, parties lose touch with many existing members.

2.6.1.3 Poor party leadership and image

Party leadership and image play a key role in the party's success or failure in elections. Undoubtedly, voters judge parties based on their leaders. This is supported by Matlosa (2007) who argues that a party's performance during and in-between general and local elections is determined, among other things, on how visionary the leadership is. Matlosa (2007, p. 17) further notes, "a party can rise or fall on the basis of the nature and character of its leadership cadre". Likewise, Africa (2008, p. 47) notes that "perceptions of parties are integrally linked to perceptions of the party leader". This means that voter perceptions of the party leader can affect the voter's view of how well the party will represent him or her as a person. According to Schulz-Herzenberg (2009a, pp. 35-36), people move to and from parties in response to the party leadership. This means that, if voters have a poor perception about the leader they will not vote for that party. Related to this are voters' perceptions of the inclusiveness of parties. Feree (2004) argues that people often seek to find political parties who will look after the interest of all groups and are not likely to vote for a party they perceive as being exclusively concerned about the interest of another group. Voters thus look at the overall image of the party and ask themselves whether the party is inclusive to all groups in society. Schulz-Herzenberg (2009a, p. 35) states that: "since inclusivity shapes the creditability and trustworthiness of a party, these images are important information cues for voters". Unfortunately, some parties often portray themselves to be exclusively concerned about the needs of one particular group, for example, based on race, ethnicity, religion, and so on. This 'exclusive style' of some parties can be one of the many reasons that opposition parties have failed to attract a significant amount of votes at the polls. For example, Sylvester (2009, p. 7)

has argued that simply representing a minority group, ethnic or otherwise, does not win elections.

2.6.1.4 Personalistic party image

Many of the opposition parties in Africa are established around individual personalities. This means that the party revolves entirely around the national leader(s) who are either the founders or financiers or both. Magolowondo (n.d., pp. 5-6) argues that it may be difficult to conceive of a possibility of followers to demand accountability of such leaders, because these leaders are seen as the patrons of their followers for the latter depend on the former for favours or even the actual sustenance of the party itself. In other words, according to Magolowondo, such parties do not have members but rather they have 'subjects' that are not likely to demand accountability of their leaders. Moreover, LeBas (2004, p. 29) argues that 'personalistic' opposition parties, which usually rally on the 'charismatic appeal of a single individual', lack structures extending beyond the national executive. LeBas further notes that, parties that are established around individual personalities may face a split whenever another rising star challenges the founder or the leader of the party.



2.6.1.5 Failure to produce alternative policies

As previously outlined, opposition parties are entrusted with offering policy alternatives to the electorate. Policy formulation and development can determine the effectiveness of opposition parties, especially when it comes to mobilising electoral support. In this regard, what is crucial is how opposition parties develop their policy positions by way of programmes and manifestos (Matlosa, 2008, p. 25). By offering policy alternatives, opposition parties have the opportunity to explain and motivate how they would do things differently from the incumbent party. They should explain their policy alternatives on issues such as education, healthcare, unemployment, poverty, agriculture, and so on (Isakpa, 2008). For example, Isakpa (2008) argues that if the ruling politicians are failing the people, it is the responsibility of the opposition to step in and provide alternative policy options on how to deal with the challenges that confront the country and people.

On the contrary, Teshome (2009, p. 291) and Matlosa (2008, p. 25) have argued that opposition parties by and large experience difficulties developing policies and programmes. Their failure to provide policy alternatives is seen as one of the most chronic problems of the opposition. Alternatively, most opposition parties display commonalities in ideological outlook (which affects their policy positions) and this situation presents the electorate with a restricted political menu from which to make their choice during elections (Matlosa, 2008, p. 25). The ruling party thus seems to do better than opposition parties in developing policies and programmes. This is probably so because ruling parties have better access to state resources and policy experts within and outside the country. Nevertheless, scholars like Edigheji in Brooks (2004, p. 11) argue that some opposition parties provide alternative policies to the electorate. However, and in most cases, their policies only appeal to narrow and specific interests and fail to transcend identity politics.

2.6.1.6 Lack of mass base

Many opposition parties lack proper contact with trade unions and labour unions which ultimately may affect their support base (Teshome, 2009, p. 292). In countries where labour unions are autonomous they can play a very important role in opposition politics (LeBas, 2003, p. 24). For instance, in South Africa the ruling party has a good relationship with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The ANC's alliance with COSATU and the SACP has secured a large majority of votes for the party. This shows that support from trade unions and other mass organisations are crucial for parties to win elections (Teshome, 2009, p. 292). On the other hand, opposition parties' relation with trade and labour unions are very weak, especially in countries where there is a dominant party such as in South Africa and Botswana. According to Matlosa (2008) this problem highlights the phenomenon of one-party dominance; one party that has the support of most unions and civil society organisations at the polls.

2.6.1.7 Forming coalitions and alliances

Coalitions and alliances are usually formed between parties in order to maximise their chances to achieve a desired goal or more commonly, to increase their electoral support. Ideally, opposition parties form coalitions with the aim to exploit the electoral dominance of

the incumbent party. Coalitions thus provide parties with an opportunity to form an alternative leadership. Matlosa (2008, p. 23), for instance, states that “coalitions serve to strengthen opposition parties, and with the predominance of dominant party systems, coalitions have something to offer”. On the other hand, it has been noted that opposition parties, especially the ones operating in dominant party systems, have neglected to form alliances with other parties. This could be due to several reasons. For instance, Matlosa (2008, p. 46) retorts that party ideologies might be different which in effect might be a difficult for one party to compromise. For example, the parties may not hold similar political interests and views on policy issues. Therefore, organising coalitions between parties can be difficult. Other factors such as race and ethnicity may also be a problem as some parties prefer certain ethnic groups to work with (Matlosa, 2008, p. 47).

2.6.1.8 Public trust in political parties

As earlier indicated, lack of public trust and confidence in some opposition parties has contributed to their declining support. Many scholars such as Matlosa (2008) and Burnell (2004) have examined this problem. They argue that there is a decline in public trust in parties. Matlosa argues that opposition parties are suffering a severe crises of public legitimacy/trust compared to ruling parties. It has also been acknowledged in a conference statement: *‘Sustaining Africa’s Momentum’* that there is a “crisis of trust in parties” which must be reversed.²³ Consequently, voters are increasingly becoming disenchanted from politics and political parties due to their lack of confidence in politicians. This problem manifests itself when political parties make promises during election campaigns but once in power, they fail to deliver on the promises made to the electorate. Moreover, corruption scandals of politicians have contributed to the hostility towards some parties. This has created a perception among voters that politicians are using their political status to maximise their personal interest. Linked to this is the internal fighting and inter-party conflicts which create an image that parties are too consumed by the scramble for party and state power and less concerned about the welfare of the people (Matlosa, 2008). Lack of trust and confidence in parties can lead to voter apathy which can hinder the democratic experience of citizens.

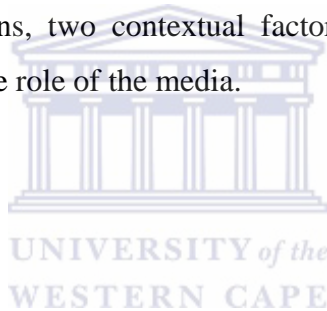
²³ International Conference on Sustaining Africa’s Momentum in Johannesburg, 5- 7 March 2007.

2.6.1.9 Lack of communication between parties and voters

Communication between parties and the electorate is very important. Parties are expected to start a ‘national conversation’ with the electorate about their policies and programmes. In order for parties to be useful, they must ensure that information flow in both the horizontal and vertical directions within the organisation so that all members and structures are well informed about the party’s goals and objectives. In this vein, Matlosa (2008, p. 55) states that parties should have the necessary communication skills to ensure that the right information is conveyed to the public.

2.6.2 Contextual factors

Contextual factors explain the political environment in which political parties have to operate. In the following sections, two contextual factors will be discussed namely, the funding of political parties and the role of the media.



2.6.2.1 Party funding context

Political parties are faced with the task of raising money to finance their electoral activities. According to Butler (2010, p. 1) parties are complex organisations that need financial resources to maintain their political offices, deliberate with citizens, develop alternative policy programmes, and set out their values and objectives during electoral campaigns. Furthermore, with sufficient funding, political parties are able to maintain a certain level of visibility, provide training, and educate people about the electoral process (Molomo, 2003, p. 312). In addition, political parties need funding to operate in a meaningful and effective way. Matlosa (2008, p. 27) states that financial resources enable opposition parties to become effective challengers to the ruling party. However, one big disadvantage of opposition parties is their weak financial position (Johnston, 2005; Mathisen and Sväsand, 2002; Ewing, 2001, Faull, 2007).

Several scholars have argued that political parties will not be able to function effectively without sufficient financial support. Norris and Kotze, for instance, argue that insufficient

funding is one of the key reasons why political parties fail to perform during elections. Moreover, Norris (2004, p. 12) states that access to money is one of the most important factors that help parties in conveying their message and mobilising potential supporters. Kotze (2004, p. 43) also claims that access to financial resources will always be considered by competing parties as the crux of their success or failure. In this regard, insufficient party funding is said to undermine the link between parties and their mass membership (Molomo, 2003, p. 312). One could thus argue that parties' electoral performance is then, to some extent, dependent on their financial position. Parties that cannot raise money risk losing support during and in-between elections.

Additionally, it has been noted that opposition parties find it difficult to compete with civil society organisations for financial assistance from international organisations. As Burnell (2004, p. 7) argues, the population tends to see civil society organisations as 'where the action is' and 'clean' by comparison with political parties. In this regard, aid donors have contributed to the poor financial position of parties by concentrating their support on civil society organisations over the years. Hence, opposition parties do not always have the financial means to fulfil their specific roles and functions in society. This could negatively affect parties in terms of meeting the costs of campaigns and more importantly, mobilisation of support at the polls. The lack of funding can also hinder the overall functionality of the party. For instance, some parties do not have the financial capacity to hire staff such as assistants, researchers, campaign managers, media liaison officers and so on. Poorly financed parties also struggle to draft policies and implement political programmes which may affect their relevance in society. In South Africa, for instance, most opposition parties bemoan the lack of financial resources as the primary reason for their declining level of support (Africa and van Rooyen, 2012, p. 203). Party funding in South Africa is discussed in more detail Chapter Three of this dissertation.

2.6.2.2 The role of the media

The role of the media is another contextual factor crucial to elections. The media as a channel of communication has at least three critical roles in elections. These are namely, information, analysis, debate, and discussion. By playing the role of information, analysis, and open forum

for debate and discussion, the media act as an institutional aid and guide to citizens in making electoral choices (Kupe, 2007, p. 31). First, the media must inform citizens accurately about the electoral processes. Secondly, it is the civic duty of the media to critically analyze candidates, parties and their manifestoes. Thirdly, the media should allow for open debate and discussion about the candidates, parties and manifestoes. In this regard, the media should expose to citizens different or alternative and opposing ideas, viewpoints, opinions and beliefs. Therefore, the media allow citizens to make more informed choices at elections rather than blind loyalties to a specific party. It would therefore be unethical for the media to cover manifestoes of some political parties rather than others. The media needs to be ethical and professional and serve the public interest (Kupe, 2007, p. 31).

However, the media has been criticized for providing more coverage to larger parties than smaller ones, especially during election periods. The resulting outcome is that the opposition parties do not get the same amount of media attention as the ruling party which is critical for their success (De Vos, 1998; Bird, 2010). Hence large proportions of the electorate either perceive the opposition as insignificant or are unable to offer opinions about their policies and programmes. According to De Vos (1998, p. 265), in a country like South Africa where one party has overwhelmingly support, it is important to level the political playing field to give opposition parties a fair chance at challenging the hegemony of the majority party. In Chapter Three, an overview of the media's influence in party performance in South Africa's elections is given.

2.7 Voting behaviour theories

In this section, I review theories of voting behaviour in order to make sense of the voter migration to the DA in 2011. The reasons for choosing one party over another are complex. While numerous authors have examined the underlying factors for why voters vote as they do, it can be safely assumed that less has been written on the reasons that voters decide to switch from one party to another. Voting theories can be broadly classified into the party-identification approach, the sociological model, rational choice theory and dominant ideology theory. One author who draws on many elements of these theories is Samuel Popkin. Popkin sees "gut-reasoning" as being critically important to their voting choices (Popkin, 1991).

Popkin also sees campaigns as being crucial but not ultimate in the voter's decision-making process. Popkin (1991, p. 70) argues "if voters had full information and no uncertainty, they would not be open to influence from others and hence there would be no campaigns". This section therefore reviews the party-identification approach, the sociological model, rational choice theory, dominant ideology theory, Popkin's integrated theory, as well as, theoretical explanations for vote switching between different elections.

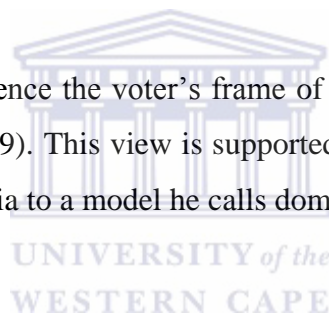
As pointed out earlier, elections are a central and important feature of democracy. It is through this process that citizens are given the opportunity to make individual choices as to who must have the power to govern a country. Many political theorists thus ask themselves how do citizens decide who to vote for in elections? In order to answer this question, theorists have developed different models of voting behaviour which seek to explore voting behaviour and how well it should be understood.

Voting behaviour theories or models refers to factors that determine the manner in which a particular group of people vote for a specific political party. Nnadika (2007, p. 33) explains voting behaviour as "...determent 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". In simpler terms, Oversloot *et al* (2002, p. 32) refers to voting behaviour as the political preference from one party to another. Scholars such as Ball and Peters (2005, p. 172) argue that the decision to vote or not to vote is influenced by tangible and intangible considerations. In addition, Heywood (2002, p. 241) suggest that voting behaviour is shaped by short term and long term influences. He states that short term influences are specific to a particular election, for instance, the state of economy, government's popularity and material circumstances. Heywood further suggests that the personality and public standing of party leaders are a particularly crucial (Heywood, 2002, p. 241). This is supported by Ebke (2005, pp. 1-2) who argues that positive or negative feelings about party candidates may influence the way electorates may vote. Another important factor that influences voting behaviour is the style and effectiveness of the party's electoral campaign (Popkin, 1991, Heywood, 2002). Popkin (1991, p. 40), argues that the style and effectiveness of campaigns do affect vote choices, and that campaigns generally make voters more accurate in their perceptions of candidates and issues.

A final short-term influence is the mass media. Ball and Peters (2005, p. 180), for example, state that the role of mass media, particularly that of television, is a factor of increasing importance in the influence of elections results. Popkin (1991) also recognises the important role of the media in voting choices. He adds that campaigns reach most people through the media. The media, especially television, is the prime information medium. Popkin (1991, p. 9) explains this further:

...the media play a critical role in shaping voters' limited information about the world, their limited knowledge about the links between issues and offices, their limited understanding of the connections between public policy and its immediate consequences for themselves, and their views about what kind of person a president should be.

The media, in other words, influence the voter's frame of reference and can thereby change his or her vote (Popkin, 1991, p. 9). This view is supported by Heywood (2002, p. 244) who relates the influence of mass media to a model he calls dominant ideology.



All the above stated considerations operate within a context of psychological, sociological, economical and ideological influences upon voting. As previously mentioned, the different models of voting behaviour identified in this research study thus comprise the party-identification model, rational choice model, sociological model and dominant-ideology model. Aside from the Western developed models of voting behaviour, there is also the racial census model that has been explored within the South African context. The racial census approach is based on the premise that vote choice is determined by racial and ethnic identity. As pointed out in the introductory chapter, South Africa is a diverse society where social cleavages may affect electoral outcomes.

2.7.1 Party-identification model

Partisanship or party-identification, as it is more commonly known, is the earliest theory of voting behaviour. Party-identification is best described as a continuing psychological

attachment that people have to a political party.²⁴ Electors are seen as people who identify with a party, in the sense of being long-term supporters who regard the party as their own (Heywood, 2002, p. 242). Hence, voters with a strong party-identification are likely to participate in elections and are more likely to vote for their preferred party. Because of their strong psychological affinity, partisan voters are less open to criticize their preferred party's policies and performance in government. They tend to appreciate that which is favourable to the orientation of their party and ignore or devalue that which is unfavourable (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960). It is therefore difficult to motivate strong partisan voters to vote for another party. They are not easily persuaded to withdraw their support from their preferred party or candidate and to transfer their vote to another. As Heath, Jowell and Curtice (1985, p. 123) argue: "people remain attached to their previous parties even if they moved out of line with them on major political principles". In this vein, party-identification is considered a very stable political predisposition and determinant of voting behaviour (Goldberg, 1966; Friedman: 2004). This belief is reinforced by Dalton (2000, p. 20) who argues that "a strong case can be made that the concept of party-identification is the most important development in modern electoral behaviour research".

Furthermore, the party-identification model places great emphasis on early socialization which ultimately shapes political behaviour and attitudes. According to Elcock (1976), Goldberg (1966) and Achen (2002), partisan identities are transmitted from one generation to the next through the socialising effects of families, peer groups, and social networks. Thus, the social location of voters is regarded as a determining factor for who voters will interact with and which political party they will support (Catt, 1996, p. 5). A partisan self-image is inherited; the values and political attitudes of social groups, especially close relatives, are considered most influential in voting behaviour. In most cases, the knowledge and information that citizens have comes from their immediate social context. On the basis of this, partisanship is an information shortcut that provides "cues" about the principles and policy orientations of parties and candidates running for office (Popkin, 1999; Roberts, 2005, p. 23).

²⁴ Campbell *et al* (1960, pp. 121-122), for instance, define party-identification as a "psychological identification which can persist without formal membership and even without a consistent record of party support".

According to Wolf (2010, n.p.), most partisans are mobilised by both their hearts and minds. Wolf explains that while partisans make up their minds regarding issues and decisions, their emotions (hearts) play a key role in mobilising them. Most partisans voting behaviour thus entails that they will support their own party regardless of factors such as underperformance and changing national circumstances, etc. In this case, parties (for example the ANC in South Africa) that have secured strong partisan support are thus less likely to care about their performance because of voters' emotional attachment to the party. This is particularly true in dominant party regimes where one party may have secured a large majority of partisan support.

Conversely, partisan support is not unbreakable. Popkin (1991, p. 54) is of the view that partisan support is also a changeable orientation in the sense that people move to and from their respective parties in response to their evolving evaluations of the parties and candidates. In other words, partisanship plays a decisive role in evaluating candidates, election campaigns, political and economic situations, and the overall party performance. Research has shown that partisan support has declined in recent times due to voters de-aligning themselves from a particular party and becoming independent voters at elections (Lanegran, 2001; Ball and Peters, 2005; Kersting, 2009).

2.7.2 Sociological model

According to Catt (1996, p. 8), the sociological model is based on social determinants rather than attitudes as the main influence for voting. This model suggests that the type of education, housing, transport and health care will affect the voters' evaluation of the government (Catt, 1996). Moreover, this voting behaviour approach stresses the group membership of the voter, suggesting that electors tend to adopt a voting pattern that reflects the economic and social position to which they belong (Heywood, 2002, p. 243). Accordingly, Feree (2006, p. 45) outlines the sociological factors that affect voting as being social class, income, occupation, education, religion, ethnic background, sex and age. In essence, this model highlights the importance of social alignment. Once this social alignment has been established, it provides a basis for "political conflict expressed at the ballot box" (Brooks et al, 2006, p. 89). In short, this model holds that one's social position and economic

circumstances will ultimately determine one's voting choice at elections. However, this model has been under attack. In this regard, Heywood (2002, p. 243) reveals that there is growing empirical evidence that the correlation between sociological factors and party support has drastically weakened in modern societies. For example, there has been a reduction on the impact of religious identity on voting behaviour (Brooks et al 2006, p. 92). In that sense, electors increasingly make their political choices independent of social group identities or membership affiliation to a given entity. Nonetheless, claims about the significance of social cleavages declining in voting behaviour have been challenged. Heywood (2002) and Evans (1999) are of the view that social class still remain an important factor influencing electoral choice. Similarly, Brooks *et al* (2006, pp. 89, 90, 113) claim that no evidence has been found for a universal decline in the relevance of the sociological model.

2.7.3 Rational - choice approach

The third model of voting behaviour is the “rational voter” choice. This model is based on an economic view of vote choice that was commonly introduced by Anthony Downs in his book *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957). This theory suggests that voters behave rationally when making their vote choices. They consider and reflect on their evaluations of party promises, party performance, preferences of party policy and candidate evaluations. In view of this, individuals are believed to decide their party preference on the basis of personal interest. Their reason for choosing a specific party is based on material benefits and not so much based on expressing their psychological attachment or ideological views (as with the party-identification and ideological approach). The idea that voters have rationality gives rise to the idea that their voting behaviour will respond to the cost and benefit of voting (Franklin, 2002, p. 12). The benefits of voting can vary considerably from one election to the next, depending on economic or social policy change.

Moreover, for the rational-choice approach, voting for a party based on intangible considerations such as race, ideology, identity or religion are somehow ‘irrational’ or ‘not normal’. This voting behaviour approach holds that voters make political decisions based on practical thinking about political issues that affect them personally. As indicated above, Popkin (1991) proposes that voters indeed “reason” during an election. He assumes that

voters reason about political parties, leaders, government performance and politics in general before making a choice. As Popkin (1991, p. 7) notes, the rational-choice approach recognises that the act of voting is shaped by voters ability to reason about political parties, what they stand for and their candidates. In this regard, voters are considered as ‘rational’ and well informed about the party, its policies, candidates, and the leader’s competence or integrity.

