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Introduction

The South African 2011 Local Government Election (LGE) is over and political parties are assessing the success of their campaigning season. The political parties that did well are talking up their successes as much as possible, while those parties that fared poorly are in damage control mode. Amongst all the daily media spin it can be difficult to glean what exactly happened in the various electoral contests that matter and why these mattered. These elections did throw up some things that surprised and many other things that did not, but are no less interesting. The main feature was the voter turnout. Many analysts and commentators speculated that turnout would remain at similarly low levels to previous LGE's or decline even further due to deepening levels of dissatisfaction with local governance. But turnout actually increased countrywide across municipalities. These elections also saw the African National Congress (ANC) lose a share of the proportional electoral support across many municipalities.² The Democratic Alliance (DA), on the other hand, has seemingly enjoyed a swing in its proportional share of the electoral support. A number of metros were also the site of heavier contestation than in elections past and some contests, such as in Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape, were tight until the end. While other metros, such as in the City of Cape Town, saw more decisive victories. Some electoral trends may have emerged and what does this mean for the various political parties' future and especially for local governance in South Africa? Did the political landscape shift and if so, was it a seismic or slight shift? More questions also remain.

- Was the increased turnout a story of differential turnout in certain communities and which political parties were aided by this increased turnout?
- Were the differences in turnout a feature in only certain communities?
- Did the swing in support towards the DA come at the expense of the ANC or was it a function of this differential turnout?
- Or was this swing in support predominantly at the expense of smaller political parties, which fared quite poorly with some heavy losses?
- But despite the higher levels of contestation and some fluctuations in support, why was the DA unable, at least via coalition, to capture Nelson Mandela Bay?

In order to address these questions we adopt a thematic approach where the main themes that will be covered include:

- An assessment of the voter turnout;
- An assessment of the ANC's performance;

¹ We are indebted to the News Research Team at the SABC, who we worked with closely during the public broadcaster's coverage of the elections. We would like to thank them for allowing us to have access to their elections analysis tool.

² Here we refer to a decline in the proportional share of the entire pool of registered voters. This does not indicate a decline in the absolute number of votes cast in favour of the ANC.

- An assessment of the DA's performance;
- An assessment of the performance of small opposition parties such as the Congress of the People (COPE), the National Freedom Party (NFP); the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and other smaller opposition parties.
- While a discussion of the key metro races, in Nelson Mandela Bay in particular, is also an important part of any assessment of these elections.
- Finally, we discuss the possible impact of these elections on the general political landscape and on local governance in South Africa in particular.

The Political Context and Voter Turnout

Voter turnout is often under-appreciated as a factor in election results, particularly given the proportional representation (PR) electoral system used in South Africa. Simply put, the result of a low voter turnout can increase the proportional strength of each vote that is cast by those voters who turn up at the polls.³ But South Africa uses a mixed electoral system for local government elections as opposed to a 100 percent proportional representation system at provincial and national level. Thus, 50 percent of a municipal council's seats are derived from a proportional representation ballot and the remaining seats are comprised of directly elected ward candidates. But how does the principle of proportionality work at the local level? The political party's proportional share of the seats in a municipal council is calculated from all the votes cast for the party on both the PR and ward ballots. In other words, while voters do vote twice and one vote is cast in a "first-past-the-post" election for ward councillors, all votes are tallied and applied to the council proportionately. So ultimately it remains a form of pure PR, but with an element of direct constituency-based democracy. Voter turnout is thus a critical factor in the results of any election in South Africa.

Moreover, by voter turnout, we do not include the voting-age population (VAP). This is the number of South African citizens who are 18 years old and eligible to vote. The population of registered voters in South Africa does not compare similarly with South Africa's VAP. So there are approximately 7 million eligible voters who are not registered with the IEC.⁴ In the previous 2006 and 2000 local government elections, voter turnout stood at 48.4 percent and 48.5 percent respectively. This is very low in comparison to the 78 percent and 76 percent of voters who turned up for the 2009 and 2004 general elections. So the turnout dynamics of local government elections, in terms of voter behaviour, have been different to those seen in general elections and it deserves greater attention as there is not enough data on this issue.

But, as a trend, citizens tend to vote when they think they will win as a result of increased competition, or that they have a renewed voice in electoral outcomes. There are different traditions of mobilization

³ Jonathan Faull explains elections as a contest for a piece of a pie. The size of the election pie remains the same, no matter how many voters show up demanding a slice. Thus, the number of voters who turn up at the polling stations on voting day determines the size of each slice, or in other words, the strength of each vote. Faull explains that "if two people vote or if twenty million people vote, the sum of the votes is formulated into a 100% figure and divided up proportionately." See Jonathan Faull, *The Politics of Cape Town*, 2004.