Popkin’s integrated theory argues that voters pay attention to the competence of candidates and incumbents. Voters care about the character of the candidate, about his or her sincerity, and whether the candidate can deliver on election promises (Popkin, 1991, pp. 61-62). In other words, voters evaluate a candidate or presidential incumbent based on a pre-existing stereotype of how certain people should act. For instance, voters may compare a presidential candidate to their image of what a president should be like, or compare a candidate to their stereotype of how someone who “does the right thing” would act (Popkin, 1991). Voters often use the media as a reasoning shortcut to evaluate candidates and incumbents. For example, media coverage of economic problems might lead voters to not only update their evaluation of the president’s handling of the economy, but also to weight this issue-specific evaluation more heavily when making a broader evaluation of the president’s overall performance (Popkin, 1991). In addition, Popkin’s theory has shown that voters formulate their voting choices in terms of what they thought the president would be doing or what they wanted him to be doing. The image and competence of the president do matter to voters (Popkin, 1991, p. 84).

Related to this, is Popkin’s argument that voters do learn from election campaigns; they ‘reason’ about what they see and hear. According to Popkin’s integrated theory, most voters have a limited amount of information about politics, limited knowledge how government works, and a limited understanding of how governmental actions are connected to the consequences of immediate concern to them. Popkin argues that campaigns increase the importance of (some) issues, strengthens the connections between issues and the office, and increases the perceived differences between candidates. Campaigns thus give voters much of the information they reason from as they deal with their uncertainty about political matters (Popkin, 1991, p. 8). Indeed, campaign communications heighten voters’ awareness of how

government affect their lives. Campaigns therefore influence voting choices, and make voters more, not less, accurate in their perceptions about party candidates, incumbents and public issues (Popkin, 1991, p. 40).

2.7.4 Dominant - ideology model

Radical theorists of voting behaviour tend to highlight the degree to which individuals choices are shaped by a process of ideological manipulation and control (Heywood, 2002, p. 244). According to Heywood (2002, p. 244) the media is capable of distorting the flow of political communications, by setting the agenda for debate and also structuring or manipulating preferences as well as sympathies. Thus, the media often form voters' views on parties, leaders and their candidates. In addition, Strömberg (2004, p. 265) reveals that the media provides most of the information used by the electorate to make political choices. In this way, the media forms certain political images in the minds of the electorate which leads to certain political opinions. This is supported by Jankowski and State (1995, p. 91) who argue that political knowledge about parties and the government increases through mass media. Accordingly, the electorate use the information to decide and express their political support. However, some scholars are of the considered view that the popularity of the press has increasingly decreased over the years (Ladd, 2010, n.p.). For instance, Ball and Peters (2005, p. 180) have noted that there is little agreement on how important the effects of the media are on individual electoral behaviour.

2.7.5 Racial census approach

Another explanatory model is the racial census model, according to which voting behaviour is based on racial and ethnic affiliation. Hulterström (2007, p.10) argues that there is a “very strong relationship between ethnic belonging and voter support”. For Hulterström (2007, p. 21) ethnicity is a problematic and undesirable element, because it undermines issue-based politics. Likewise, according to Hoeane (2004, p. 1) race and ethnicity are regarded as primary analytical variables in explaining voting behaviour. Hoeane goes on to refute the racial census analytical framework which has been used to interpret South African elections according to racial and ethnic categories. The racial census theory thus focuses on the central

role played by race and ethnicity in voting behaviour and the performance of political parties. As the racial census theory assumes that there is a direct link between a voter's race and ethnicity and the political party he or she will vote for. Voting loyalties are often related to race and ethnicity. The distinction between race and ethnicity is made on the basis of skin colour and cultured language. Hence, skin colour defines a racial group while language and cultural behaviour define an ethnic group (Prudhomme, 2004, p. 55). Many voters find it difficult to escape racial and ethnic identifications and attachments when voting for parties.²⁵ Political parties are also not immune to this racial and ethnic interpretation of politics. This is despite the declining trends in racial and ethnic voting behaviour reported by some scholars referred to above. The role of identity in voting behaviour remains widely debated and a contentious issue.

2.8 Vote switching

Many individuals frequently vote for different parties in different elections. This is commonly known as the 'vote switching' or 'voter realignment' theory. A central component of this theory is the change in behaviour of voting groups. More specifically, vote switching or voter realignment means the switching of voter preferences from one party to another; in contrast to voter dealignment where a voter abandons a party to become independent or nonvoting. According to Warren, (2008, p. 695), voter realignment starts with a national election where the balance of power between two parties is altered significantly. In essence, it is argued that vote switching can be defined as deviation from a true nationalised voting pattern in different types of elections (Lyons and Linek, 2010, p. 283). A variety of views on vote switching between different elections have been proposed. For instance in the European context, some scholars have focused on the idea that individuals may vote for different parties in different types of elections because some elections are less important than others. Hence some scholars argue that voters are likely to switch political allegiances from national (and provincial) elections to local elections because voters understand that the purpose of these elections is different (Franck and Tavares, 2008, p. 1).

²⁵ All races (white, coloured and Indians) are said to face the same problem in relation to racial and ethnic attachments to certain political parties.

Western scholars like Van Aelst and Lefevere (2011, p. 4) indicate that the ‘second order theory’ might explain the motivations for vote switching in different types of elections. The second order theory or hypothesis stipulates that local elections are considered to be less important to voters than national and provincial elections. This perspective was presented by Reif and Schmitt (1980, p. 8) who asserted that the national arena is the most important one, and hence, elections for national public office are normally the most salient in the eyes of the public and political parties. National elections are thus ‘first order elections’ while other elections, such as those for local offices are ‘second order elections’ and are considered less important to the electorate. As Marsh (1998, p. 592) states, the most important distinction between the two types is that in second order elections “there are less at stake as in first order elections”.

According to this theory then, in local elections, voter turnout will be lower; parties that are in government will lose votes; and small parties will do better than in national elections (Van Aelst and Lefevere, 2011, p. 4). Ultimately, the second order theory argues that voters most often use local elections to punish or reward the current governing parties. Voters are thus more prone to switch between parties at the local level to express feelings of dissatisfaction. In this way, voters try to exert pressure on their preferred parties by withdrawing support from them.

Thus, in a local election we might see voters moving in the opposite direction. It is argued that government parties would be particularly vulnerable to vote switching between different types of elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Marsh, 1998). This is because governments normally tend to disappoint voters and would thus suffer losses in local elections. Marsh (1998, p. 594) points out that government popularity among voters tend to reach its lowest point around mid-term, usually coinciding with the time when local elections take place. Additionally, it is argued that local elections are mostly driven by strategic protest voting and that strategic protest voting is a reaction to the performance deficits of the government (Weber, 2007, p. 512).

However, there are other mechanisms that underpin vote switching between elections. First, Weber (2007, p. 513) indicates that vote choices in local elections are usually influenced by

national issues. As Weber (2007, p. 513) explains, being ‘second order’ level means that an election is dominated by forces emanating from another, ‘higher order’ level. Reif and Schmitt (1980) hold the same view that local elections cannot be separated from national or provincial elections because it is conducted in the same political system. They argue that concerns which are appropriate to the first order (national) arena will affect behaviour in second order elections, even though the second order elections are ostensibly about something different (Reif and Schmitt, 1980). In this regard, voters most often consider the political situation at national level when casting their votes in a local election.

The key question that still remains relates to what motivations underlie voter behaviour and voter movement between elections? Reif and Schmitt (1980) attempted to answer this question by suggesting that voters often choose to support other parties in protest against their own or against the performance of government. In addition, studies have shown that vote switching from national to local elections might be motivated by party candidates. According to Van Aelst and Lefevere (2011, p. 7), particular candidates might also cause people to vote differently at the national and local level. Voting choices are thus also shaped by party leadership and candidates. Hence party candidates and leaders can motivate voters to cross over from one party to another.

Scholars like Van Aelst and Lefevere (2011, p. 5) build on the vote switching theory by proposing that another dimension of vote switching between elections is issue voting. Although there is different conceptions of this notion, issue voting basically means that people vote for a party because of its “outspoken attention to specific issues” or that they agree with related policy proposals (Aardal and Van Wijnen, 2005; Macdonald *et al.*, 1991). In the context of a local election, citizens may be casting a different vote as in a national election because they want a specific issue to be dealt with. For instance, their motivations to support a party might be influenced by service delivery issues such as water and sanitation. However, at national level, voters might support parties for their policies because at this level parties have the power to enact policies in parliament once they have the majority of the votes. It is thus assumed that at this level voters would have independently formulated issue positions or perceptions of where parties stand on particular political issues (Evans and Andersen, 2004, p. 2).

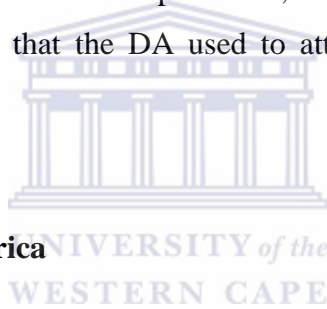
2.9 Conclusion

This chapter made reference to the roles and functions of political opposition parties in democracy. It also discussed some of the weaknesses and challenges opposition parties are currently facing. Furthermore, this chapter discussed voting behaviour theories which demonstrate how citizens choose a candidate or political party. Voting behaviour theories are precisely important to this study as they give detail to why some voters might decide to move between parties at elections. However, it must be pointed out that most of the above conceptual and theoretical discussions made are mainly based on Western literature. Nevertheless, these theoretical reflections are applicable to the political developments in South Africa and to Africa more generally. South Africa's democracy has been considered as weak, precisely because it has been characterised by one-party dominance and weak opposition parties. Opposition parties are regarded as crucial to democracy, their existence and relevance has been questioned. At the same time, this chapter gave an overview of possible reasons for the declining support for opposition parties in democracies. It highlighted that most opposition parties around the world are faced with problems and challenges which may affect their electoral support. Hence, South Africa is no exception as weak opposition parties is a common trend in most African democracies. Alternatively, this chapter argued that electoral performance of any party is determined by vote choices. The literature studied showed that vote choices are ultimately affected by psychological, sociological, economical and ideological influences. As will be seen in my findings the approach used by Popkin appears to be the most useful for understanding the responses given by the participants interviewed for this research. The next chapter will focus on the South African context and determine if there is a definite correlation between the literature studied in this chapter and what is currently happening in South Africa in terms of electoral choices and party performance at the polls.

Chapter Three: The South African Political Context

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief political history and the electoral performance of the ANC, DA, ACDP and COPE since the inception of democracy in 1994. The ANC is examined because of the critical role it has played in South Africa's political landscape while the other three political parties are explored as they are an integral part of the study. The chapter also explores the implications (positive and negative) of one-party domination for South Africa's democracy. In addition, the chapter presents the electoral trends of the 2011 election vis-à-vis the performance of opposition parties that participated in this election but failed to make significant electoral gains. Last but not the least; the chapter explores the 2011 voter migration from small parties to the DA. In particular, the chapter focuses on the election campaign rhetoric and strategies that the DA used to attract votes from small opposition parties.



3.2 Political parties in South Africa

3.2.1 The African National Congress

The ANC which was initially named the South African Native National Congress was formed as a liberation movement in 1912. It led the resistance to apartheid and was a key player in the transition from apartheid to a democracy (Hendricks, 2005, p. 70). In the pre-democratic era the ANC's goal was to liberate South Africans from apartheid rule. According to Deegan (1999, p. 40) the ANC perceived itself as a liberation movement with a historical mission to "unite all the people of South Africa, Africans in particular, for the complete liberation of the country from all forms of discrimination and national oppression". Therefore, the party is the only party that represents the black majority in South Africa since 1994. According to Lijphart, the party's most loyal and emotionally committed voters are poor, rural and black. The ANC also enjoys overwhelming support from black people in townships around the country (Lijphart, 1998, p. 148). Lijphart argues that opposition parties find it hard to compete with the ANC's long history of existence. Most opposition parties have also failed to

fashion policies that resonate with the view of the majority of black citizens. Hence the ANC has become increasingly popular among South African voters at the expense of the opposition parties.

The ANC won all four national democratic elections by overwhelming majorities. It received 63 percent of the votes in 1994 while in 1999 the party increased its majority to 66 percent; and in 2004 the ANC secured 70 percent of the national vote (Southall, 2005, p. 62). Despite the drop to 65.9 percent in the 2009 elections, the ANC still holds a dominant position in South African politics. Much of the ANC's electoral successes are due to the party's long history as a liberation movement and also the party's historical alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP).²⁶ These two organisations are instrumental in delivering worker support to the ANC (Hendricks, 2005, p. 70) and have been a strong electoral support base for the ANC since 1994.



3.2.1.1 The ANC and internal opposition

Both COSATU and the SACP have been centres of 'internal opposition' between elections, serving almost as a 'non-electoral' opposition to the ANC (Booyesen, 1999; 2009). These alliance partners have openly demonstrated their refusal to conform to the ANC's neo-liberal economic policies since 1996 (Brooks, 2004; Lodge, 1999). COSATU and the SACP have articulated alternative views on government policies, and have to some extent ensured public accountability. In this vein, internal opposition within the broad alliance does create political spaces for dissenting voters to government policies and programmes (Prudhomme, 2004, p. 32). Furthermore, there are strong civil society organisations in South Africa that also present alternative views and ensure public accountability. As Friedman (in Prudhomme, 2004, p. 33)

²⁶ The 'tripartite' alliance between the ANC, SACP and Cosatu was formally constituted in 1990, though, of course, the SACP's association with the ANC was much older, and Cosatu had aligned itself politically with the ANC at the time of its adoption of the Freedom Charter 1986 (Lodge, 1999, p. 7).

argues, these organisations act as an alternative form of opposition, providing oversight at the state relations level.²⁷

The foregoing begs the question whether South Africa needs viable alternatives to the governing party if internal opposition exists within its ranks. However, as stated in Chapter One, political (opposition) parties are needed to effectively represent and advocate the diverse political views of citizens. Hence, strong and viable opposition parties are an important and crucial feature of any democracy. Furthermore, internal opposition is not always sufficient for sustaining multiparty democracy. In a democratic system such as South Africa, citizens vote for a political party and not civil society organisations at the polls. COSATU is not a political party and, hence it cannot be perceived as an ‘opposition party’ or ‘alternative government’.

The SACP, on the other hand, benefits from its alliance with the ruling party and its leading members occupy their parliamentary seats thanks to this alliance. As Daniel, Habib and Southall (2007, p. 61) have indicated, although the Alliance is formally a partnership, the ANC is the leading element. They explain that the SACP remains a separate political party, yet it has no autonomous public representation; those of its members who sit in parliament do so as ANC members of parliament (Daniel *et al*, 2003). Likewise, a significant number of COSATU federation and union officials have been elected into parliament under the ANC auspices, at the cost of withdrawing from full-time trade union work. This also explains why COSATU, SACP and their followers unite behind the ANC against opposition parties during election times.

Hence, the SACP and COSATU cannot play an effective oppositional role in general. The SACP, for instance, will not do so unless and until it withdraws from the Alliance and starts campaigning for votes on its own (Moses, 2012, p. 4). A possible break-up between the alliance partners, some argue, is the most likely way that South Africa will move away from a dominant party system. COSATU and SACP members would no longer feel ‘obliged’ to vote

²⁷ Non-governmental organisations (NGOs such as the Landless Peoples Movement and Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) are only two examples of organisations that have been an alternative voice in public debates.

for the ANC and a new party might even emerge from the split. As Hendricks (2005, p. 73) states: “political pundits argue that a viable opposition can only emerge from within the ranks of the ANC”. Similarly, Butler expresses the opinion that “a split in the ruling alliance, and the desertion of its followers in large numbers, appeared to be necessary conditions for an alternative government” (Butler, 2009, p. 2).

Although there have been tensions between the Alliance partners, for the moment the Alliance remains in place and there is every indication that it will do so for the forthcoming elections (Daniel *et al*, 2003; Hendricks, 2005; Southall, 2009). The break-up thus is very unlikely. This means that the ANC’s political dominance is set to continue for some time, unless opposition parties significantly make electoral inroads in traditional ANC constituencies. The following subsection discusses the concept of one-party dominance in South Africa’s democracy.



3.2.1.2 The ANC and one-party dominance

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the notion of a dominant party refers to a political party that has successively won elections and whose electoral defeat cannot be envisaged or is unlikely for the foreseeable future. The debate whether the ANC should be characterized as a ‘dominant party’ became a major focus to the lead up to the 2004 general elections. By 2004, the ANC had won three successive elections with a large majority of the votes. Opposition parties, on the other hand, had been struggling to maintain or increase their support at the polls. After the 1994 election, opposition parties represented in the National Assembly had combined strength of 37 percent. In 1999, this fell to 34 percent and in 2004 it was at 30 percent (Prudhomme, 2004, p. 41). It is for this reason that Matlosa (2010, p. 2) claims that the South African political system has evolved into a dominant party system in which the ANC has emerged as the ruling party under conditions of an “enfeebled and fragmented opposition”.

The following table illustrates how dominant the ANC has been over other well-established parties contesting national elections.

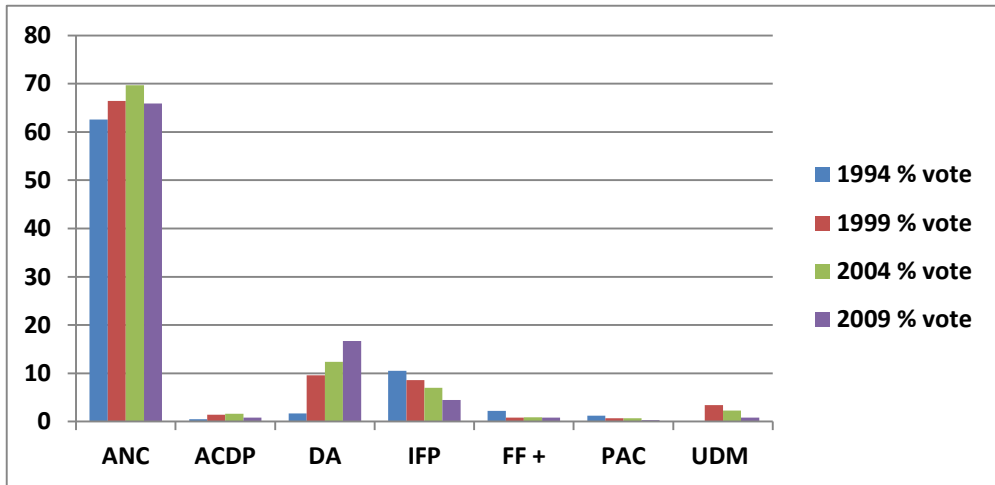


Table 2: Political parties' performance in four elections at national level

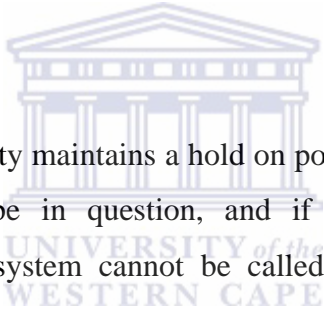
Data retrieved from: www.elections.org

The figures clearly show that the ANC is a dominant party nationally given the trends in voting patterns since. The same pattern occurs at the local level. Since the first local election that was held in 1995, the ANC has performed strongly at the polls. The IEC reported that “[t]he African National Congress achieved a comfortable victory, winning 63.65 percent of the votes and 5633 council seats nationally”. Due to the election outcome, the ANC governs 198 municipalities and eight of the nine provinces in South Africa (Keegan, 2011, p.5).

In view of the above, numerous scholars have expressed their concerns about the implications of one-party dominance in a democracy such as South Africa. Prominent exponents of the ‘party dominance theory’ in South Africa, Giliomee and Simkins state that the very essence of democracy is at risk (Giliomee, 2004; Giliomee and Simkins, 1999).²⁸ In their analysis, Giliomee and Simkins observe that fundamental tension exists between a dominant party rule and democracy and argue that one-party domination is likely to close down opposition parties and, in effect, transform democracy into an elective dictatorship. This was also the view of Przeworski and Limongi (1999, pp. 155-183) who argued that the absence of a change in government in democracies can lead to authoritarianism.

²⁸ Giliomee and Simkins have been critical writers about dominant party systems in a democracy. They have examined dominant party regimes in new democracies in the developing world such as Mexico, Taiwan, Malaysia, and South Africa.

In addition, it has been observed that one-party dominance can hold long term challenges for the democratic health of any country. As Southall argues, the absence of powerful opposition specifies the hollowness of South Africa's democracy (2003, pp. 53-78) while Sylvester (2009, p. 1) states that "democracy cannot be said to be strong until there has been a change in the ruling party". Consequently, both scholars have questioned how the South African electorate can hold the government accountable without a strong opposition. They point to the fact that if there is no credible threat to the government at the polls, it makes it easier for the incumbent to abuse their political power. Additionally, Suttner (2004, n.p.) argues that democracy without turnover is at best fragile and untested, and at worst, it is not really a democracy at all (see also Ferim, 2013). This is also the viewpoint of Huntington (1991), a democratic theorist, who claims that the necessity of a potential changeover in power in the foreseeable future is the ultimate test of democracy (see also Southall, 2005; 2009). Other critical voices of the dominant party system such as Murphy and Blair put forward a similar argument:



If one group or party maintains a hold on power for a long time, the quality of democracy may be in question, and if one group maintains this hold permanently, the system cannot be called democratic (Murphy and Blair, 2006).