⁴ See Collette Schulz-Herzenberg, "Trends in Party Support and Voter Behaviour," in Roger Southall and John Daniel (eds), *Zunami: The 2009 South African Elections*, Jacana Media, Auckland Park: 2009, (p.24-25).

around local issues in South Africa. Under Apartheid, black authorities were rejected by the majority in townships and working class areas and a culture of boycotts and parallelism via street committees was established. While in suburban South Africa the culture of rate payers associations has a long history and encourages engagement. Thus, varying cultures exist as to how communities engage with local governance. It would have seemed that voter turnout could speak to the extent of a loss of confidence in local governance in South Africa. Citizens are generally far more critical of local structures than national and provincial structures. This is a constant trend and in some ways understandable as local government performance and failure is tangible – potholes, refuse removal and sanitation are key local issues for most citizens.

These elections also came at a time when local governance is beset with challenges round service delivery issues and citizen confidence. And this was confirmed by a *“State of local Government”* report released by the Department of Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs in 2009 where it stated that “key elements of the local governance system were showing signs of distress.”⁵ Meanwhile the increase in violent protests has created a frustrated state that has become increasingly violent in its response to these challenges. The recent death of Andries Tatane, a protestor killed by police in Ficksburg (Free State), being a clear example. Idasa’s Local Governance Unit recently released its *“State of Local Governance in South Africa from a Citizen Perspective”* where it stated that one in 10 citizens surveyed were satisfied in the quality of service delivery provided by their municipalities. This was a significant decrease from 2006 where four in 10 respondents were satisfied.⁶ Therefore, citizen perceptions of local governance in South Africa is currently not only negative, but it is becoming more so over time.⁷

This report also concluded that the current levels of dissatisfaction with local governance could either result in significant shifts in party and candidate support or lead to a low voter turnout as citizens lose confidence in local governance as an institution.⁸ A recent attitudinal survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) also indicated that voters’ intention to vote is underpinned by previous participation in elections, a general interest in politics and general satisfaction with political leadership, efficacy and responsiveness. Approximately 65 percent of respondents indicated to the HSRC that political disillusionment and disinterest were their primary reason for not intending to vote indicating a link between citizen’s perception of and level of satisfaction with local governance and their willingness to participate in the upcoming local government elections.⁹

⁵ Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, *State of Local Government Report*, 2009.

⁶ Idasa, *The State of Local Governance in South Africa from a Citizen Perspective*, 2011.

⁷ This is despite Idasa’s research showing that service delivery had actually remained more or less the same during the past 5 years. But it is the disjuncture between what citizens expect and what they receive from the state that is in fact increasing. This accounts for the overall levels of satisfaction with local governance having actually decreased. See *The State of Local Governance in South Africa from a Citizen Perspective*, p.36.

⁸ Idasa, 36.

⁹ Human Sciences Research Council, *IEC Voter Participation Survey*, 2011

Table 1: Voter Turnout Comparison by Province and Year						
	2011				2006	2000
Province	Registered	MEC7	Voter	% Voter	% Voter	% Voter
	Voters	Votes	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout
Eastern Cape	3,111,535	7,346	1,813,802	58.16	56.06	55.45
Free State	1,386,521	3,060	767,321	55.22	47.24	48.36
Gauteng	5,592,676	15,366	3,127,671	55.77	42.47	42.78
KwaZulu-Natal	4,648,733	8,589	2,865,855	61.53	50.57	45.97
Limpopo	2,340,799	2,764	1,172,855	50.05	44.74	42.33
Mpumalanga	1,718,309	3,396	960,748	55.80	46.35	43.02
North West	1,576,898	3,457	845,093	53.47	45.63	43.90
Northern Cape	572,140	1,391	363,361	63.36	53.50	55.09
Western Cape	2,706,736	9,286	1,748,208	64.37	51.78	57.15
Total	23,654,347	54,655	13,664,914	57.64	48.40	47.33
<i>Source: SABC News Research and IEC</i>						

And so a number of analysts and commentators therefore speculated that because of this deepening crisis, the voter turnout would drop in these elections below the previous figure of 48.6 percent in 2006. But in fact the national average turnout increased to 57.64 percent of all registered voters (See Table 1). There were significant increases in turnout across all provinces and metropolitan cities. The Western Cape, the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal also saw the highest levels of turnout of all provinces.

Increased electoral competition is the likely reason for the increases in turnout. The electoral landscape has seen some shifts and changes since the last local government election in 2006. Different electoral trends also emerged in the 2009 general elections. We saw increases in support for the Democratic Alliance (DA) and some decreases in support for the African National Congress (ANC).¹⁰ In comparison with the 2004 general elections the ANC lost a proportional share of the electoral support in every province except KwaZulu-Natal in the 2009 national elections. While the DA increased its overall support countrywide. The haemorrhaging of support by smaller opposition parties and the emergence of the Congress of the People (COPE) shortly before the 2009 general elections also featured. Two electoral choices seem to have emerged in our electoral politics, with most support disproportionately consolidated behind the ANC and the DA.