Furthermore, some dominant parties find it increasingly difficult to distinguish between party interest and state interest. Without rotation in political office, some dominant parties can become ideologically entrenched which can result in political instability over time. Butler (2009, p. 6) adds that a dominant party such as the ANC can successfully 'deploy' party members to key institutions and call upon their loyalty to ensure that those institutions are not used to damage the interest of the party.²⁹ A dominant party can therefore hold many negative implications for democracy and democratic accountability.

²⁹ Butler specifically made reference to the South African Broadcast Commission, the Public Protector and a range of parastatals that have all been accused of adopting partisan positions that favour the ANC (Butler, 2009, p. 6). The ANC's strategy cadre deployment has thus raised concerns that the ANC could use state institutions as a means of patronage and control.

Nevertheless, not all scholars share the pessimistic view that one-party dominance is bad for democracy. For instance, Matlosa and Karume (2004, p. 14) argue that political dominance, in most African countries, is won through democratic means such as competitive elections. In this regard, the ANC's dominance may not be viewed in the same way as authoritarianism as it has achieved its electoral victories based on voting consensus (Butler, 2004; Brooks, 2004). Moreover, Cachalia (1999) observes that the ANC is in power because of its ability to convince the majority of the electorate to vote for the party rather than inheriting it. She further claims that "the ANC's dominance is the result of successful contestation, not the absence of it" (Cachalia, 1999, n.p.). Therefore, one-party domination cannot be viewed as 'undemocratic' or 'illegitimate' if the incumbent party won elections through a democratic process of free and fair elections.

Besides, Butler argues that the dominance of the ANC might be a necessary, temporary condition for state stability and reconstruction considering the legacy left by the Apartheid regime. Butler adds that the ANC has helped to contain conflict and to defuse racial or ethnic polarisation in South Africa (Butler, 2009 p. 4). This fact has also been observed by Kurame who indicate that one-party dominance serves well when there is a need to promote national reconciliation after oppressive systems such as Apartheid (Kurame, 2004, p. 8).³⁰ It is also suggested that one-party dominance can offer political, economic and social stability to a country. A dominant party is a much better stabilizing source than fragmented opposition parties (Arian and Barnes, 1974, p. 593).

Consequently, this dissertation does not assume that one-party dominance is necessarily bad for South Africa's democracy, but does recognise the fact that it can be dangerous for the sustainability of a multiparty democracy in many ways. As previously indicated, under a dominant party rule political representation is usually concentrated in the hands of a narrow majority. Members of the government can pass legislation and make policy choices that they like and think is necessary without the consent of opposition parties. Hence supporters of opposition parties, especially the smaller ones, might feel "ruled out" of the policy process under a dominant party system (Matshiqi, 2009, p. 4). For example, most South African

³⁰ Many view the dominance of the ANC as positive as it is an indication that the black majority is actively participating elections and not alienated from political processes (Prudhomme, 2004, pp. 35 - 36).

opposition parties, as well as civil society groups, were against the Protection of State Information Bill (POSIB). However, the governing party voted in favour of this Bill regardless of public outcries.³¹

Therefore, the key argument is that a dominant party system may progressively close down opposition politics in South Africa. Multipartyism would be negatively affected as most political parties would not see the need to participate in the political system. Also, poor performance of opposition parties can lead to the incumbent government being irresponsible to the needs of citizens, less accountable, and more importantly, prone to misusing and abusing government resources. Thus, and like most multiparty democracies, South Africa cannot afford to further entrench and deepen the domination of one party.³² It is evident that strong and highly competitive opposition parties are essential to check transgression towards authoritarian tendencies and the abuse of power by the incumbency.



3.2.2 The Democratic Alliance

The DA has been the second largest party in the National Assembly from 1999. The party belongs to the liberal tradition in South African politics represented during the apartheid era by the Progressive Party (PP)³³ which later became the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) in 1977 (Lodge and Scheidegger, 2005; Southern, 2011). Following the amalgamation with other liberal parties and splinter groups,³⁴ the PFP changed its name to Democratic Party (DP) in 1989. In 1999 the DP announced that they would form an alliance with the New National Party (NNP) and changed its name to the Democratic Alliance (DA) with the aim of building a political party that would effectively challenge the ANC for political power. Southern (2011, p. 282) noted that “the NNP was the National Party (NP) of the apartheid

³¹ The Bill has given rise to the Right2Know campaign, an array of civil society organisations, supported by Cosatu and opposition parties, who have joined forces in opposition this legislation (De Jager and Meintjies, 2013, p. 16).

³² Over the years, the governing party has received much criticism for failing to deliver for the poor, over-spending state resources and for corrupt activities. In local elections, poor communities have demonstrated their anger towards the incumbent party for not addressing economic and social inequalities.

³³ The Progressive Party (PP) was found in 1959 which for many years had Helen Suzman as its sole representative in Parliament.

³⁴ The DP was an amalgamation of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), Independent Party, the National Democratic Movement, and a so-called ‘fourth force’ of disillusioned Afrikaners (Kotze,

era, which added the word 'New' in 1997 in attempt to dispense with its racist history". However, the NNP later ended its alliance with the DA and formed a new alliance with the ANC in 2004.³⁵ The DA decided to retain their name even though the original alliance partner shifted allegiance (Hendricks, 2005, p. 74). The break-up between the DA and NNP was expected to harm the electoral support of the DA in future elections. It was assumed that when the NNP leaders defected from the DA that NNP supporters would also leave the DA. Yet, the split was not disadvantageous to the DA whose support has steadily increased among voters.

Over the subsequent decade the DA has gained support across all racial groups. It won over many African, Indian and Coloured (mixed-race) votes. These racial groups constitute almost half of the DA's support base (Johnson, 2012, p. 13). The DA is also favourable among the white electorate over its main rival, the Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). According to Southern (2011, p. 284), Afrikaner voters shifted to the DA rather than the FF Plus because of the realisation that in order to have a real stake in South Africa they would need to be part of a potential majority. Additionally, the DA has increased its support in the Western Cape and Northern Cape Province, especially in the Coloured communities which many other parties have failed to achieve (Southern, 2011, pp. 284 -285).

The electoral support of the DA has risen considerably since the first democratic election. From a staggeringly poor 1.7 percent in 1994 election, the party improved its position to 12.4 percent and 50 seats in the National Assembly in 2004. The DA took 16.7 percent of the national vote in the 2009 elections and obtained 67 representative seats in the National Assembly. At the provincial level, the DA grew in eight of the nine provinces, increasing its total numbers of provincial seats from 51 in 2004 to 65 in 2009. From the 65 seats in 2009, the DA secured 22 (51.5 percent) of the provincial seats in the Western Cape; 16 seats (21.9 percent) in the Gauteng province; 7 seats (9.2 percent) in the KwaZulu Natal province; and 6 seats (9.9 percent) in the Eastern Cape. The DA benefited provincially from "split voting" in the Western Cape. Considerable numbers of voters who voted for other parties nationally, voted for the DA provincially (Daniel and Southall, 2009, p. 268). The principal victims of

³⁵ According to Lodge (2002), the merger between the NNP and DP was never institutionalized and by November 2001 the alliance had sprung apart primarily due to former NNP office holders' dissatisfaction with the leadership of Tony Leon.

this phenomenon were COPE and the ACDP whose provincial votes were 17 and 12 percent lower than their national hauls from the Western Cape, respectively.

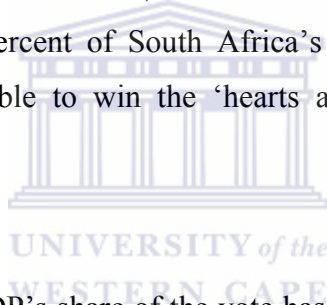
There were many factors that contributed to the electoral growth of the DA. A critical phase which actually propelled the party into the national limelight was when the party became the official opposition in 1999 during its “Fight Back Campaign. This election campaign was spearheaded by Tony Leon. Another key factor that contributed to the DA’s electoral gains was their revamping of the party’s corporate image in 2008. According to Jolobe, the DA realised they needed a new energy, a new vision and more importantly, a new outlook that would attract African voters (Jolobe, 2009, p. 135). The goal was to market itself as a modern, forward looking party that had no reservations about being non-racial. According to Southern (2011, p. 287), the timing was important for the DA; launching the image a year before the 2009 elections allowed it time to sink into the imaginations of South Africans.³⁶

During the reinvention of the party, Helen Zille was elected as party leader to transform the party’s image as a white minority party and recreate a non-racial, centralist alternative to the ANC (Jolobe, 2009, p. 138). Under the leadership of Helen Zille, the DA seemed to have convinced some voters of the party’s message of non-racialism. In terms of language policy, the party gives recognition to the eleven official languages in South Africa (Southern, 2011, p. 287). This inclusive image of the DA has helped the party to represent itself as a party that is committed to racial representation. Secondly, Schulz-Herzenberg (SABC Online, May 16, 2011) talks about the DA’s merger with the Independent Democrats (ID) in August 2010. This merger not only attracted potential new supporters, but it also provided the DA with a viable mayoral candidate in Patricia De Lille for the 2011 election. As a former trade unionist and a long standing national politician, De Lille has built credibility among the electorate. De Lille is predominantly known for her role against corruption and in the investigation into the arms deal in 1999. Given this fact, there was a general perception that the DA’s electoral advances were a result of the merger. Indeed, this perception was not entirely incorrect. For example, of the 12 wards the ID lost in by-elections after the 2011 local election, nine were won by the DA in the 2011 local election (Dhawraj, 2012, p. 325).

³⁶ The year also saw the launch of COPE, which was expected to be a major challenger for the votes of disillusioned ANC supporters (Southern, 2011, p. 287). Hence, the reinvention of the party was the central pillar going into the 2009 general elections (Jolobe, 2012, p. 136).

3.2.3 African Christian Democratic Party

The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) was formed in December 1993 in the run-up to the 1994 elections. The ACDP embraces a Christian oriented democracy and is socially conservative. The party stands for what it calls ‘godly principles’ (Sithole, 2014, p. 2). The party’s aim is to infuse Christian principles and values into the state decision-making process. For instance, the ACDP is woven around calls for the reintroduction of the death penalty, opposition to abortion, and wants to get rid of homosexual acts and gay marriages. The ACDP was the only South African party that voted against the final Constitution of 1996, on the basis that the document embraced too many anti-Christian values. Consequently, the party’s appeal is strongly grounded in Christianity as the ACDP’s messages are mainly aimed at voters who want to preserve morality and protect the integrity of the family structure. Thus, the party displays a political agenda that emphasises the need of moral restoration, especially in terms of crimes such as murder, violence and rape. Despite having a potentially large constituency (almost 80 percent of South Africa’s population follows the Christian faith), the ACDP has been unable to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the South African electorate.



Like other small parties, the ACDP’s share of the vote has declined dramatically since 1994. For instance, in 1994, the ACDP won 0.45 percent of the national vote and secured two representative seats in the National Assembly. Many critics believed that the party would lose one of the two seats in Parliament in the 1999 general elections. Despite such belief, the ACDP managed to double its support to 1.43 percent in 1999 and secured 6 seats in the National Assembly. Provincially, the ACDP won 4 seats in 1999 (1 in Gauteng; 1 in KwaZulu Natal; 1 in Limpopo; and 1 seat in the Western Cape) which equates to 1.38 percent of the provincial vote. In the 2004 elections, the ACDP won 1.60 percent of the national votes and obtained seven seats. The ACDP thus became one of the largest parties in Parliament. The ACDP also did well at the provincial level, increasing its total number of provincial seats from 4 to 8 in this election. Two seats were captured in both the Western Cape Province and in the KwaZulu Natal Province. The ACDP also captured one seat each in the Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo and Northern Cape. However, the 2009 elections witnessed a sharp decline in support, nationally and provincially. The ACDP only managed to receive 0.81 percent of the vote and the number of seats dropped to 3 in the National Assembly. At

provincial level, the ACDP's performance looked very bleak in the year 2009. This was evidenced by the party only securing 2 representative seats; one seat in the KwaZulu Natal Province and one seat in the Western Cape Legislature.

At the local level the ACDP has also seen a steady decline. For example, in the first local government elections in 1995, the ACDP only contested in a few of the municipalities and won three seats. From 1995 to 1999, four councillors from other political parties crossed the floor to join the ACDP and the party saw an increase from seven councillors to more than 70 nationally in the 2000 local elections.

3.2.4 Congress of the People

One of the most significant political occurrences in post-apartheid South African politics has been the formation of the Congress of the People (COPE). After Mbeki's resignation as state president, Mosiuoa Lekota and other Mbeki allies formed a new opposition party, which was registered as the Congress of the People in December 2008.³⁷ COPE was formed by breakaway ANC members who were dissatisfied with the organisation's decision to 'recall' the then-President Thabo Mbeki in September 2008 and replace him with Kgalema Motlanthe (Freedom House Report, 2010, p. 2).³⁸ COPE is the third party to emerge from the ANC over the years. Arguably, the dominant interpretation of the party's origin is that it is a fragment of the ANC in the same tradition as the previous split or breakaway such as the Pan African Congress (PAC). According to Booysen (2009, p. 85), the formation of COPE was an externalization of internal political differences in the ANC in the multi-party domain. Prominent founding members of the party included the former Gauteng Premier Mbhazima Shilowa, former Congress of South African Trade Unions president Willie Madisha, and Barney Pityana, the vice-chancellor and principal of the University of South Africa. During the run-up to the 2009 elections, it was expected that the emergence of COPE would erode the political dominance of the ANC (Southall, 2009; Booysen, 2009). In this vein, Southall

³⁷ It can be argued that Lekota was the "driving force" behind the formation COPE. For example, Lekota was the first ANC leader who made the famous public statement that "they were going to serve divorce papers on the ANC" (Hamlyn, 2008).

³⁸ For many, COPE is primarily an anti-Zuma formation and the potential political home for 40 percent in the ANC who had supported Mbeki at the 52th National Conference in Polokwane.

(2009, p. 45) notes that newcomers like COPE, which may be perceived as more inclusive, are likely to benefit from the failures of government.

COPE performed significantly well in its first election and won 7.42 percent of the national vote and obtained 30 representative seats in the National Assembly. At the provincial level, the party received 7.3 percent and thus obtained 36 seats. The ultimate goal for COPE was to peg back the ANC's majority and to replace the DA as the official opposition party in the 2009 election (Daniel *et al*, 2009, p. 262). Although the party was unable to beat the DA for official opposition status in the National Assembly, COPE managed to attain official opposition status in several provinces like the Free State (4 seats), Eastern Cape (9 seats), North West Province (3 seats), Northern Cape Province (5 seats) and Limpopo (4 seats). The DA obtained fewer seats than COPE in these provinces in 2009.

According to Kotze many of COPE's support came from former DA, UDM and ID supporters, while other supporters had their origin in the ANC (Kotze, 2012, p. 176). This was quite significant for a party that was formed five months prior to the 2009 elections. Before the 2009 elections, Ndletyana (2009, p. 2) described COPE as a centre-right movement, implying that its support base would be Mbeki supporters, middle class professionals, and business people that are inclined towards a free market economic approach. Likewise, Southall had the view that COPE had a greater appeal amongst "the relatively well-off than amongst the poor" (Southall, (2009, p. 183). However, it was found that most of COPE's supporters in the 2009 elections came from urban and metropolitan communities that were unemployed, poor and socio-economically marginalised, and who felt neglected by the ANC government (Booyesen, 2009; Booyesen; 2010).

In 2011, COPE contested in its first local government election. The party's election manifesto became electronically available in the middle of March 2011 (Kotze, 2012, p. 178). The manifesto focussed on service delivery, crime, combating corruption, and better job creation. However, the manifesto received little attention during the party's election campaign. In support of this, Kotze writes, "in the absence of an efficiently managed election campaign and use of the public media most of the messages in the manifesto never reached the electorate" (Kotze, 2012, p. 179). The party relied mainly on door-to-door campaigning to

communicate with voters (Kalipa, 2011) and hence each campaigner used his or her own understanding of COPE's political message.

More seriously, several controversies have blown up in COPE's face since its establishment. A few months before the 2011 elections, the party struggled with infighting and power struggles. References were made in public to the 'COPE's Shilowa faction' and the 'COPE's Lekota faction'.³⁹ The two factions and the ongoing internal turmoil resulted in a significant drop in the party's support base. According to Kotze, COPE lost five percent of votes since the 2009 elections and the electoral support losses were split between the ANC and DA (Kotze, 2012, p. 184).

3.3 Electoral Trends: the case of Local Government Elections of 2011

On 18 May 2011, the fourth local government election took place in South Africa. As previously indicated, there has been a significant increase in the number of opposition parties participating at the local level. However, none of them (with the exception of the DA) made significant inroads into the larger voting bloc. The final results of the 2011 election indicated that the ANC and the DA are the two leading parties with the IFP in third place followed by the COPE in a distant fourth. In this election, most of the opposition parties' support drastically declined. None of the smaller opposition parties such as the ACDP, UDM, PAC and MF won more than 1 percent of the ballot. Other parties such as the FF Plus, African People's Convention (APC), Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP) also obtained less than 1 percent of the municipal votes.

The most significant outcome for the opposition in the 2011 elections was the increasing popularity of the DA. For the first time since the advent of democracy in South Africa, the ANC faced a serious challenge in more than one major metropolitan area. The DA, which has governed the City of Cape Town for the past five years, challenged the ANC in Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay. The DA projected itself as the main alternative to the ANC, emphasising that the party has been in power since 2006 (coalition government in City of

³⁹ Timeslive, 29 March 2011. Shilowa's COPE faction won't contest local elections.

Cape Town) and won the Western Cape Province in 2009. In the same way, the DA encouraged voters to compare the delivery of services in the areas controlled by the DA to areas where the ANC were in majority (Böhler, 2011, p. 60). The DA had the advantage this time because four surveys have confirmed that the City of Cape Town is the best city in the country in terms of service delivery (Böhler, 2012, pp. 59-60). The DA used the results of the surveys conducted to show voters that they are ready to govern more municipalities across the country. The primary theme used by the DA was “We deliver for all”. This theme communicated the message to voters that the party’s top priority was about providing basic services for all, especially the poor. This campaign was largely nationally driven and received a higher level of media coverage compared to previous elections. According to Schulz-Herzenberg (SABC News Online, May 16, 2011), the DA showcased their capacity for service delivery by emphasising their accomplishments in the Cape Town Metro. The DA’s campaign was launched at a time where many voters were disappointed with the lack of service delivery by the ruling party. As a result, the DA used its 2011 campaign to profit from citizens who were, and maybe still are, frustrated with the performance and governance of the ANC.



It was also noted that the party’s election campaign included tactics (once the exclusive preserve of the ruling party), such as rallies, songs and toyi-toying. Matshiqi (Business Day, 16 May 2011) wrote that Helen Zille led her supporters in the toyi-toyi and singing of struggle songs, followed by shouts of viva!

The DA has remained weak to attract black-African voters from traditional ANC constituencies. For instance Jolobe (2012, p. 136) states:

...while the party was able to increase its share of the vote in coloured majority communities, making inroads into ANC constituencies in these areas, it was not able to attract the black-African vote.

The DA’s challenge in the 2011 elections was to break this pattern, in other words, their task was to increase the party’s levels of support in black-African communities that had been loyal to the ANC (Jolobe, 2012, p. 137). During this period, the party continued to work hard to

create a new image for itself. In an attempt to attract more African votes, Zille spoke isiXhosa fluently during her campaign speeches (Matshiqi, 2011). The party used Helen Zille, Patricia De Lille and Lindiwe Mazibuko as the party's public faces; the idea being to create an image of the DA as a political home for all races.⁴⁰

The DA's election campaign for this particular election was reasonably successful. In previous years, the DA was criticized for concentrating too much of their efforts on negative campaigning. Sylvester (2009) states, "the content of the DA's previous election campaigns has often been characterized by negative tones and personalized attacks". However, the content of the 2011 campaign was more positive and the party refrained from direct attacks on its rivals, concentrating instead on issues that would be of most concern to the voting public. The DA specifically concentrated on the African communities to increase the party's share of African votes.

Moreover, the party also campaigned using the legacy of struggle stalwarts such as former president Nelson Mandela. For instance, at their final rally at the OR Tambo Hall in Khayelitsha, Zille claimed that the DA were the real guardians of Mandela's legacy; namely reconciliation between races (Zille, 2011; Böhler, 2011; Jolobe, 2012). Other parties, especially the ANC, were taken by surprise by the DA's local government election campaign. Newspapers such as the Cape Argus reported that the DA's 2011 election campaign "outflanked" the ruling party. COSATU stated that "[t]he movement simply did not know how to respond to the DA's campaign. The ANC did not come up with a co-ordinated offensive response against the Democratic Alliance's campaign" (Du Plessis, 2011).⁴¹ For this reason, the DA won 21.97 percent compared to the 16.32 percent that they won in 2009 and the 14.7 percent in 2006. As pointed out in the introductory chapter, the party's support increased with more than 7 percent in this particular election. Overall, the DA won control of eighteen municipalities against the five it controlled prior to the 2011 elections.

⁴⁰ Based on the principles outlined in the strategy paper "Becoming a party for All the People: A new Approach for the DA".

⁴¹ Du Plessis reported in the Cape Argus that "for the first time in recent years the ANC attracted less than two-thirds of the vote, with 63 percent" (Cape Argus, June 28, 2011).

In the meantime, other political parties experienced the worst of results in the 2011 election. For example, the IFP won only 3.94 percent of the votes compared to the 7.56 percent in 2006. The IFP lost many of its supporters to the newly formed National Freedom Party (NFP). The NFP primarily arose because many people were unhappy with the style of leadership that had dominated the IFP since its establishment (Scherer, 2012). Former IFP supporters felt that the IFP leadership was out of touch with the changes materialising on the grassroots level of the party. This motivated the realignment of voters to the NFP. Despite being only three months old at the time of the 2011 elections, the NFP managed to receive 2.58 percent of the votes cast. The high competition between both parties has led to political rivalries between members of both parties which has not always been peaceful (Scherer, 2013). This potentially disadvantages both parties in the future which might impact on their support base.

It is clear that the 2011 local election was the worst for most opposition parties as they all had lost some support across the board. For example, the ACDP and PAC lost more than 50 000 votes since the 2006 local government elections (see table below). They only managed to win 0.63 and 0.44 percent of the votes in 2011. Due to the ACDP's decline in the votes cast in its favour, the party lost 46 municipal council seats in this election (Keegan, 2011, p. 3). Apart from the IFP, COPE, ACDP and PAC, other opposition parties either saw a decline in their votes or stagnated below 1 percent. The UDM, led by former ANC member Bantu Holomisa, received 0.68 percent of the total vote compared to 1.3 percent in 2006. The UDM thus lost 44 424 votes and lost 40 of its 97 councillors in this election (Keegan, 2011, p. 3).

Also, the UCDP which was founded by Lucas Mangope, the president of the former Bophuthatswana homeland, took 0.7 percent of the vote in 2006 but only managed to receive 0.2 percent of the vote in 2011. According to Keegan (2011, p. 3), the UCDP's support declined with 36 488 votes. FF Plus faced the same fate as it went from 1 percent (94 140 votes) in 2006 to 0.40 percent (53 931 votes) in 2011.

Party	2006		2011		Increase/Decrease	
	Total Votes	%	Total Votes	%	Total Votes	% points
ACDP	128 990	1.31%	78 737	0.59%	-50 253	-0.72%
AZAPO	30 321	0.31%	26 300	0.20%	- 4 021	-0.11%
PAC	109 816	1.11%	54 846	0.41%	- 54 970	-0.70%
MF	42 530	0.43%	53 042	0.40%	10 512	-0.03%
UDM	129 047	1.31%	84 623	0.63%	- 44 424	-0.68%
UCDP	62 459	0.63%	25 971	0.19%	-36 488	-0.44%
FF+	94 140	0.96%	53 931	0.40%	-40 209	-0.56%

Source: Keegan (2011, p. 3)

Table 3: Change in party support between 2006 and 2011 local elections on PR ballot

Against this background, it is evident that most opposition parties have been experiencing dwindling electoral support since 2006. Therefore, after the 2011 elections, questions have asked whether such results mark the end of small opposition parties. Some have argued that despite significant losses, small opposition parties still play an important role in a democracy as they provide legitimate political representation for some minority groups. Consequently, several reasons have been formulated to explain the loss in support for opposition parties.

3.4 Underlying reasons for the poor performance of South African opposition parties

The fate of opposition parties hinges on their capacity to attract and reproduce electoral support. Support for parties can be extended, withdrawn or even transferred. In this regard, the continuity of parties is not always assured. This section focuses on the potential reasons for the dwindling ability of opposition parties to attract support. It highlights some of the reasons emerging from the study that explain South African opposition parties' failure to win political power. These include: insufficient funding from the state and private donors, failure to propose policy alternatives, lack of media coverage, racial and ethnic voting loyalties as well as having no track record in government.

3.4.1 Political party funding

As mentioned in Chapter Two, funding for political parties is critical for the functioning of democracy. As a commitment to furthering multiparty democracy, the South African Constitution of 1996 (section 236) makes provision for funding by the state for political parties that participate in the National Assembly and provincial legislatures. The Constitution reads in part: “[t]o enhance multiparty democracy, national legislation must provide for the funding of political parties participating in national and provincial legislatures on an equitable and proportional basis”. The Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act 103 of 1997 was enacted by Parliament to regulate state funding of political parties. The Act determines that funds are to be allocated according to a formula that takes into account the proportion of members a party has in the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures and a minimum threshold amount to ensure equity. The Regulations (1998, 3) explains this as follows: 90 percent of the allocation of the financial year is paid in proportion to each party’s aggregate seat representation in the sum of the seats of the National Assembly and provincial legislatures. The remaining 10 percent is divided among the provinces proportionately to the number of seats in each province, and the provincial allocations are divided equally among the parties in each legislature (Regulations (1998, 4). In simple terms, this means that the bigger share of the public funding goes to the parties with the larger representation in the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures.

The aforementioned formula (90 percent proportional and 10 percent equitable) has remained a challenge for political parties, especially for the smaller ones. This is particularly so because parties that are not represented in the National Assembly or in the provincial legislatures do not qualify for public funding.⁴² As Matlosa notes: “no allocations are made from the fund to political parties which are represented in municipal councils only and, nor to those which have no public representatives at all” (2008, p. 28). In this regard, some parties have argued that the current public funding arrangement is unfair towards newly established parties that wish to contest elections but do not have the money to do so. According to Pottie (2004, p. 163), in March 1999, several of these parties voiced their objections and called for the implementation of a public funding system to all political parties without a binding

⁴² This means that a newly formed party such as the Congress of the People (COPE) was excluded from receiving public funds in 2009. In order to qualify for state funding a party must have already had to be occupying seats in one of the legislatures.

condition of representation in Parliament. Interestingly though, despite the absence of public funding, six previously non-represented political parties gained seats in Parliament in 2004 and thus qualified for a share of the public funding in the next financial year (Pottie, 2004, p. 163).

In addition, concerns have been raised that the current formula benefits larger parties as larger parties receive the lion's share of the state's money. For example, because parties receive public funding in a strictly proportional manner, the ANC could receive up to R60 million and the DA R15 million, while smaller opposition parties stand to get only R2 million or less.⁴³ For Booyesen and Masterson (2009, p. 415), public funding has, therefore, helped to consolidate the dominance of the ANC at the expense of other political parties. They further point to the huge difference between the amounts of public money allocated to the ANC by comparison with the two largest opposition parties which in effect advantages one party over the other. For example, they state that "of the R88 million that the IEC distributed to parties in the 2009 financial year, R61 million went to the ANC, R10.5 million to the DA and R5.4 million to the IFP" (Booyesen and Masterson, 2009, p. 415). In other words, the ANC received about 5 and a half times as much of the taxpayer's money in 2009 as the next two parties combined (Booyesen and Masterson, 2009, p. 415).⁴⁴

To further illustrate how this allocation might perpetuate the dominance of larger parties, amounts from previous financial years were looked at. In 2005 the Political Parties Fund stood R74.1 million, with the ANC getting R49.3 million, the DA R9.3 million and the balance was divided between the 16 smaller parties represented in parliament and the provincial legislatures. According to Seedat (2009, p. 8) some argue that the current funding arrangement is perfectly fair and appropriate, since it has the effect of rewarding parties according to their legislative strength and therefore reinforces the democratically expressed will of the electorate.

⁴³ These amounts are reflected in the Represented Political Parties' Fund Annual Report 2010/2011

⁴⁴ Booyesen and Masterson (2009, p. 415) thus maintain that "[t]he ANC had become extremely well-resourced, also reaping benefits from beneficiaries of its period in government and investment and direct business interests, and other political parties found it hard to compete". The authors however have not given an alternative method for public funding to parties.

Similarly, Moses (2012, p. 3) felt that it is difficult to envisage a fairer method of allocating parties funds to parties, as South Africa already has numerous ‘one-person’ parties at national and provincial level.⁴⁵

Party	1999	2004	2009
ANC	R 30 897 681	R42 573 853	R 61 160 804
IFP	R 5 142 284	R 5 050 841	R 5 403 084
DP/DA	R 2 151 086	R 7 087 153	R 10 538 737
PAC ⁴⁶	R 887 938	R 610 995	-
ACDP	R 661 158	R 1 404 821	R 2 117 425
ID	N/A	R 270 276	R 1 249 562
MF	R 192 428	R 371 829	R 617 921

Table 4: Amounts allocated to political parties in 1999, 2004 and 2009 elections⁴⁷

In addition, Faull (2007, p. 68) explains that political parties with representation across a range of provinces receive a larger sum of the equitable component of the fund than parties with regional representation. In his analysis, Faull noted that in 2004, the ACDP received 30 percent more of the equity transfer than the Independent Democrats (ID). This is despite the fact that the ID won more votes than the ACDP in the national component of the election. Also, under this formula, parties with representation in the National Assembly but without any representation in the provinces (for example AZAPO after the 2004 elections) receive no money through the equity transfer.

Moreover, parties wishing to contest elections for the National Assembly and provincial legislatures have to pay a deposit in order to participate. For the 1994 election, this deposit was set at R25 000 for the National Assembly and R5 000 for each provincial legislature a party wished to contest. For the 1999 elections, the deposits were raised to R100 000 for the

⁴⁵ Moses further wrote “It is alleged that many of these parties only exist so that their one or two representatives can enjoy a healthy income as a Member of Parliament or Member of Provincial Legislature. If a minimum amount of public funds were allocated to all registered parties, regardless of their electoral success, how many more one-person parties might emerge?”

⁴⁶ Funding was suspended for the PAC during 2009/2010 due to failure to submit the audited financial statements.

⁴⁷ The table does not include all parties but merely provides examples.

National Assembly and R20 000 for each provincial election (Lodge, 1999, p. 27). The 2004 election saw an increase to R140 000 for the national elections and a deposit of R30 000 per province (EISA, 2004, p. 12). For the 2009 elections, parties contesting for the National Assembly had to pay a deposit of R180 000 while parties contesting for provincial legislatures paid R40 000 per province. From the aforementioned, it is clear that public funding alone is not sufficient for parties with low levels of representation in the National Assembly and provincial legislatures.

As pointed out in Chapter Two, many opposition parties rely on membership fees to carry out the party activities. However, membership fees are not sufficient enough to sustain the operations of a party. Matlosa (2008, p. 21) argues that membership subscriptions play an insignificant role as a source for funds. Likewise, Sadie (2006, p. 211) adds that the majority of South African parties do not have a broad based card-carrying membership which can serve as a source of financial income. She further notes that “approximately three to five percent of party supporters are card-carrying members (Sadie, 2006, p. 211). Additionally, in order to attract a large number of members possible, membership fees are kept low. Hence, membership fees cannot guarantee the survival of the party. For this reason parties tend to rely on funding from elsewhere especially the private sources.

Political parties can receive money from private donations. In this vein, political parties have often benefited from private sources of funding. According to Matlosa (2008, p. 30) individual political parties get financial support from companies mainly in the run-up to the elections to enable them to carry out their election campaigns. Hence, private funding allows parties to travel the country and get in touch with the electorate. Research conducted by Teshome further argues that private funding is necessary to counter the domination of the incumbents. In that sense, private funding enables opposition parties to become effective challengers to the ruling parties in their running of the country (Teshome, 2009, p. 293). Likewise, ruling parties need financing in order to effectively function in communities so as to consolidate their positions with the electorate. For both opposition and ruling parties private financing is, therefore, crucial for their day-to-day party activities, especially during their election campaigns.

However, it has been suggested that private donors are more likely to give financial support to larger parties than smaller ones for obvious reasons. For instance, they assume that smaller parties have limited power to influence government decision-making. UDM leader, Bantu Holomisa, indicated that the ruling party and the DA have access to big amounts of private funding compared to smaller parties. Holomisa noted that smaller parties do approach private companies and businesses for funding. Nevertheless, and in most cases, private companies fear that they may lose tenders and future government business deals if they give financial assistance to opposition parties. Holomisa further notes that the lack of financial resources makes it difficult for small parties to market their programmes, influence public discourse, and to ensure active participation of the citizenry in government programmes, and politics in general. The UDM president argues that “inadequate funds make it hard, if not impossible, for small parties to achieve their objectives” (Holomisa, 2012).⁴⁸

Although funding may be skewed in favour of the incumbent party, a lack of financial resources cannot be the sole reason why some opposition parties perform poorly during elections. Further analysis of opposition parties’ financial standing, reveals that it is not only funding that undermines their electoral performance (Makara, 2009, p. 59). Other factors are also influential. Africa and Van Rooyen have indicated that many opposition parties perform their best at the time when they have the least amount of resources. They state: “parties such as the UDM, ID and COPE performed their best in the election after they were formed, but received reduced support at the polls thereafter” (Africa and Van Rooyen, 2012, p. 203). Hence electoral success does not always depend on money but ultimately depends on the trust and hope of the electorate. Additionally, it can be argued that in most cases parties do have financial resources, but do not have the ability to deploy and distribute their finances successfully to achieve their electoral goals.

3.4.2 Failure to propose policy alternatives

South Africa’s national and local elections have involved highly-contested party campaigns and may have prompted a greater interest in opposition parties. However, it has been

⁴⁸ The UDM thus proposes a reform in the party funding model; 50% of the public funds should be distributed proportionally and 50% should be allocated equitably (CPLO roundtable discussion “Future of Smaller Opposition Parties” on 29 June 2012).

observed that many opposition parties are weak in terms of proposing alternative policies and developing a long term political vision for the country. For instance, Lanegran (2001, p. 83) claims that during the first five years after apartheid, South African opposition parties have failed to propose appealing policies as alternatives to the political agenda of the ANC.⁴⁹ Likewise, Sadie (2006, p. 217) argues that the ANC occupies the centre of the ideological spectrum and therefore, opposition parties find it difficult to present policies that are substantially different from those of the ruling party. Opposition parties therefore tend to adopt “a vague populism during elections, and pitch their campaigns around their opposition to corruption, services for the population in general, if vague, promises of a better future (van der Walle, 2003, p. 304).

A second observation made relates to the fact that opposition parties often campaign around the same issues, with little or no difference in their campaigns to distinguish their messages from one another. For instance, Olaleye (2003, p. 4) highlighted a growing trend among parties towards convergence in policies and ideologies. Olaleye argues that political parties sound similar and have very little substance beyond slogans and stated comments. As a result, political parties become less differentiated from each other and competition between parties is based on ethnic cleavages and personalities, instead of clear distinguishable policy platforms (Olaleye, 2003). This has made it somewhat difficult for voters to make informed choices as to who has the best public policies and programmes to address issues such as unemployment, education, housing, water, infrastructure, and so on. In this regard, opposition parties’ campaigns have not been very successful in assisting voters to discern which party would best represent their interests.

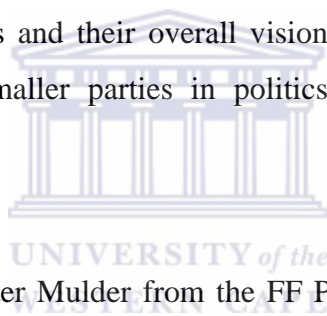
Most opposition parties seldom offer alternative policies to voters, but rather emphasize their ability to run the government ‘better’ than the incumbent party. As Africa and Van Rooyen (2012, p. 203) argue: “opposition parties tend to position a critique of the ANC as the centre of their campaign strategy... and this... permeates their campaigns”. Hence, a critique of government performance is unpersuasive to an electorate already cognisant of what the policy

⁴⁹ Most of the South African ideological spectrum is covered by the ANC and its alliance with Cosatu and the SACP. Opposition parties have been struggling to differentiate their policy preference from each other and from the ruling party (Langfield, 2010).

problems are (Africa and Van Rooyen, 2012). Opposition parties thus contribute to their own weakness in terms of presentation of alternative policies to the public.

3.4.3 The role of the media

The role of the media came under scrutiny with opposition parties calling for the regulation of the media during elections.⁵⁰ Many parties such as the ACDP, FF Plus and the UDM complained that they usually struggle to get media attention, especially during elections. For instance, ACDP's Western Cape Provincial Leader argued that during the 2011 local elections the media excluded smaller parties and bigger parties (such as ANC and DA) dominated the discussion (Haskin, 2012).⁵¹ Haskin further noted that 'sound bites' on the radio or television had time restrictions and hence, the work done by smaller parties was not adequately covered. Small parties do not necessarily have the time to reflect on their policies, their position on social problems and their overall vision. For Haskin, voters are not well informed about the work of smaller parties in politics in general, and government in particular (Haskin, 2012).



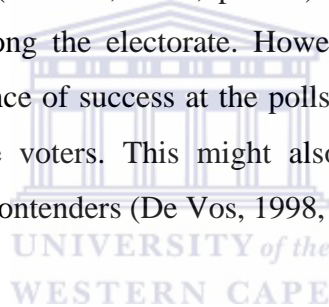
On the issue of print media, Pieter Mulder from the FF Plus asked the following question: "should the government (ANC) be allowed to spend millions of taxpayers' rands on publishing weekly reports on its successes, with full-page advertisements in the media, while opposition parties must buy advertising space with their own funds?" In this regard, Mulder notes that small parties are disadvantaged because they do not have money for paid media platforms and this could be a serious threat to democracy. Ultimately then, many would argue that media coverage, especially public media such as the SABC, should be equally divided among all political parties taking part in the election regardless of their potential strength. However, De Vos (1998, p. 267) notes that an allocation on equal basis would clash with the basic principles set out in South Africa's Constitution regarding the financing of political parties during an election; 90 percent proportional and 10 percent equitable.

⁵⁰ Previous analyses of the media's role in South Africa's elections have focused on the extent to which the coverage is fair to the spectrum of parties (Krüger, 2012. p. 235).

⁵¹ Haskin is a member of the ACDP and spoke at a presentation on the Future of Smaller Political Parties hosted by the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office, 29 June 2012.

Another side to this argument is that the extensive coverage given to the ANC and DA was not the result of media bias. To illustrate this point, Davis (2005, p. 247) argued that “disparities in public and private funding gave the ANC and DA an unrivalled ability to ensure a strong media presence in the run up to the elections”. Also, although the ANC and DA tend to receive most attention, this is explained by their position as main ruling party and opposition, respectively (Krüger, 2012, p. 235). However, the Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) highlighted that there was cause of concern around the extremely low coverage afforded to smaller parties. Hence, they argued, there is a need for equal participation and accessibility in the media environment for small parties (Bird, 2010, pp. 5-6).

Similarly, De Vos argue that in an ideal world (or democracy) special provision should be made for newly formed parties or small parties to obtain free access to media that might be disproportionate to its strength (De Vos, 1998, p. 265). This will in turn improve small parties’ profile and support among the electorate. However, this could be problematic if parties who have no serious chance of success at the polls inundate the media with political propaganda which may confuse voters. This might also dilute the effectiveness of the political speech of more serious contenders (De Vos, 1998, p. 276).



3.4.4 Racial and ethnic voting loyalties

Apartheid fostered strong racial identities in South Africa. Given this fact, it is often presumed that race determines and or explains voting and social behaviour. The argument is that black Africans vote for ‘black parties’ and white Africans vote for ‘white parties’. Consequently, some voters use race and ethnicity as a shortcut or as an ‘informational cue’ to decide whom to vote for (Mattes, Taylor and Africa, 1999; Piombo, 2001). In that sense, voters look for a party that best provide a vehicle for who they are in terms of race, ethnicity and religion, and so on. There are several explanations for the correlation between race and voting behaviour since 1994. Brooks (2004, p. 5) argues that “in a deeply divided and unequal society, historically contracted along racial lines, it is no surprise that voting patterns were a stark indication of voting along racial lines”.

In as much as racial identity is important component in South Africa's elections, it is a complex matter. Despite the fact that race and ethnicity serve as some of the major explanations for voting behaviour (see Chapter Two) it has been revealed that the racial census argument remains contested. For instance, Friedman (2005) contends that voters do not base their electoral choice on their racial or ethnic identity. He further argues that "if they were, Zulu speaking voters would not divide their support between the ANC and the IFP, and 'coloured' voters would not divide theirs between several parties" (Friedman, 2005, p. 5). The work of Hoene (2004) concurs with that of Friedman; arguing that South African politics have shifted towards politics based on material interests rather than on racial and ethnic divides. Many other South African scholars have expressed similar viewpoints about race and voting choice. For example, Kotze mentions that race and ethnicity merely explain one aspect of the current voter behaviour in South Africa's elections. There has been a definite shift in the focus of the voter towards service delivery, especially at the local level (Kotze, 2006, p. 207).

Nevertheless, many scholars have indicated that historical voting loyalties still exist in South Africa. This has tended to entrench the dominance of the ANC, which continues to be perceived as the party representing the 'black' majority, as well as the party of liberation (Brooks, 2004, p. 2). These perceptions seem likely to generate permanent majorities for the ANC for the foreseeable future. For example, Steven Friedman argues that identity loyalties to the ANC will ensure that the party will secure a majority regardless of its performance in government (Friedman, 2005). As long as voters consider it a betrayal to change their voting choices, the smaller parties will have a difficult time winning over supporters of the major parties (Moses, 2012, p. 4).

3.4.5 The racially exclusive style of opposition parties

Parties also use race and ethnicity to establish their support base. For example, most opposition parties are identified with a particular racial and ethnic group. Habib states "rather than developing an electoral programme that attracts the support of diverse communities, the election strategies of opposition parties have concentrated on narrow sections of the electorate (Habib, 2006, p. 86). Reference was made to the IFP that projected itself as the

defender of and representative of the Zulu people. In doing so, the party reduced its appeal to non-Zulu independents (Habib, 2006, p. 86). The NNP and DP have historically been seen as serving the interest of the Afrikaner and English whites respectively (Habib, 2006).⁵² Hence both parties denied themselves the opportunity to appeal to the African voters, who constitute the largest portion of voters (Habib, 2006, p. 86). The same could be said about other parties such as the UDM, UCDP and MF that have exploited race and ethnic divides to appeal to a certain group for support.

Based on the exclusive nature of the opposition, Southall and Daniel (2009, p. 6) argued that none of the opposition is able match the ruling party's (ANC) claim to non-racialism and inclusiveness. It is believed that many in the electorate do not exercise their right to vote because there is no other political alternative (Nduru, 2004, p. 1). A general perception is that opposition parties do not represent the politics of the majority of South Africans. This adequately explains why the ANC was able to obtain an overwhelmingly majority in general and local elections since 1994 (Kotze, 2006; Davies, 2003). Opposition parties thus have to break down the perception that it only caters for a certain minority group. Yet, according to Lanegran (2001), some opposition parties have tried to craft wide representative identities and policies to attract a larger audience. However, most of them have remained unsuccessful to make significant in-roads into the larger voting bloc (Langeran, 2001). It would thus seem that a shift from racial rhetoric is not enough for the opposition to appear more inclusive to all citizens. According to Kotze (2006, p. 213), the opposition as a whole need to focus improving material conditions through service delivery. Indeed, and inevitably, the focus of the electorate has been on issues such as service delivery rather than racial politics. Hence, parties need to pay attention to their electioneering strategies in order to ensure that they are in touch with the majority of South Africans.

3.4.6 No track record of governance

South African opposition parties rarely have the opportunity to create a track record of governance due to the ANC's dominance that extends to provincial and local offices. Voters

⁵² An argument is also made that the DA and especially the NNP have explicitly expressed their interest as representing the English and Afrikaner groups respectively, and were not merely seen as such.

have only campaign statements as evidence of the opposition's position and reputation (Langfield, 2010, pp. 35-36). It is therefore difficult for an opposition party that has not held public office to convince voters to vote for the party. Many voters would rather continue voting for the ruling party than to take a chance on an unknown, especially if choosing an opposition party may well be a "wasted vote" as the dominant party is likely to continue in office (Langfield, 2010, p. 36).

3.5 The 2011 voter migration to the DA

As pointed out above, several reasons have been advanced for the poor performance of some opposition parties. In particular, some reasons have been formulated to explain why the ACDP and COPE in the 2011 local government elections experienced poor results. In this regard, Greben (2012, p. 331) observes that the DA managed to increase its support by the absorption of small opposition parties. This means that many voters that formally supported a small opposition party had crossed over to the DA in the 2011 election. This observation was supported by Africa and van Rooyen (2012, p. 192) who argue the DA mainly benefited from a large percentage of voters that defected from small opposition parties in the 2011 elections. Other scholars such as Taderera (2011, p. 1) note that switching over to the DA was potentially influenced by ineffectual leadership and infighting in some of the smaller parties.

In order to understand the nature of vote switching from small political parties to the DA, Greben (2012) divides the DA into two clusters namely, DA1 (this cluster constitute mainly of whites) and DA 2 (that is representative of the coloured population in the Western Cape). The aim was to illustrate how the DA was the primary beneficiary from the movement away from small parties in the 2011 election. Greben (2012, p. 346) shows that in DA1, 65 percent of COPE voters crossed over to the DA in 2011. Similarly, the DA managed to obtain a significant number of votes from the ACDP supporters in this cluster. Greben further illustrates that 78 percent of the 2009 ACDP supporters voted for the DA in 2011 (Greben, 2012, p. 346). At the same time, the DA 2 cluster had steadily increased from 64.5 in 2009 to 77.8 percent in 2011 (Greben, 2012, p. 347). This was mainly because of a decrease of coloured votes for smaller parties such as the ACDP. The ACDP lost nearly 77 percent of its

supporters to the DA 2 cluster in 2011 election. Similarly, COPE lost 56 percent of its 2009 supporters to this cluster (Greiben, 2012, p. 348).

For the DA, this exodus from smaller parties was a culmination of ongoing campaign messages since 2004 (Kotze, 2006; Africa and van Rooyen, 2012). The DA projects itself as the only party that can effectively challenge the dominance of the ANC. For this reason, the DA issued statements that small opposition parties ‘fragment the opposition’ and a vote for such parties is a ‘wasted vote’. Thus, Kotze (2006, p. 213) notes such statements from the DA led the electorate to believe that smaller parties are insignificant. As expected, such negative statements were not well-received by small opposition parties. The ACDP had on several occasions argued that irresponsible statements about small parties create a perception that small parties have nothing to offer to the electorate. The ACDP further argued that the goal of the DA is to have a two-party system similar to the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) which could ultimately mean the end of smaller parties.

The fact that the DA’s campaign rhetoric was followed by voting patterns which improved its electoral position is especially problematic for small opposition parties because their image is further damaged. This in turn, limits the possibility of recovering the lost support. This further creates a negative cycle for small opposition parties. Ultimately the apparent exodus from small opposition parties to the DA means that the choices of voters become more limited at the polls.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have given an overview of the history and electoral performance of the ANC since 1994. I have also explored the implications (positive and negative) of one-party domination for South Africa’s democracy. This is followed by the party history and performance of the DA, ACDP and COPE. The ANC is also explored in this study since one cannot discuss South Africa’s political landscape without discussing the party and its political dominance. The other three political parties were explored since they are an integral part of study. Most importantly, I also presented the electoral trends of the 2011 election as well as a

number of other opposition parties that participated in this election but failed to make significant electoral gains. Lastly, the chapter explored the 2011 voter migration to the DA. It particularly focused on the election campaign rhetoric and strategies of the DA that were used to attract votes away from small opposition parties.



Chapter Four: Discussion, analysis and presentation of research findings

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the research findings. The findings are presented and discussed in line with the general aim of the study which is to gain insight into the motivations of voters who switched from the ACDP and COPE to the DA in the 2011 local government election. Therefore, this chapter particularly focuses on the voter perception and evaluation of the ACDP and COPE. It simultaneously explores the key motivations for the voter migration away from the two parties to the DA. This is followed by a discussion on the reasons why the DA managed to attract a large percentage of votes from the ACDP and COPE in the 2011 local election. Lastly, the chapter presents the findings from the interviews with the party representatives.



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4.2 Party leadership and image

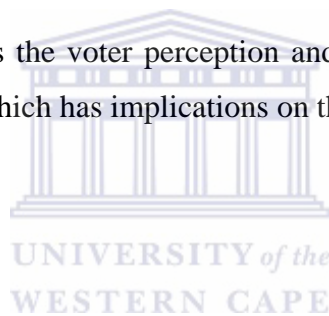
In Chapter Two, an argument was made to the effect that voters do reason about parties, candidates and representatives. Popkin's integrated theory argues that voters with limited information use reasoning shortcuts to make political choices.⁵³ As Popkin argues that voters evaluate and form images of candidates by the information they receive through the media and other communication channels. Popkin demonstrate that both political evaluations and votes depend on the voters' views whether they can identify with the party candidate. He further argues that party images are important to voters. Voters reason about party images to evaluate whether the party has the ability to deal with different issues (Popkin, 1991, p. 56).

Hence, a good party leadership and image is crucial for the survival of any political party. In support of this, Letsholo (2005, p. 5), contends that effective leadership is critical in

⁵³ Voters do this by using information shortcuts that they receive during campaigns, usually using something like a "drunkard's search" (Popkin, 1991). Voters use small amounts of personal information to construct a narrative about candidates. Voters use information gained in their daily lives, through the media and through personal interactions, to evaluate candidates and facilitate electoral choices.

determining voting patterns in any given society. In most cases, voters look at the characteristics and competence of party leaders in making important political choices (Africa, 2008; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a). It is for this reason that scholars such as Africa and Schulz-Herzenberg argue that if a voter is uncertain about the party's leadership and image, he or she tends not to support it. It is even worse with uncertain voters who are more likely to either abstain from voting or to consider an alternative political party at the polls. Another argument was made that voters do not respond positively to leaders that they perceive as untrustworthy, autocratic, and only concerned about the needs of a specific group (Feree, 2004; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a). Conversely, voters are more likely to respond positively to parties that they perceive as inclusive to all social groups. In other words, leadership and overall public image of parties are important information cues that enable voters to decide which candidate and party to vote for (Popkin, 1991).

The subsequent section discusses the voter perception and evaluation of the leadership and image of the ACDP and COPE which has implications on their voter support base.



4.2.1 ACDP's leadership

To start with, the leadership of the ACDP has been relatively stable since 1994. The ACDP is one of a few parties that have not changed its national leader since its formation. Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, the ACDP president, has remained uncontested in party congresses while the party's deputy president's position has changed more than twice since 1994. The ACDP is also one of the few parties that have maintained a 'clean' party image and reputation. This is, however, expected for a party that places Christian values high on their political agenda. As previously indicated, the ACDP is known for its conservative Christian beliefs and biblical principles (Egan, 2007, p. 460). While other Christian parties such as United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP) support base are mainly Tswana speakers in the North West (Hoeane, 2004, p. 9), the ACDP's support is not defined to any particular racial, ethnic or language group. Rather, the party has been quite diverse with a black leader at the helm while coloured and white leaders are present at both provincial and local levels.

With regards to leadership, only one interviewee (1 out of 8) had a positive perception of the ACDP's leadership. He mentioned "unlike other parties, the (ACDP) leader never came under fire for any misconduct or for bringing the party's name in disrepute" (ACDP respondent 4). This respondent decided to move away from the ACDP because of the ACDP's "weak" opposition status. He motivated that a single strong opposition party like the DA would be more beneficial than a multiple of small ones that have no real political influence.

Eight of the nine participants that previously voted for the ACDP had a negative perception and evaluation about the party. Their reason being that under the current leadership, the party had failed to make their political voice heard on important political issues. Thus, the party's failure to effectively advocate the political interests of its supporters has been blamed on the party's poor electoral growth since 1994. The participants argued that the poor performance of the ACDP has minimised the party's relevance in the political realm and consequently, the party's political opinions are hardly recognised. The eight participants observed that the party's leadership played a critical role in the party's electoral failures. They further stated that despite the party's long existence, the party leader's charismatic personality and popularity has done very little in shifting voting patterns in the ACDP's favour. They agreed that while Rev. Meshoe is a good politician and is greatly respected among his peers, the president lacks the ability to make the ACDP a strong and viable political alternative to other opposition parties. In this vein, one of the participants in the study suggested that the leader of the ACDP should change in order for the party to increase its votes (ACDP respondent 2). However, this participant could not say what type of leader would bring electoral fortunes for the party. The following quotes demonstrate the point above:

"The party has minimal influence in government decision-making, especially on issues that affect me personally. The ACDP is known for upholding good Christian values, but as a citizen, I need a party that can deliver on its promises after elections" (ACDP respondent 4).

"They (ACDP) do not present themselves well. They (ACDP) only raise their voice few months before elections and they come across very weak" (ACDP respondent 6).

“I felt that the ACDP was not strong enough and was not doing enough to make our political voices heard in government” (ACDP respondent 7).

“Rev Meshoe is a well-respected leader. However, under the current leadership, the ACDP has minimal political impact. I need a party with strong political direction” (ACDP respondent 8).

Additionally, all the participants interviewed linked their poor perception of the ACDP’s leadership with the lack of visibility and poor engagement of the party’s leader and candidates with the electorate. The interviews revealed that the presence and visibility of the party for the 2011 local election was minimal, if not, non-existent. For example, participants indicated that there was no real engagement between the voter and the party during this election. The participants argued that the party’s failure to visit their communities was a clear indication that the ACDP was not serious about maintaining their support base intact for future elections. This substantiates Matlosa’s (2008, p. 24) argument that voters become disillusioned with parties that neglect to keep their membership active during and in-between elections. It also substantiates Popkin’s (1991, p. 65) view that a voter wonders about whether a party or candidate really cares about people and their concerns. Due to the lack of contact between voters and the ACDP representatives, the opportunity to express their views was not given to them in the 2011 election. This is a cause for concern for the ACDP, as parties mobilise most of their support through direct contact with their constituencies. The following quotes demonstrate the point above:

“I moved away from the ACDP because the party representatives were not visible in my community. The only time I saw party representatives was at church events closer to the 2011 local election. That was not good enough” (ACDP respondent 3).

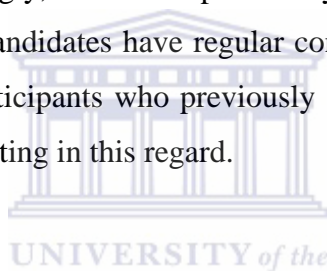
“I switched votes because of the poor visibility of party leaders. They (ACDP) only made themselves known to the public a short period before the election date (ACDP respondent 6).

“The ACDP did not do their campaigning well in the 2011 election. The party did not come to our church to encourage people to vote for them. Maybe they (ACDP)

thought because we are Christians we will automatically vote for them as we did in previous elections” (ACDP respondent 7).

“The ACDP’s presence in my community was very poor. It was not as visible like previous years” (ACDP respondent 8).

It is well documented in the literature that engagement between political parties and voters is important, especially closer to the election date. As previously indicated, parties are expected to start a conversation with the electorate about their objectives and their strategies to address pertinent political, social and economic issues. Political engagement is therefore an important aspect in creating an open dialogue for voter participation in the electoral process. Another benefit is that political engagement establishes public trust and confidence in the party and in the democratic process. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the party leader to ensure that party representatives and party candidates have regular consultations with voters during and in-between elections. All the participants who previously supported the ACDP claimed that the ACDP proved to be disappointing in this regard.

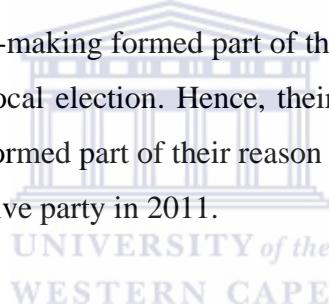


Moreover, five of the participants claimed that the ACDP did not have a strong leadership orientation in the 2011 election. For instance, they complained that the ACDP mayoral candidate for the City of Cape Town, Ferlon Christians, was not a strong political contender against Patricia De Lille from the DA and Tony Ehrenreich from the ANC. Their argument was that the mayoral candidate for the ACDP lacked the necessary political experience and credentials compared to other mayoral candidates from other parties such as the ANC and DA. The majority of the participants thus suggested that the ACDP must recruit stronger political leaders at the local level as this level is the closest to the people.

In the 2011 election, the party used Helen Zille, Patricia De Lille and Lindiwe Mazibuko as the party’s public faces. The idea was to create an image of the DA as a political home for all races. Participants indicated that Patricia De Lille has been a long standing politician who has spoken out against corrupt activities in government. Thus, she has built some credibility among the electorate. This was also the view of Schulz-Herzenberg (2011) and Dhawraj (2012, p. 325) who argued that the merger with the ID provided the DA with a viable

mayoral candidate for the 2011 election. Most of the participants that were interviewed noted that Helen Zille and Lindiwe Mazibuko appear to be trustworthy and competent compared to the public figures of the ANC and other parties.

In terms of party leadership then, the responses showed that voters make political choices, whether at national or local level, in accordance with their perception of the quality and more importantly, the character of candidates contesting the election. These findings are thus in consonance with the rational choice model and Popkin's theory (discussed in Chapter Two) which stipulate that voters often have powerful opinions about party leaders and candidates. The rational choice model and Popkin (1991) argue that voters care about the competence of the candidate they are voting for. Voters thus tend to assess a given candidate's capability in delivering on the party's election promises. Indeed, the findings show that leadership was an important issue for most opposition voters in the 2011 election. To a certain extent then, one could argue that rational decision-making formed part of the decisions of these participants to migrate to the DA in the 2011 local election. Hence, their perception and evaluation of the party leadership and candidates formed part of their reason to withdraw their support from the ACDP and to look for an alternative party in 2011.



4.2.2 ACDP's party image

As previously mentioned, the party's support base is not limited to any racial or ethnic group. In this regard, the ACDP has been seen to be relatively inclusive to all social groups in South Africa. Lodge and Scheidegger (2004, p. 15) indicate that the ACDP's electoral support is predominantly concentrated in KwaZulu Natal and the Western Cape. The party has constituencies in other provinces like Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Although the ACDP has benefited from middle class white and coloured voters, the party's support base is 60 percent black (Lodge and Scheidegger, 2004, p. 15).

Perhaps, a counter argument to their inclusiveness is the fact that the ACDP's support is strongly concentrated in the Christian religion. As referred to in Chapter Two, religion has been identified as an important "social-structural source of voter-alignments" (Brooks *et al.*, 2006, p. 92) and thus, on one hand, strong religious individuals are more inclined to vote for

a party that share their religious or ideological preferences. On the other hand, non-religious voters are less likely to vote for a religious party like the ACDP because they might struggle to identify with the party's divine image and political message. This is the dominant view of the sociological model which explains that voter choices most often reflect the social or religious identity of individuals. These identities become important political cleavages when individuals vote for parties and develop perceptions about these parties.

South Africa is a deeply religious society with approximately 85 percent of the population declaring some religious affiliation (Struwig and Roberts, 2009, p. 18). However, the Christian religion is said to be the most dominant in the country. Given this, it can be argued that political space does exist for Christian parties like the ACDP in South Africa. Support for the ACDP may be influenced by the party's vision for an ideal Christian democratic society and the party's position against political issues that might go against Christianity. For instance, some voters may identify with the ACDP for its position against abortion, homosexuality and same sex marriages. The ACDP has also advocated for the death penalty to come back to South Africa (Lodge and Scheidegger, 2004, p. 15) which may not auger well with some members of society, for example, many black conservative people passionately oppose it because of its association with apartheid.

Therefore, voters who do not identify with the ACDP's values may not see the party as a viable alternative to adequately represent their interests. For example, the political commentator, Eusebius McKaiser, criticized the ACDP's position on abortion and accused the party for undermining women's rights. McKaiser argued that the ACDP's anti-abortion stance perpetuates male dominance over female bodies, making reference to a historical context of male-run states whose laws regarding reproductive decisions deprioritise the interests of women (The Star Online, March, 3, 2014). Accordingly, the ACDP may find it difficult to mobilise support from voters that support rights of homosexuals, are pro-abortion, and do not support the death penalty.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ This view was not supported by the ACDP party official during the interview. He stated that the party does not discriminate against any societal group – the ACDP has an open-door policy for gays and lesbians. He further argued that the ACDP is moving away from its “churchy image” in order to

The findings reveal that all the research participants who previously voted for the ACDP initially supported the party because of the party's strong religious identity in South African politics. The majority of participants noted that the ACDP has maintained a respectable public image as the party upholds strong Christian morals which they all can relate with. For example, one participant stated, "as a strong Christian believer I felt that the ACDP would best represent my interest and promote the word of God in government" (ACDP respondent 3). Other participants gave similar responses that their Christian identity primarily informed their voting choice at the polls. Four of the participants voted for the ACDP since 2004; three voted for the party since the 1994 and 1999 elections; and one participant voted for the ACDP since the 2006 local election. For these former ACDP voters, their voting choice was a reflection or manifestation of their religious identity and their support for the ACDP's Christian morality in politics.

In the 2011 local election, participants indicated that their voting choices changed. Although their religion still played an important component in their lives, it did not inform their vote choice in this election. In this vein, participants indicated that the Christian image of the ACDP became 'less important' to them because other issues such as leadership, governance and service delivery were more crucial. It is important to note that the 2011 elections happened during a time when most citizens expressed their dissatisfaction with the leadership and governance of the ANC. Not long after the April 2009 general elections, service delivery protests and other public demonstrations (which were not related to service delivery) took place in most of the provinces. For service delivery alone, there were 111 demonstrations throughout all nine provinces in 2010. It was also reported that a few weeks before the 2011 local election took place, 23 demonstrations took place over poor or totally non-existent public services such as water, electricity and good sanitation in many townships (Böhler, 2011, p. 58). During this particular period, wage strikes also increased nationally and this had implications on voter choices.

appeal to a broad cross-section of South African voters. Yet, it was reported that the leader of the party told the media that "gays are sinners" and "they should ask forgiveness from their sins".

Throughout the study, it was evident that those who previously voted for the ACDP in 2009 had strong negative views about the overall performance of the governing party at all spheres of government. They expressed their concerns about the unfulfilled election promises by the governing party since 1994. Participants especially expressed their frustrations with the corruption scandals surrounding many public officials and the ANC in general.

Most of the ACDP participants interviewed were of the view that South Africa needed a strong opposition party to effectively challenge the electoral dominance of the ANC. However, these former ACDP supporters noted that the ACDP was electorally too weak to unseat the ANC in future elections. In this regard, the ACDP was not considered a strong opposition party against the ANC. Nevertheless, the DA was seen as the only opposition party that could be pose a real threat to the power of the ANC. Because of its significant improvement at the polls since 1994, the DA was viewed as a party that was capable of eroding the political dominance of the ANC. Some of the participants shared the following:

“The current ANC leadership is morally corrupt. A strong opposition is necessary to effectively challenge the ANC in future elections” (ACDP respondent 2).

“A strong opposition party like the DA can expose the corruption of the ANC and be the next party in government (ACDP respondent 7).

Subconsciously then, these former ACDP supporters (and maybe other previous ACDP supporters that moved to the DA in the 2011 election) were voting against the ANC government, and not so much against the ACDP in this election. One could argue that the voter exodus from smaller opposition parties like the ACDP was mainly motivated by perceptions and views about the negative aspects of the ruling party. More specifically, a key reason for their movement was the negative feelings towards the current leadership of the ANC and how it has affected the quality of governance and service delivery across the country. In this way, the movement away from the ACDP in the 2011 election was less influenced by the election shortcomings of the ACDP itself.

4.2.3 COPE's leadership and image

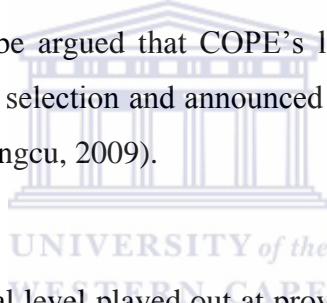
On the question why participants previously supported COPE in 2009, all nine participants interviewed noted that COPE presented itself as a powerful new party that could be a political home for South Africans who had either become disillusioned or alienated from the ANC. These participants stated that they saw COPE as a credible opposition party that could successfully challenge the political hegemony of the ANC.

All the research participants that previously supported COPE expressed their fear for the continuation of the dominance of the ANC as the ruling party. Many of their frustrations were towards to the leadership and governance of the ANC. There is little doubt that these participants were afraid that Jacob Zuma would see a second term as president of the country. In Chapter Three, reference was made to the public protests that were spread throughout the nine provinces; citizens expressed their grievances against continued deficiency of basic services such as water and electricity in local communities. On the other hand, most voters have expressed their dissatisfaction with President Jacob Zuma's style of leadership. The research participants interviewed clearly expressed their concerns and fears about the manner in which the governing party had dealt with leadership and governance issues. The party received serious criticism about the manner in which it had allowed individuals within their own ranks to misuse their political position to divert government resources into their own coffers. These findings about President Zuma are in consonance with Popkin's theory which argues that political evaluations and choices will depend on, among other things, the presidential candidate's character, personality and performance record.

More importantly, the notion was that the arrival of COPE in the political arena would strengthen South Africa's democracy and the party would provide voters with opportunities for adequate political representation at the polls. These voters thus saw COPE as a party that is inclusive to all citizens. However, the optimism about the arrival of COPE did not last long. Soon after its establishment, COPE received much criticism regarding its own leadership. The party lacked clarity and transparency on how COPE's leaders were to be elected and this uncertainty led to frustrations among its members which soon became public. This ultimately had an impact on the credibility of the party to the run up to the 2011

election. This also reinforced the belief that no party can come out of the ANC and perform well.

As previously mentioned, the leadership conflict was mainly between two factions namely, those aligned to Lekota and Shilowa, respectively (Twala, 2011, p. 124). There was also the “Reverend Mvume Dandala” factor that contributed to the party’s leadership problems. For example, this “politically” unknown priest was the electoral face of COPE in the 2009 elections. According to Twala (2011, p. 129), parachuting Dandala into this position was an attempt to quell the leadership squabbles between Lekota and Shilowa. However there were mixed feelings about the presidential candidacy of Dandala. Dandala was viewed as an imposed leader who had no background of the founding principles of COPE (Twala, 2011). In addition, Lekota was not enthusiastic about Dandala’s selection (Ndletyana, 2010, p. 40).⁵⁵ Many of Lekota’s supporters saw this as a “motion of no confidence” in Lekota’s leadership (Twala, 2011, p. 130). It may be argued that COPE’s leadership squabbles started when Lekota disapproved of Dandala’s selection and announced that the ballot papers would carry his face instead of Dandala’s (Mangu, 2009).



The leadership duel at the national level played out at provincial and local level. Most of the research participants interviewed were aware that between 2008 and early 2012 it was impossible for COPE to successfully constitute its national congress. As a result, the party’s national leaders could not be elected and factions were formed. However, in February 2011, Lekota obtained an interim court order recognising him as the president of the party. This was followed by the dismissal of Shilowa from the party after an internal disciplinary hearing was conducted. It was claimed that Shilowa refused to participate in this hearing and, more importantly, that he was found guilty for mismanaging the party’s parliamentary funds. Given this, Shilowa’s chances for claiming the title of COPE’s party leader were gone. Those aligned to Shilowa decided to withdraw from the 2011 election process, and the Lekota group managed to gradually consolidate its hold on COPE.

⁵⁵ The Shilowa faction approved Dandala’s selection and seemed happy to rub Lekota’s nose in the defeat (Ndletyana, 2010).

Without doubt, the leadership dispute had a serious impact on the party's image. The party's commitment to internal democracy (the democratic process within a single party to elect party leaders at different levels of government) was already in question. Additionally, the party looked incompetent as it was unable to resolve the internal leadership squabbles which created two factions at the end. Given this, it was useful to ask the participants about their perception and evaluation of the leadership and image of COPE in the 2011 election.

The participants interviewed noted that they had a negative perception and evaluation about the leadership and image of COPE. This was primarily linked to the internal fighting among party leaders, Lekota and Shilowa. Several participants stated that they were disappointed in the leadership of COPE as they initially thought that COPE would be a strong political contender that would bring an end to the 'poor leadership and governance' of the ANC. However, after the party's internal power struggles were out in the open, none of the participants felt that COPE was able to give political direction to the country. For these former COPE supporters, COPE was too focused on their leadership clashes and court cases pending and overlooked the needs and concerns of voters. For example, one of the participants stated that the poor leadership, internal division, and the party's failure to hold an elective congress made him question COPE's commitment and ability to be an effective party in government (COPE respondent 5). This respondent further argued that the constant leadership mayhem tarnished the entire image of COPE and hence the party failed to consolidate its position in 2011 local elections. Other interviewees shared similar viewpoints as follows:

"I was disappointed in COPE. COPE did not have the impact that we hoped it would have in Parliament and in politics, in general. Other problems such as factionalism and power struggles made me move my support to the DA" (COPE respondent 4).

"COPE was falling apart. The party focused all their attention on the power struggles within the party. Their political vision was not clear anymore" (COPE respondent 8).

To a large extent, it seemed that factionalism and leadership problems were some of the key motivations for former COPE supporters to move their vote to another opposition party. Very

similar to the ACDP respondents, previous COPE supporters were looking for a strong opposition party to successfully challenge the dominant rule of the ANC. For instance, three out of nine COPE respondents indicated that they previously supported the ANC but were unhappy with the party's poor performance in government. They decided to move their support to COPE in 2009 with the hope for a better future (in terms of leadership, service delivery, employment and so on). The other seven respondents that formerly supported COPE were mainly 'first-time' voters who were frustrated with the (poor) leadership of the ANC but saw no alternative in other parties prior to the 2009 election. On the question why they decided to give their first vote to COPE and not another opposition, all the seven participants responded that COPE positioned itself as a party that would ensure a government that is in touch with popular needs. COPE further portrayed itself as a party that would uphold a clean and accountable government. For example, one respondent stated:

"I was unhappy with the ANC's leadership and felt that COPE could make a difference. I saw COPE as a party that could be a viable opposition to the ANC (unlike other opposition parties). The fact that they broke away from the ANC and spoke out against corruption within the ANC government influenced me to vote for the party in 2009" (COPE respondent 1).

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These responses thus revealed that the 2011 vote-switching had very little to do with their evaluations about the ACDP and COPE, respectively. However, a key finding is that most participants realised that both parties were electorally too weak to change the government. With this realisation, these participants had very little, or no confidence in the ACDP or COPE to unseat the ANC in the 2011 election. During the interviews it became more evident that most of the participants were pushing for a stronger opposition party for future elections. The 2011 election was therefore seen as an opportunity to voice their dissatisfaction with the ANC government by voting for the 'strongest' opposition party, the DA. This supports the argument that suggests that although some voters regard local elections as being less important than national elections, national issues such as leadership and governance do have an impact on the voting behaviour at the local level.

4.3 Election campaigns

As previously discussed, election campaigns are a vital and an integral component of democracy. The use of election campaigns creates opportunities for the exchange of information between parties and the electorate. Campaigns inform voters about parties, candidates and the electoral process. They also allow politicians to express their political opinions. Most significantly, campaigns can assist voters to discern which party would best represent their interests. Electoral campaigns are also a necessary platform to address the societal needs such as service delivery, education, employment, and infrastructure at all levels of government. Some scholars view election campaigns as a “social contract” between the party and the voters (Phago, 2012, p. 70).

It is clear that election campaigns are meaningful vehicles for mobilising electoral support. However research has shown that election campaigns enjoy fairly limited levels of public visibility in South Africa (Scheimer and Mattes, 2011, p. 18). Many voters have either already decided who they will vote for, or already concluded that no party represents their interest, and will abstain from voting. Hence, election campaigns are not important to them. Nevertheless, political parties spend a big sum of their money on campaigns with the hope that it will attract significant support from the electorate. Given the fact that the campaigns are an important tool for electioneering; a question was posed to the participants about the effectiveness of the campaigns for the ACDP and COPE in the 2011 elections. More specifically, the question sought to find out whether the election campaigns influenced their movement (shift) from the parties they previously voted for to the DA. A general feeling among respondents was that the ACDP and COPE produced poor campaigns for the 2011 elections. However, all the participants expressed the opinion that both parties’ election campaigns were unable to convince them to continue their support for these respective parties.

4.3.1 The ACDP’s election campaign

The ACDP’s theme for their 2011 election campaign was “Let’s Fix It” which emphasised that the ACDP is the best alternative to address poor government performance on key issues.

Their campaign focused on service delivery, poverty, unemployment, education and housing, to name a few. In their campaign manifesto, the party also spoke about combating crime in local communities. The party also adopted a national election message that highlighted their commitment to the implementation of policies that will ensure better transportation and health services. The ACDP's campaign was also a critique of the ANC; highlighting and exploiting the shortcomings of the ANC's performance at all levels of government. A key message was that the ANC was faced with internal leadership squabbles and provincial factionalism. The ACDP further exploited issues such as the recall and forced resignation of former President Thabo Mbeki, the resignation of Ebrahim Rasool⁵⁶, and the fact that prominent members of the ANC were involved in corruption scandals (ACDP 2011 Western Cape Campaign Assessment Document). In their campaigning, the ACDP also focused on highlighting and exploiting the shortcomings of the DA. They emphasised that the DA was a 'white dominated' party and the party was misleading voters through 'window dressing'. The overall aim of the ACDP's 2011 election campaign was to establish the ACDP as the biggest and best alternative to other parties, especially the ANC and DA. Moreover, their campaign emphasised that the ACDP does have a credible (yet limited) track record in delivery at municipal level. Their campaign message noted that ACDP has co-governed municipalities with other parties and has also brought stability and credibility in those municipalities.⁵⁷

Other parties campaigned around the same topics. All the political parties that contested the 2011 local election emphasised that they are the best political alternative; they knew best how to deal with service delivery problems; and that they were committed towards better education, employment and health services. As a result of similar campaign strategies and messages, the ACDP's election campaign did not stand out from the rest. Participants made an example that the ACDP's campaign did not attract their attention as it focussed on the same issues as other parties contesting.

Their responses were also based on the poor visibility of the campaign. The ACDP had an insufficient number of posters, pamphlets, and had a very limited distribution of the party's

⁵⁶ The then-ANC premier, Ebrahim Rasool, was fired from his position for allegedly having supported Mbeki's failed bid for the ANC presidency (Ndletyana, 2010, p. 2).

⁵⁷ Information was obtained in the ACDP Western Cape 2011 Campaign Assessment Document.

manifesto. All the participants who formally supported the ACDP mentioned that they had no knowledge about the ACDP's election campaign because their campaign materials did not reach them as voters. One participant made an example to the effect that there was no engagement between voters and the party manifesto or other campaign material (ACDP respondent 4). Other respondents had similar experiences. For example, they all pointed out that they had neither interacted with the party's representatives nor engagement with the party's campaign materials. One of the respondents made the following statement: "I am unaware that the ACDP had an election campaign. I saw nothing" (ACDP respondent 3). Furthermore, all participants interviewed under this category argued that the DA was a better alternative because the party's campaign material was more accessible than other opposition parties (ACDP respondent 1). Respondents who previously supported COPE shared the same view that the DA ousted all other parties' election campaigns in 2011. They indicated that DA put out a much stronger presence and therefore managed to connect with more people on the local level.

4.3.2 COPE's election campaign

COPE's campaign focussed on addressing service delivery, crime, corruption and job creation. Additionally, the party's manifesto also emphasized the importance of local economic growth and development, activist citizenship and community activism (Kotze, 2012, pp. 178- 179). The party launched their election manifesto at a spectacular event, but like other parties, the manifesto received little attention during the election campaign (Kotze, 2012, p. 178). Other aspects such as factions within the party (and the party's constant failure to hold a national conference) received more attention than the proposals in their election manifesto. Hence COPE's campaign manifesto and messages had little impact on the minds of voters.

Furthermore, participants in the study observed that COPE, like other small opposition parties, had poor visibility during the 2011 election. The party had limited posters and in some areas, posters were non-existent. The party also had limited distribution of their campaign manifesto and other party materials. Several participants mentioned that all parties have the duty to educate the electorates about their policies and political programmes.

However, this was something COPE was lacking. For example, one respondent stated that he was approached by COPE representatives a few days before the election, and to his disappointment, these representatives could not explain the party's election aims and strategies. The respondent thus felt that COPE campaigners lacked knowledge about the party and also did not have enough experience to engage with voters. This respondent further stated that due to their (campaigners) lack of information "one could not differentiate between COPE's message to that of the ANC or other parties. It therefore seemed like every representative of COPE had their own idea of what COPE stood for and had to offer" (COPE respondent 5).

Another respondent expressed the opinion that COPE produced an incoherent campaign strategy; campaign material was poorly managed and, more importantly, the campaign lacked substance. Interestingly, a few months after the interviews were conducted, Kotze (2012, p. 179) wrote that COPE's 2011 election campaign was not efficiently managed. The party also neglected to efficiently use public media to introduce their manifesto to the electorate. As a result, COPE's campaign messages never reached voters.

Furthermore, other participants felt that COPE's leadership battles overshadowed the party's election campaign. For instance, two respondents indicated that they had lost interest in the party and "paid no attention to their 2011 campaign" (COPE respondents 4 and 8). In contrast, the participants indicated that the DA had an effective campaign compared to those of the ACDP and COPE. The DA's campaign focused on the reduction of poverty through economic growth and job creation. It also emphasised the delivery of basic municipal services for all. The DA's manifesto attempted to address a range of issues that were seen as relevant for growth, job creation and service delivery. Some of the focus areas included: efficient and transparent government; sustainability in resource usage; clean water; electricity; primary health care; and social development.

Looking back at the election campaigns and manifestos it was interesting that all three parties (ACDP, COPE and DA) campaigned around the same issues in the 2011 local elections.

Although different strategies were used, the content and the messages were almost identical. The DA's campaign messages were however better articulated due to the party's efficient use

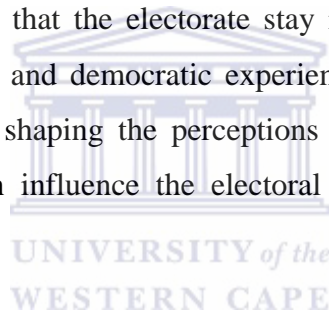
of public media to promote the party's manifesto. The DA also had better financial resources to make use of paid media to reach a broader audience. There is little doubt that the DA's election campaign out-performed most opposition parties in the 2011 election. As earlier pointed out, the DA produced an effective campaign and had enough "foot soldiers" to communicate the party's campaign messages to the local communities. However, election campaigns are not the sole reason for the success or failure of parties at the polls. Although election campaigns are important vehicles for voter mobilisation, they do not determine the electoral growth of parties. Parties with the best election campaigns are not necessarily seen as the best political alternative. Responses showed that those who formally supported the ACDP and COPE were less worried about party campaigns and felt more apprehensive about the leadership and political direction of the country.

Some participants indicated that their decision to leave the ACDP and COPE had little to do with the effectiveness of their 2011 campaigns. They argued that most of them had already decided to move their support to the DA long before the 2011 campaign period started. While they acknowledged that the DA had the most consistent and positive campaign out of all the parties, their main motivation was to find a viable opposition party that had the ability to effectively challenge, and hopefully unseat the ANC in elections. Thus, the DA's quality campaign almost served as a "confirmation" or "validation" that they had made the right choice by switching their vote to another party in 2011.

Importantly, the above findings are in consonance with Popkin's theory which highlights the importance of campaigns in elections. Popkin's view is that voters use campaigns as shortcuts to discern which party or candidate would best represent their interests and concerns. In Popkin's analysis, he argues that campaign communications increase the accuracy of voters' perceptions and evaluations of parties and candidates. While campaigns are critically important, Popkin also sees campaigns not being the ultimate factor in the voters' decision-making process. As the above findings suggest, party campaigns were not the most important reason for the migration to the DA in 2011. However voters used campaigns as rational shortcuts to evaluate parties, candidates and issues.

4.4 The role of the media in vote-switching

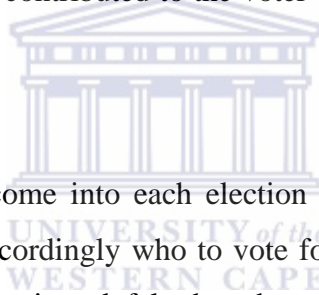
Elections are all about individuals making political choices. In order for the electorate to be assisted in this regard, they must have access to an effective, critical, reliable and independent print and electronic media. In recent years, political parties have increasingly used the media as a communication tool. Parties use the media to inform particularly the public about their policies, political programmes and other related political issues. More importantly, parties use the media to bring their election campaign messages across with the aim to increase their support among voters. The media is therefore a critical communication platform that supplies information about the different political parties and candidates contesting the election. It also acts as a medium for educating the potential voters about the electoral process. In this regard, the media plays an intermediary role between the government, politicians, parties, and the electorate. The media also reports on election speeches, rallies and other political developments in order to ensure that the electorate stay informed. In this way, the media strengthens the electoral process and democratic experience of citizens. Consequently, the media plays a powerful role in shaping the perceptions of voters about parties and their leaders. These perceptions often influence the electoral support of individuals and their behaviour at the polls.



When it comes to voting and elections, the media provide most of the information used by the electorate. Another determining factor of voting behaviour then, is the media and the role it plays in forming opinions about the parties contesting the election. This is the view of the dominant ideology theory (as discussed in Chapter Two) that explains that most often the media portrays certain images of parties and their candidates in the mind of voters. By exposing the electorate to certain political statements and messages about political leaders and government performance, certain images are mentally constructed in the mind of the recipients, who in this case are the electorate. This can lead to political opinions being formed and political support decided accordingly (Popkin, 1991).

To date, the South African print and electronic media industry has often been criticized for favouring larger political parties while smaller parties do not receive the same amount of media coverage. For instance, the media would report on larger parties' election speeches

while ignoring the statements of other political parties that are also contesting the election. The inequitable manner of media reporting has been cited as one of the core reasons why most opposition parties have become ‘silent’ and to some extent ‘irrelevant’ in multiparty politics. If we look at the media coverage of the 2011 elections, the ANC received 46 percent followed by the DA with 25 percent (Krüger, 2012, p. 235). This is why other parties had to compete for media coverage. Parties like the ACDP and COPE were affected by a lack of coverage during the election period; ACDP received two percent while COPE scored a bit higher with eight percent (Krüger, 2012, p. 235). Indeed, the fact that the ANC and DA receive the most media attention is worrisome for smaller parties although it may be argued that certain political parties and their political messages are not deemed newsworthy by all journalists and/or news outlets. Whether this is through their own inability to “generate news” or because they are “crowded out”, smaller parties seldom get noticed by the media and hence their status and relevance in party politics may suffer. Given this, a question was posed to participants whether the media contributed to the voter exodus from the ACDP and COPE during the 2011 elections.



It is often assumed that voters come into each election with an open mind ready to hear parties’ campaigns and decide accordingly who to vote for. However, not every ACDP and COPE respondent that were interviewed felt that the media influenced their decision to migrate to the DA. For example, three participants who previously supported COPE indicated that media coverage (or the lack thereof) played a minimal role in their voting behaviour during the 2011 elections. It was further established that in fact, these three respondents decided to migrate to the DA long before the 2011 election campaigns started. Hence, the respondents revealed that they had little interest in following the 2011 election campaigns on television, radio or newspapers. Two of the eight ACDP respondents indicated that media coverage of party campaigns had a minimal effect on their voting choices. They stated that sometimes they would remove themselves from the political environment and ignore party campaigns because parties campaign around the same issues. See the extracts from the interviews with ACDP and COPE respondents below:

“The media did not really factor into my voting choice. I have only ever voted for the party that I believe would represent what I stand for, and the party that displays the

most commitment to upgrading and improving the lives of ordinary citizens, both in my community and in the city” (ACDP respondent 1).

“The media did not really factor into my voting choice” (COPE respondent 1).

“My choice (to move vote to the DA in the 2011 local elections) was not influenced by the media but rather through personal engagement with the DA and party representatives” (COPE respondent 5).

In addition, these respondents argued that they preferred direct face-to-face campaigns as opposed to ‘virtual engagement’ with parties during elections. This is so because, they argued, face to face campaigning allows for better interaction with the party and its leaders.

It is quite evident from the data that some voters were far less likely to follow election campaigns through the mass media. This is in line with Scheimer and Mattes (2011, p. 6), who argue that South Africa’s news consumers systematically “tune out” of election news during the run up to the polls. In this regard, one can argue that the ACDP and COPE’s campaigning to some extent ignored the personal engagement aspect of campaigns which might have affected them negatively. Both parties had few representatives at grassroots level to effectively engage with ordinary voters. Moreover, both parties campaigned with little campaign resources. The majority of respondents thus strongly advised both parties to focus on their level of interaction with voters, rather than complaining about unfair media coverage. At the end, each political party is responsible for their own campaign visibility. The media is only one of the many platforms to engage with the electorate.

However, the effects of the media on the electorate were evident in some participants. For example, twelve of the research participants who followed party campaigns mentioned that the media portrayed the DA as more effective, efficient and a better alternative to other parties. The DA’s campaign messages were advertised on television, radio stations and print media. One respondent argued that the media showed that the DA was consistent in the public eye for exposing corruption of other parties and sometimes their own member too, which gave them an image of wanting to do what is right amidst the wrongdoings (ACDP

respondent 7). Other participants felt that the DA invested a lot of time and money into their 2011 election campaign. See their responses below:

“The media influenced my voting choice during the 2011 elections. The media made me aware of the positives and negatives of all the main parties contesting. The DA had more positive than negative media coverage” (COPE respondent 4).

“I believe that the media played an influential role in my voter choice in 2011. Specifically in highlighting issues relating to corruption and “tenderpreneurship” which ought to name and shame those parties/individuals who abuse their power in government for personal benefit. This has been quite evident within the ANC. COPE also received negative media coverage. I therefore decided to change my vote in 2011 to the DA” (COPE respondent 7).

“The media did not influence my voting choice for the 2011 elections. I do not read newspapers. The reason being that there is too much bad news, and the constant bickering, fighting and arguments between political parties do not help much” (ACDP respondent 1)

“While the DA’s mayoral candidate (De Lille) received good coverage. The media reports on De Lille were more positive than negative. So, in that way, the media convinced me to change parties” (ACDP respondent 3).

“Yes, the media influenced my vote in 2011. The media portrayed the DA as the strongest opponent against the ANC. I decided to add to the DA’s voting totals” (ACDP respondent 7).

The twelve respondents argued that an important part of the DA’s campaign was direct contact between party and voters. In this vein, Weaver (1996, p. 241) notes that such contact is more effective per voter because it allows for a two-way communication and humanises the candidate. It would be wrong to assume that the voter migration to the DA in the 2011 election was solely because of the party’s campaigning and media coverage. It has to be pointed out that a party’s electoral success is not solely dependent on the degree of media coverage it receives but rather that voters look at other aspects of the party such as leadership, image and general competence.

4.5 Party evaluations and responses from party representatives

4.5.1 Lack of public finances

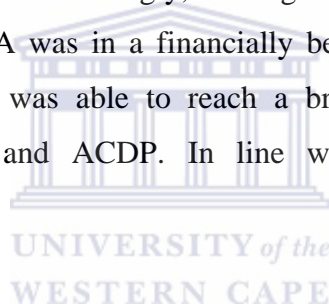
The data received from the interviews with two party officials showed that a lack of party funding severely impacted the effectiveness of their election campaigns for 2011. As a result, both parties struggled to reproduce their electoral support they once enjoyed during this election. The literature studied in this dissertation has revealed that party funding can determine the success or failure of parties at elections. Subsequently, a lack of party funding is considered to be one of the key factors that hinder political participation of the opposition. Parties that have limited funding also struggle to establish and run party offices. With regards to elections, some parties are unable to produce effective campaigns and do not have the necessary resources for advertisements. Funding thus allows parties to interact with the electorate on a broader scale. However, if funding is scarce as previously mentioned, interaction with the electorate might be limited.

Generally, both party officials were of the opinion that poor performance of opposition parties is due to a lack of financial resources. As indicated in the literature (see Chapter Three), political funding in South Africa is based on principle of proportionality (90 percent) and the principle of equity (10 percent). Due to the heavier weighting of proportionality (than equity), most opposition parties struggle to survive. This is so because not all parties have a high level of proportional representation in legislatures and hence, do not receive an adequate sum of money from the state. In contrast, the ANC (because of the party's large number of members in the National Assembly and provincial legislatures) is currently the only party benefiting from the allocation formula. In this respect, the ANC may have a considerable advantage over other parties contesting elections.

Many opposition parties are not able to compete with the governing party. Although, public funding is made available to parties, the amount (in most cases) is less than the amounts spent on the election. Accordingly, the ACDP official argued that the political playing field is unequal in the sense that the governing party (ANC) receives the largest part of public funds. Additionally, the ANC has access to state resources (property, vehicles and media etc.) which

are not accessible to opposition parties. The ACDP official also revealed that while members of the incumbent government enjoy unlimited access of state resources to travel around for meetings, officials of smaller opposition parties have to rely on private funds or even their own personal funds to attend meetings. For him, there is unfair competition between the governing party and opposition parties. His reason holds that because of the “exclusionary” use of state resources by the governing party, the governing party are more visible in terms of election campaigns and mass media. In contrast, opposition parties struggle financially and do not have the means to effectively communicate their campaign messages to voters which in turn affect them negatively.

However, the DA is perhaps the exception to the argument above. As earlier noted, the DA’s electoral support has increased and as a result, the party has a higher representation in terms of both proportionality and equity. Accordingly, funding from the state has steadily increased for the party. Therefore, the DA was in a financially better position to carry out a well-planned election campaign and was able to reach a broader audience during the 2011 elections compared to COPE and ACDP. In line with this, the ACDP respondent contextualised it as follows:

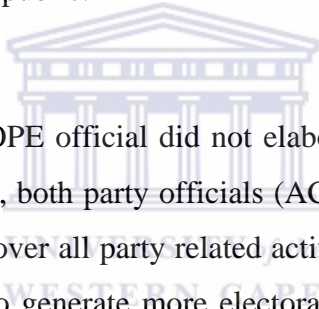


“The ANC has far more financial resources. Therefore the governing party has the means to be more visible; locally, provincially and nationally. The DA has become stronger. The party has grown electorally which brings more public funding and, as a result, more office bearers that can go out and visit constituencies. In contrast, opposition parties (with the exception of the DA) do not have the necessary funds to visit communities across the country; hence they tend to be less visible in terms of campaigning. For example, a small party like the ACDP does not have enough financial resources and senior office bearers to attend community meetings on a large scale. Opposition voters thus get disillusioned.”

For the ACDP in particular, a lack of funding has made it difficult for the party to sustain a provincial wide campaign during the 2011 elections. According to the ACDP official, their campaigning was very poor in comparison with other opposition parties due to poor financial resources. As such, the ACDP could not produce enough marketing material such as t-shirts, posters, pamphlets, banners and adverts and so on. This had a serious impact on the party’s

campaign visibility, and to some extent, the campaign's accessibility. In addition, the ACDP official stated that the party is not present in every community, town or campus due to financial constraints. Thus, with no funds, citizens either become detached from the party or more seriously, are not aware of its existence. In this vein, the ACDP campaign message was not received by all, not understood by all, and was not a priority to all.

As for the COPE, the official interviewed did not elaborate on how funding influenced their election campaign for 2011. However, she admitted that insufficient financial resources limited the party from achieving their electoral goals. For example, she made reference to how funding has impacted the level of interaction between the party and the electorate during the 2011 campaign. She further stated that the party's communication machinery is largely affected by funding and that although communication mechanisms were in place, it was not optimally used to engage with the public.

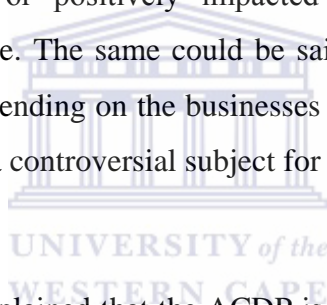


It is evident that although the COPE official did not elaborate on the impact of funding on their campaigns for 2011 election, both party officials (ACDP and COPE) made it clear that public funding is not enough to cover all party related activities. Worse still, it is not enough to produce effective campaigns to generate more electoral support. In order to compliment public funds, funding from other private sources is thus needed. The ACDP official was of the opinion that a "public funding reform" was necessary in order to address the financial challenges that opposition parties go through. He proposed that an allocation of 50 percent proportionality and 50 percent equitability would be of immense benefit for parties, especially the smaller ones who have low representation in parliament. For him, a public funding reform will ensure that the playing field among parties (especially during elections) is equal. The ACDP official added the following:

"Adequate funding, whether from the state or private donors, ensures better party structures, more personnel and a higher level of visibility in communities. Funding also enables the party interact with a larger segment of voters."

4.5.1.1 Private funding

As earlier pointed out, political parties are free to raise money from private donors to run election campaigns or other party activities. Unlike public funding, this form of funding is not subject to any regulation. An interesting finding was that private funding was an element of concern for both party officials. According to the ACDP official, private funding is skewed towards the governing party, the ANC, and the DA. Smaller opposition parties are not seen worthy of private donations. This is due to the fact that private donations might be misconstrued to be a fight against the party in government. This finding was reinforced by the COPE official who mentioned that private donors might feel that they would be labelled “pro or against democracy” depending on which political party the donor funds. She was of the opinion that private funding can have an impact on the “clients of the businesses” and the “public at large”. Based on this response, it could be assumed that the bottom line of businesses may be negatively or positively impacted depending on their customers’ awareness of their political stance. The same could be said about parties; either they could gain or lose electoral support depending on the businesses that associate themselves with the party. Hence, private funding is a controversial subject for most parties.



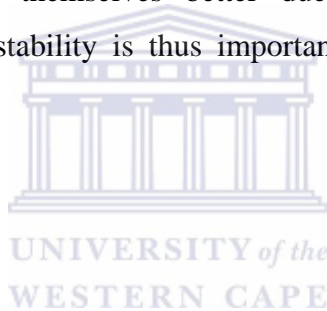
The ACDP respondent further explained that the ACDP is known for its Christian principles and family values. Private funding from businesses that are not aligned with those principles and values can become problematic. For example, prior to the 2011 elections, the party was faced with an ethical dilemma whether or not to accept funding from organizations whose businesses seemed to be in conflict with the party’s ideologies. As a result, they had to decline the donations to protect the party’s name and image. Henceforth, he agreed with the COPE official that private funding could have strong effect on the image of the party and (in this regard) could influence the perceptions of voters.

4.5.1.2 Membership fees

With regards to internal funding, both parties rely on membership fees to cover some of the party’s expenses. The membership fees are used for administration purposes and are seldom enough to finance other party related activities such as election campaigns. Most of its members cannot pay the R10 annual fee due to poverty and unemployment. According to the

ACDP official, this amount has not changed since 1994. The ACDP respondent explained that internal financing is also limited because not all party officials can make financial contributions to the party.

Although COPE's membership fees⁵⁸ are slightly higher than that of the ACDP, both parties have tried to keep membership fees as low as possible. Hence, a lack of financial contributions from party members could be related to poverty. This is another cause of weakness within the opposition. Due to poverty (and unemployment of members), opposition parties lack resources to improve the party's position in elections. Under such circumstances it is difficult for opposition parties to get support from the masses. From the responses gathered, it was established that a lack of financial resources limited the parties' ability to interact with the electorate during the 2011 elections. In this regard, both the ACDP and COPE were unable to market themselves better due to financial constraints at all organisational levels. Financial stability is thus important for parties to gain and sustain electoral support.



4.5.2 Structural limitations

Financial constraints cannot be the sole reason for poor electoral performance of the opposition. The ACDP official, on one hand, focussed more on the external (such as public/private funding) problems the party faced but was unenthusiastic to provide information on the internal problems within the party, and how that influenced their voter support for 2011. On the other hand, the COPE representative highlighted that internal problems also played a key role in the 2011 election outcome. Despite lack of funding, COPE faced challenges such as lack of good administration and logistical plans. Additionally, the party failed to plan in advance for the 2011 elections. This is evident in the statement below:

⁵⁸ The COPE representative indicated that COPE charges different rates for membership fees, depending on your social status in the community. R30.00 per year for an ordinary member; R10.00 per year per student; R10.00 per year per young person; R10.00 per year per women; R500.00 per year per business and professional member

In the run-up to the 2011 elections, candidate posters were only displayed a week before the elections; many service providers for pamphlets and t-shirts were already with orders from other political parties.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that party fortunes in the 2011 elections were heavily tied to perceptions of party leadership and image. Although, leadership and image were the primary determinants for voters to look for an alternative opposition party in 2011, other secondary factors such as party campaigns, the role of the media, and the party's track record in government also impacted their voting choice at the polls.



Chapter Five: Conclusion and reflection of key findings

5.1 Introduction

This thesis aimed to answer a central research question, namely “Why did voters who previously voted for the ACDP and COPE decide to move their support from these parties in the 2011 local government election?” This chapter thus explains the research findings with an implicit logic toward answering the central research question and sub-questions which were outlined in Chapter One.

Chapter One indicated that most South African opposition parties have been struggling to maintain or increase their support at the polls. Additionally, the chapter illustrated that there was a definite movement from smaller opposition parties to the DA in the 2011 local election and consequently, this voter exodus to the DA weakened small opposition parties. Two parties that were significantly affected by the voter exodus were the ACDP and COPE. The main objective of the study was to explore the motivations embedded in voters’ decision to move from smaller opposition parties like the ACDP and COPE to the DA. This chapter presents concluding comments about the key findings regarding the motivations of voters interviewed in this study. As previously indicated, the theoretical approach used by Popkin is most suitable for understanding the choice that respondents made to move their support from the ACDP and COPE. Hence Popkin’s integrated approach has been adopted to make sense of the behaviour and movement of voters during the 2011 election.

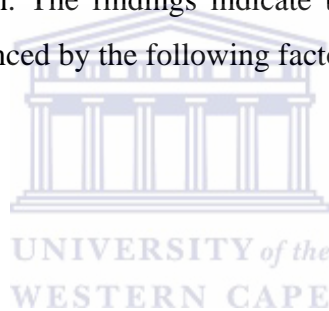
As previously noted, weak and fragmented opposition parties are a common phenomenon in democracies around the world. The literature has shown that weak opposition parties are particularly common in democracies that are characterised by one-party dominance. In a dominant party system, a single political party is consistently elected and gains an absolute majority of the legislative seats. It was argued that one-party dominance has many negative implications for a democracy; a lack of public accountability, abuse of state resources, less opportunity for meaningful electoral competition between parties, and this could lead to voter apathy. Opposition parties are therefore regarded to be critical for a democracy to function properly.

On the other hand, it was discovered that the weak and fragmented opposition cannot be solely blamed on the political dominance of one political party. Reviewing the literature it was discovered that there are several reasons that account for opposition parties' failure to broaden their appeal among the South African electorate. These reasons included their leadership style, party image, lack of financial resources, their inability to produce alternative policies, and failure to carve election messages and manifestoes that are distinct from the ruling party, the ANC.

5.2 Research findings

As aforementioned, a substantial number of voters who supported the ACDP and COPE in the 2009 general elections decided to withdraw their electoral support from the ACDP and COPE in the 2011 local election. The findings indicate that the key motivations for their movement to the DA were influenced by the following factors:

- Party leadership
- Party images
- Election campaigns
- Media coverage



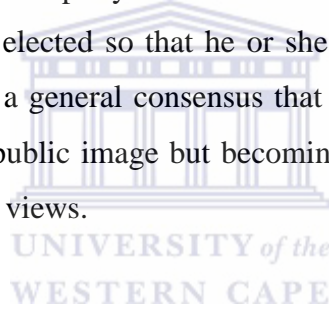
It is important to note that the primary motivation for the movement away from the ACDP and COPE was leadership and party image. The quality and effectiveness of the party's election campaigns and media coverage were seen as secondary factors. The findings will thus be discussed in that order.

5.2.1 Leadership of ACDP, COPE and DA

A key theme that emerged from the interviews was the quality of leadership of the parties selected for this study, the ACDP, COPE and the DA. Seemingly, incompetent leadership by

the ACDP and COPE (at the national level) was the primary motivation for the voter migration to the DA. Interestingly, the majority of the research participants evaluated the national leaders of the parties. This substantiates the argument made in previous chapters; the success of parties is linked to the voter perceptions and evaluations of the party leaders, their visibility and engagement with the electorate. As Africa (2008, p. 47) suggests, perceptions about the party are more likely to revolve entirely around the national leader. Only a few of the participants had evaluated the quality and competence of the mayoral candidates in this election.

Participants who previously supported the ACDP revealed that the party leadership lacks the ability to make the party a strong alternative voice in party politics. Although the majority had positive comments about the national leader, Rev. Meshoe, they expressed concerns about the poor electoral growth of the party under his leadership. A suggestion was made that a new national leader should be elected so that he or she could broaden the party's appeal among the electorate. There was a general consensus that the current ACDP leader's strong Christian morals are good for a public image but becoming less relevant in a society that is characterised by diverse religious views.



The ACDP mayoral candidate for the City of Cape Town⁵⁹ (Ferlon Christians) received a negative rating in terms of leadership. Participants claimed that Christians was a weak candidate in comparison to other mayoral candidates of other parties that contested the election. The majority of the participants proposed that the ACDP should have recruited a stronger candidate who could have effectively challenged the mayoral candidates of other parties. They made reference to mayoral candidates like Patricia De Lille (DA) and Tony Ehrenreich (ANC) that came out much stronger in political debates in the 2011 election. The perception that De Lille would be a good mayor thus motivated the participants to give their vote to the DA. The participants that were interviewed had little opinions and insights of Ehrenreich.

⁵⁹ In chapter one, I indicated that most participants reside in the City Of Cape Town and could thus only form political opinions about the mayoral candidates contesting in this area. The same applies for COPE.

In a similar manner, those who previously supported COPE revealed that COPE's leadership looked relatively incompetent to make the party a strong, political voice that will adequately represent their interest. Their perception was based on the internal leadership conflict among the party leadership and members soon after the 2009 elections. Participants felt that COPE was too preoccupied with their court cases and lacked the necessary discipline to resolve the issue internally. Ultimately, a perception was created among voters that COPE has no political direction. Thus, the level of confidence and trust that they had in COPE in the 2009 elections dramatically declined after the party's leadership problems became public. Participants were unable to give an opinion about the mayoral candidates of COPE because they did not know who the candidates were in the different metropolitan areas. This indicates that visibility, engagement and communication between the party and voters were limited in the 2011 election.

So why was leadership so important in this election? The findings revealed that opposition voters were looking for a party that displayed a strong leadership ability to bring an end to the leadership of the ANC. As stated earlier in the foregoing chapters, the 2011 election came at the time of high levels of dissatisfaction with the ruling party. Issues such as the corruption allegations made against prominent public officials that belong to the ANC, the abuse of state resources, and scandals that surround the party leader, Jacob Zuma, led to the negative perception that the ANC is no longer fit to govern the country. Participants argued that the ANC allowed individuals within their own ranks to misuse their political position to further personal interests. In addition, participants expressed their concerns about the manner in which the governing party dealt with local issues such as the lack of basic services in poor communities. Their frustrations and anger in relation to the performance of the ANC had an impact on their voting behaviour and movement in the 2011 election. They saw the 2011 election as an opportunity to make the DA a stronger opposition and to punish the governing party for its shortcomings.

The DA, on the other hand, appeared to have a strong leadership orientation. The party also seemed more competent in terms of governance and providing adequate basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity to local communities. The DA's leadership and governing track record in the City of Cape Town incited some hope and inspiration among voters.

Consequently, participants interviewed for this study chose to switch to the DA as they could see engagement between a stronger opposition party as an asset rather than a liability. This finding is in consonance with Popkin's theory that when voters make their choices at the ballot box they are primarily motivated by their insight and assessment of the party candidates or incumbents. Voters are thus inclined to vote for a party that they feel has a leader or candidate that have the ability to represent and govern effectively.

Moreover, negative perceptions about the leadership of the ACDP and COPE were linked to the poor presence and visibility of the parties during the 2011 election. Participants felt that that party leaders, candidates and campaigners should have been more visible in communities. The majority of the participants said the ACDP and their leader only emerge during the election period and then disappear when the election is over. This negative perception about the ACDP was the basis of much disillusionment among the participants who were previously loyal supporters of the party. In addition, the distribution of election manifestoes and pamphlets were also limited, if not, non-existent in some communities. In contrast, the DA's presence and visibility was stronger than other parties contesting the election. There was engagement between the national leader, mayoral candidate and party representatives with the electorate. Indeed, opposition voters felt that the positive engagement with the DA motivated them to change their vote to the DA in the 2011 election. This point is further explored in the section related to the perceptions about the election campaigns.

5.2.2 Party images

Both parties (ACDP and COPE) received a negative rating in terms of public image. The findings showed that the ACDP's conservative and 'churchy' image has become less important to some opposition voters who previously supported the party. It was argued that the image of the party was, and to an extent, still excludes other social groups. This finding is in agreement with Popkin's integrated theory which argues that voters do reason about party images by assessing whether the party is inclusive to the needs and concerns of all individuals. As previously indicated, an 'exclusive' party image could prevent parties to grow electorally because not all voters can identify with the party's ideologies and policies. The findings thus indicated that leadership and party images are equally important in vote choices and unfortunately, the ACDP fared very poorly in both aspects in the 2011 election.

The findings further indicated that COPE's leadership disputes tarnished their public image. Voters that previously supported COPE in the 2009 elections said that they are not convinced that COPE is ready to govern any public office. As with their perception on leadership, participants noted that COPE has failed to present a positive public image, as the party appears 'untrustworthy and incompetent'.

The findings revealed that all participants had a positive perception and evaluation of the DA in terms of its public image. Overall, the DA was seen as competent, trustworthy and inclusive to the majority of participants. Participants felt that based on the DA's positive party image, the party will do a good job in government.

The above findings about party images are in agreement with Popkin's theory that in the absence of sufficient information, voters use party images as reasoning "short cuts" to help them to decide which party to vote or not to vote for.



5.2.3 Evaluations of election campaigns

With regards to election campaigns, the majority of the participants felt that both the ACDP and COPE had poorly developed campaigns for the 2011 election. Their negative perception about party campaigns was another reason for their migration to the DA in this election.

The findings revealed that both parties were unable to develop campaigns that attracted the attention of the voter. Both parties campaigned around the same issues. For example, both parties chose to focus on the poor government performance on important issues such as unemployment, crime, and service delivery, to name a few. These two parties thought that they would secure more support if they capitalize on the shortcomings of the ANC and the DA. However, voters were less interested in hearing problems but were more interested in solutions to these problems. Unfortunately, the ACDP and COPE (like other opposition parties) failed to provide campaigns that are unique and that are distinct from other parties contesting the election. In that sense, voters were presented with the same campaign messages which did not motivate them to support the parties.

It was further revealed that the majority of participants did not read the campaign manifestoes of the two parties. This was due to a limited distribution of manifestoes and pamphlets by the ACDP and COPE. On the other hand, campaign material of the DA was easily accessible by participants. In sum, the DA managed to develop positive campaigns and was able to reach a broad spectrum of voters in the election.

The above findings are in consonance with Popkin's theory that campaigns matter to voters. Voters may turn to party campaigns for help with the evaluation of the party, the leader and candidates, and policy positions. In this vein, voters may assess the overall competence and ability to deliver of the party based on the party's campaign behaviour. Election campaigns, to some extent then, are information shortcuts for voters to help them to reason about political parties.

5.2.4 Media coverage

The findings revealed that the media played an important role in the migration away from small parties to the DA. Most media reporting portrayed the DA as a strong political opponent while other parties like the ACDP and COPE had to compete for the media's attention. As seen in Chapter Four, the DA managed to attract a sizeable portion of media coverage giving the party a platform to canvass for votes. Indeed, participants that were exposed to media reports on the DA, and other parties contesting the 2011 local election, were more likely to change their political views and voting choices during the 2011 election. Media reports and communication highlighted the leadership problems of COPE and created an image that COPE lacked competence and integrity to deal with critical issues relating to leadership and governance. Participants indicated that COPE's internal problems were all over the media and therefore it was hard to ignore. Additionally, the ACDP had a weak media presence in the run-up to the 2011 election. Most of the ACDP's media statements focused on the ANC while limited attention was given to their plans and policy proposals.

Ultimately, a considerable amount of media coverage was related to the 'two-horse' race between the ANC and the DA. This strengthened the DA's position compared to other

opposition parties. Participants noted that the media was biased towards particular parties in the 2011 elections and hence perceptions of, and support for, parties were constructed accordingly. As previously indicated, these findings support the assertions of Popkin that the media has an effect on voting choices; the media affects how voters reason about the government, parties and public issues.

5.2.5 Voting determinants

Contrary to the assumptions that voting choices would be determined by traditional determinants, the 2011 local election pointed out that voting behaviour is much more complex in South Africa. As seen in Chapter Four, research findings showed that voters, especially those who previously supported the ACDP and COPE, were more mobile and flexible in terms of their vote choices. The findings indicate that electoral choices were not determined by historical loyalties, race or social or religious identity in the 2011 election. Those who previously supported the ACDP and COPE in the 2009 elections found themselves switching off their traditional partisan predispositions - they were more focussed on serious issues of concern in their communities, as well as the (ANC) government's performance in dealing with those issues. These voters paid careful attention to leadership, party images, party campaigns and media reporting. More specifically, those who supported the ACDP in 2009 felt that their vote choices in 2011 were not informed by their religious identity, as in previous elections. Those who formally voted for COPE moved away from the perception that the DA is a party only for 'white interest'. These participants moved away from their perception that only a break-away party that comes from the ANC could adequately represent political preferences.

When considering their inputs in this study, one could observe a rational form of reasoning when it comes to the participants' political opinions and decisions about the ACDP, COPE and the DA. The responses given by participants appeared to be more in line with the integrated theoretical approach adopted by Popkin that holds that voters has strong opinions about the government and political parties. Voters also have a strong awareness of serious issues in their communities and the mistakes made by government regarding these issues. Findings indicated that participants paid attention to negative or positive feelings about the

ACDP and COPE's leadership, party images, election campaigns and the media coverage, which led to them switching their vote.

5.3 Conclusion

The study has illustrated the complexity involved in voter decision-making processes. Voters use different elements of reason to help them decide which party to vote for. The findings suggest that voters do have strong political opinions about national party leaders. My findings also suggest that voters do reason about their character, competence and visibility, and that voters also reason about party images, campaigns and media communication.

A key problem was that party leaders should be more visible during and between elections. The findings revealed that in most instances voters has no engagement with the leaders of the parties contesting the election. Party leaders should make themselves available to their constituencies on a regular basis. It will help them to establish public trust and improve the relationship between the party, existing members, and potential voters.



Opposition parties like the ACDP and COPE should keep in mind that party campaigning does not stop after the election results have been announced. However, their campaign should continue until the next election. Permanent campaigns, mentioned by Africa (2012), could improve perceptions about the party and better their changes at the polls. A permanent campaign could improve their visibility and improve their party profile in the election.

Currently, opposition parties blame the biased reporting of the media for their poor performance at the polls. However parties could use free media opportunities more effectively to bring their campaign messages across. The radio is a widely accessible medium to improve their communication and engagement with voters. Parties could also consider the use of online media as this communication platform is untapped by most parties.

Most opposition parties seldom offer alternative policies to voters, but rather emphasize their ability to run the government ‘better’ than the incumbent party. Both the ACDP and COPE focused on the shortcomings of the ANC and DA in the 2011 election rather than presenting viable solutions to the social and economic problems the country is facing. This trend was also outlined in the run-up to the 2014 general elections; many smaller parties have sought to capitalise on the weaknesses of the ANC, rather than showcasing their own strengths (Marrian, 2014).

Moreover, small parties should therefore seek to change their election strategies in order to meet the needs of the electorate whose confidence in their ability to win is dwindling. Clear and well-articulated election messages will definitely improve smaller opposition parties’ electoral performance to the extent that they can effectively challenge parties such as the ANC and DA.

In the research conducted, I observed that only one opposition party, the DA, has been able to grow its support among the electorate. This was mainly due to positive perceptions and evaluations of the party in terms of leadership, party image, well-articulated election campaigns and positive media coverage. At the same time, smaller opposition parties like the ACDP and COPE lost support to the DA because of negative perceptions in terms of the above mentioned factors. At the end, the ACDP and COPE were seen as too weak to compete for municipal seats.

Moreover, it should be emphasized that voters saw the migration to the DA as the ‘only’ viable option to create a stronger opposition against the ANC. Given that the DA was the only opposition party growing electorally it made sense for these respondents to support the party in the 2011 local elections. Initially, they hoped that the ACDP and COPE would fulfil this strong opposition role, but the party’s dwindling support meant that this will never be the case.

There has been a perception that South Africa might be moving towards a two party system in the future. This perception is based on the DA electoral gains in the 2011 election while

other opposition parties have fared relatively poor. The DA's primary potential for growth lies in its ability to attract a significant number of black voters in forthcoming elections. Some analysts believe that the party has reached a ceiling with regard to white voters. It would thus be important to investigate the electoral performance of the DA among black voters.

The research has highlighted that weak opposition parties raise serious challenges for the future of multiparty democracy. Not only do they strengthen the dominance of the ruling party, but they also pose a serious threat to the survival of the very idea of a political opposition and of electoral choice. The need for a stronger opposition has thus taken centre stage in the political discourse.

It is generally accepted that for democratic governance in any country to function effectively, governing parties need to be held accountable during their tenure. It is important for a governing party to know that there is a real possibility that they can be voted out and replaced by viable alternative parties. This is the reason why there is a need for strong opposition parties in democracy. Unfortunately, most opposition parties have struggled to maintain or increase their support base. More specifically, it would appear that opposition parties like the ACDP and COPE are faced with a serious electoral crisis. Should the ACDP and COPE wish to succeed in future elections, both parties need to come up with alternative political ideas (to the ruling party and the DA) that would attract and convince voters to vote for them. However, if the DA manages to capitalise on its electoral gains and to prove to be a more formidable political opponent at the national level, South Africa might be moving towards a two party system. The implications of a move to a two-party system remain to be seen.

In conclusion then, the answer to the central research question of "Why did voters who previously voted for the ACDP and COPE decide to move their support from these parties in the 2011 local government election", are as follows: leadership and party image have been found to be primary determinants of voter movement. Lesser, but not irrelevant issues such as party campaigns and media coverage were also found to be voter determinants. Given the uncertain future, opposition parties in South Africa such as the ACDP and COPE will need to be cognisant of these issues if they are to survive.

Appendix A: Dates of interviews

Participants	Date of interview
ACDP MPL	29 October 2012
ACDP participant 1	4 January 2013
ACDP participant 2	10 January 2013
ACDP participant 3	15 January 2013
ACDP participant 4	20 January 2013
ACDP participant 5	19 June 2013
ACDP Participant 6	09 February 2013
ACDP participant 7	28 June 2013
ACDP participant 8	29 July 2013
COPE MP	20 November 2012
COPE participant 1	27 November 2012
COPE participant 2	05 December 2012
COPE participant 3	09 January 2013
COPE participant 4	06 December 2012
COPE participant 5	27 November 2012
COPE participant 6	27 November 2012
COPE participant 7	23 January 2013
COPE participant 8	5 June 2013
COPE participant 9	14 June 2013



Appendix B: Informed consent form

With your signature at the bottom of this page, this form has the power to protect your autonomy. Please read it in full, and if you understand and agree, sign below.

- The purpose of this research is to investigate the declining voter support for opposition parties namely: ACDP and COPE.
- More specifically, this study will examine the underlying reasons that voters decided to move their vote from the ACDP and COPE (or to abstain from voting) in 2011 local government elections.

All that is required from you is participation in this interview as you may have valuable insights for this research. This interview should last no longer than sixty minutes.

Please be advised you will receive no rewards, gifts or compensation for participating in this research. Participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated confidentially and only used for references purposes. Hence, anonymity will be ensured where appropriate and there are no limits to confidentiality, unless you are willing to be named. The findings of the research will also be reported back to participants. You are at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences for yourself.

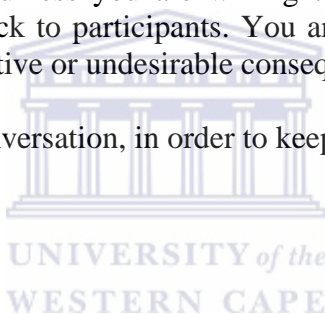
If you agree, I will record this conversation, in order to keep accurate notes.

Yours faithfully

Meshay Lee Moses

Tel: 0838739843

Email: meshayleemoses@gmail.com or 2756089@uwc.ac.za



I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

Appendix C: Ethical considerations for study

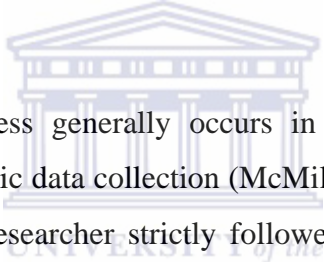
The essential purpose of research ethics is to protect the welfare and rights of research participants. Thus, to avoid unethical research practice, the researcher paid careful attention to ethical guiding principles for research. Two common key principles of research are that of autonomy and consent. These two principles requires the researcher to respect the autonomy of all persons participating in the research work, requiring the researcher to address issues such as the voluntary and informed consent of research participants (Durrheim, 1999, p. 66). Having this in mind, it was vital that the researcher clarify exactly what the researcher's intentions where when setting up the interviews. The researcher therefore provided all participants with an informed consent form that explained the purpose of the research in detail. As Durrheim states that the consent form ensures that participants receive a full, non-technical and clear explanation of the tasks expected of them, and allowing that they can make an informed choice to participate voluntarily in the research (1999, p. 66).

Additionally, the consent form was designed to ensure that the researcher will respect the participants' wishes to remain anonymous, unless requested otherwise by the participant. The consent form also explained that information obtained from the respondents is confidential. This means that no one has access to the individual data or the names of the participants except the researcher. All the participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The researcher only commenced with the interview once the participants understood the purpose of the research and the informed consent form was signed. The consent form is included in appendix A.

Moreover, ethical clearance and approval was obtained from the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) Senate Research Grants before the study commencement. All interviews conducted by the researcher strictly conformed to the university's Code of Ethics in Research. All work and information gathered that is not the researcher's own will be acknowledged according to UWC's approved referencing conventions. A final copy will be submitted to the institution and to the research participants.

Appendix D: Interview protocol and data collection procedures notes

In order to ensure good qualitative interview questions, the interview guide field testing was conducted with two participants sharing the same characteristics with the study participants, but who were not included in the main study. The main objective of piloting was to ensure that the interviews were capable of eliciting information that could answer the study questions. During the piloting stage, the researcher took detailed notes on how the participants were reacting to both the phrasing and the content of the specific questions. The researcher was very attentive to see if the respondents could show any confusion or surprise at a particular question. Therefore, she inspected the interview questions to ensure that question was valid enough to elicit a specific piece of information. In order to achieve this goal, she looked at the phrasing of the questions to ensure that respondents were able to understand the meaning and implication of each question in the same way.



Qualitative data collection process generally occurs in three phases that are planning, beginning data collection, and basic data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 322). In the scope of this study, the researcher strictly followed these three phases. In the first phase, the researcher analysed the research aim and objectives as well as the research questions in order to identify the respondents who would be logically informative. During this phase, the researcher also located her respondents and searched and gained permission to conduct the interview with the respondents. In the second phase (beginning data collection), the researcher established rapport, trust and reciprocal relations with the respondents. During this phase, the researcher gave each participant an overview of the study and emailed each of them the interview guide with the key questions. The researcher also made telephonic contact with the participants that served as reminder for the scheduled interview.

Furthermore, the researcher also adjusted her interviewing and recording procedures to the persons involved. For instance, she allowed each participant to respond in his/her preferred language. Participants thus responded in either English or Afrikaans or both. None of the respondents were Xhosa, Zulu, and Sotho etc. In the last phase, the researcher administered the interviews with the participants. In this phase, the researcher had a casual conversation to put the participants at ease. The researcher allowed each participant to talk about themselves

and how they feel about voting in particular and elections in general. After this brief discussion, the researcher moved to the interview questions and the consent form.



Appendix E: Interview schedule for voters

1. Are elections still important in South Africa? Why?

2. Which parties did you vote for in the different elections since 1994?

General Elections	1994	1999	2004	2009
National				
Provincial				

Local Government Elections	1995	2000	2006	2011
PR (Metro)				
Ward Councillor				

3. What were the reasons that you decided to change to the DA in 2011?

4. The media has a duty to inform citizens about the electoral process and enable them to make informed choices, how did the media influence your 2011 voting choice?

5. Thinking about the party (parties) that you voted for in 2009:
 - 5.1 What was the main reason that you voted for this party in 2009?
 - 5.2 What was the main reason that you withdrew your vote from this party in 2011?
 - 5.3 Do you think that the party's 2011 election campaign was effective? Why do you say so?

5.4 Do you think this party received enough fair coverage from the media in the 2011 election?

5.5 Would you give a positive or negative rating of the party's leadership? Why would you give it this rating?

5.6 Do you still feel a sense of loyalty to that party?

5.7 What do you think is the fundamental reason that this party lost support in the 2011 election?

5.8 How do you think this party can improve its chances in the 2014 election?

6. Thinking about your voting choice in the 2011 election:

6.1 Was it difficult to move your vote to the DA?

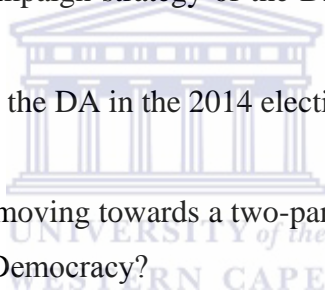
6.2 What do you think are the main reasons that the DA managed to increase its support?

6.3 What is the most effective campaign strategy of the DA compared to smaller opposition parties?

6.4 How likely are you to vote for the DA in the 2014 elections? Why?

7. Do you think South Africa is moving towards a two-party state? Do you think it would be beneficial for South Africa's Democracy?

8. Do you have any other comments you would like to add?



Appendix F: Interview schedule for party representatives

The topics of the interviews were selected in advance and the researcher decided on the sequencing and wording of the questions.

The following are the main interview questions for the party representatives:

1. How in a few words does your party describe itself?
2. Looking back to local government election in May 2011:
 - a. Since the election, how much has the party's membership increased or declined, in percentage or total numbers?
 - b. How much does your party charge for membership per annum?
 - c. What were the key reasons that your party was unable to increase its electoral support among South African voters during the 2011 local elections?
 - d. Voters tend to move away from parties. This has influenced electoral outcomes. What were the most important reasons for change in party support, in your opinion?
 - e. What constraints did your party face during the 2011 local election?
3. In a few words, please describe your election campaign of 2011
 - a. Do you think your campaign strategy was effective and please motivate your answer?
 - b. In your opinion what could you have done better in your campaign?
4. Political mobilising is a key component of gaining support. How does your party seek to recruit new members and/ or voters during and between elections?
5. Communication between parties and voters are important. Does your party have the necessary mechanisms in place to communicate with the public on policy issues?
 - a. If yes, what are these mechanisms? If no, what will be done to develop these?
6. Some parties promote internal democracy. How does your party promote internal democracy?

- 7. Briefly explain the media environment**
 - a. Parties have access to free media coverage. Please indicate whether the free media coverage given to your party was sufficient?
 - b. In your opinion, how was your party covered by the media during the 2011 local government election?
 - c. Did the party make use of paid media in preparation for the election?
- 8. There has been a call for political party funding reform**
 - a. How would you describe public funding from the state?
 - b. What are your thoughts on private funding?
- 9. What are your perceptions of the ANC and the DA?**
 - a. Public protests have been a sign of anger towards the governing party. Why was the ANC able to convince voters to vote for them in the 2011 election regardless of poor services?
 - b. Looking at the image of the DA, why was this party more successful than other opposition parties to convince voters to vote for them in 2011?
- 10. Do you think South Africa is moving towards a two-party state?**
 - a. What are your views around a two-party system? Would it be beneficial for South Africa's democracy?
 - b. How would it affect parties?
- 11. Many analysts have criticized small opposition parties saying that they do not appeal to the needs of electorate. What do you think is the fundamental reason that smaller opposition parties are not gaining support?**
- 12. How can your party improve their chances in the next election?**

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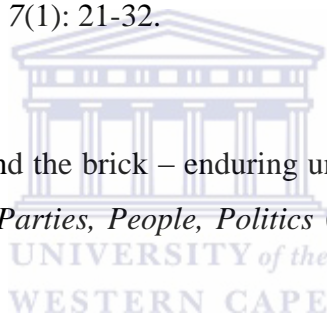
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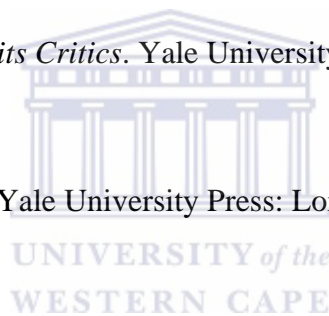
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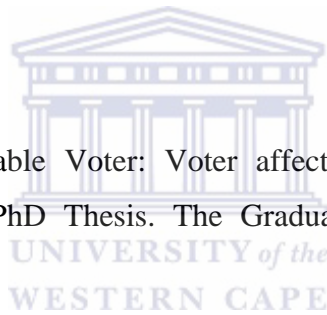
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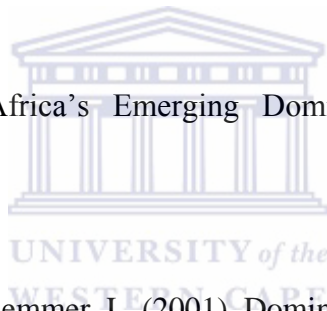
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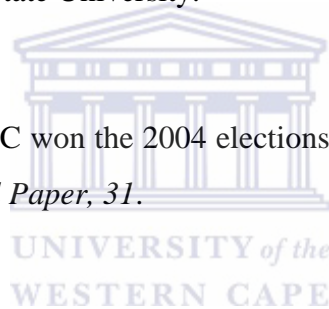
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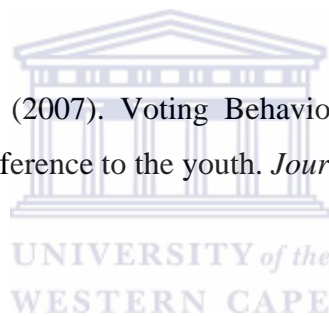
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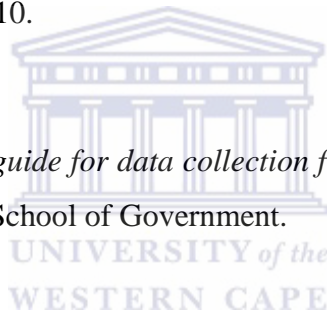
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