Because of this slightly shifting context, a number of metropolitan municipalities were also the scene of greater contestation during these elections when compared to the elections in 2006. These metros included the City of Cape Town, City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane and especially Nelson Mandela Bay municipality.

¹⁰ See Kate Lefko-Everrett, Neeta Misra and Justin Sylvester, *Idasa 2009 Election Response*. Available at: <http://www.polity.org.za/article/election-response-shifting-political-landscape-2009-04-30>

Table 2: Voter Turnout by Metro and Year				
Metro	2011		2006	2000
	Vds Dec	Turnout	Turnout	Turnout
	%	%	%	%
Buffalo City	100	55.59	55.26	56.84
City of Cape Town	100	64.44	51.96	56.47
City of Johannesburg	100	54.47	42.74	38.95
City of Tshwane	100	54.84	44.31	45.2
Ekurhuleni	100	55.66	47.38	44.64
Ethekwini	100	58.63	43.82	41.5
Mangaung	100	54.52	49.4	50.22
Nelson Mandela Bay	100	64.27	56.87	61.39
NATIONAL	100	56.69	48.4	47.33
<i>Source: SABC News Research</i>				

Looking at Table 2, it is clear that increased turnout occurred within all the metropolitan areas as well. The City of Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Bay both had the highest turnouts of all the metros in the country. However this is also where the DA performed best in all of the metro races that it contested, with a 40.24 percent share of support in Nelson Mandela Bay and a 61.15 percent share of support in City of Cape Town.¹¹ This may indicate that much of the DA's increase in electoral support has been driven by a significant increase in the number of votes coming from first time voters or voters who had stayed away in 2006 due to a perceived loss of electoral power or voice. In other words a higher turnout, behind the DA, within the opposition's traditional support base buoyed its overall proportional share of electoral support; this was particularly so in the key contests in the City of Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Bay.

But if an increased turnout aided the DA, does this mean it hurt the ANC? If we look at KZN, a province where the ANC is growing and where it increased its absolute number of votes from 932 978 in 2006 to 1 622 553 in 2011, we see that turnout also increased by approximately 11 percent from 50.57 percent in 2006 to 61.53 percent in the 2011. And this is despite the ANC having lost approximately 3 percent of its share of electoral support in these elections. So although the DA may have scored from an increased turnout, it did not necessarily hurt the ANC as turnout increased across the board including among the ANC's traditional support base. The real reasons for the ANC's slight proportional decline countrywide and the DA's increases may lie in differential turnout in key constituencies as well as some shifts in support and in increased competition, particularly across the Western Cape and in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro.

But nevertheless, the overall increase in turnout bodes well for the country's electoral health as the heightened political contestation has resulted in higher levels of participation by citizens.

¹¹ Both results in the City of Cape Town and Nelson Mandela Bay were increases in support of over 15 percent for the DA.

The African National Congress: Holding on to its base

Much was at stake for the ANC in these polls. The party continues to suffer from factionalism at all tiers of its organisation. Moreover many of the criticisms of local governance have been laid at its door including corrupt, unaccountable elected officials, poor service delivery and party factionalism crippling the ability of government to function. Furthermore proposed responses to some of these challenges such as its “cadre deployment bill” appear to have been cast aside. Although it increased its absolute number of votes the ANC came out of these elections slightly weakened, having lost a small percentage share of the proportion of the vote. Nevertheless, it should not be dismissed lightly as it remains the dominant party on the political landscape.

Table 3: ANC percentage share of PR vote by province			
Province	2011		2006
	Turnout (%)	Votes (%)	Votes(%)
Eastern Cape	58.2	71.37	81.75
Free State	55.2	71.02	76.61
Gauteng	55.8	59.66	62.5
Kwazulu-Natal	61.5	56.79	46.67
Limpopo	50.1	80.59	83.98
Mpumalanga	55.8	78.03	80.5
North West	53.5	74.03	76.6
Northern Cape	63.4	63.12	69.9
Western Cape	64.4	33.65	40.17
National	57.6	63.65	66.35
Source: SABC News Research			

Table 4: ANC percentage share of PR vote by metro				
Metro	2011		2006	2000
	Turnout	Votes	Votes	Votes
Buffalo City	55.59	70.01	81.03	80.31
City of Cape Town	64.44	32.8	38.08	38.25
City of Johannesburg	54.47	58.56	62.31	58.86
City of Tshwane	54.84	55.32	58.57	56.75
Ekurhuleni	55.66	61.63	61.56	56.53
Ethekwini	58.63	61.07	57.61	46.92
Mangaung	54.52	66.27	71.95	69.67
Nelson Mandela Bay	64.27	51.91	65.78	65.74
Source: SABC News Research				

The ANC won a total of 63.65 percent of votes in this election, compared with 66.35 percent in 2006. This continues the trend, which emerged in the 2009 elections, of a declining proportional share of electoral support for the party. The ANC’s proportion of electoral support dropped across all provinces, except Kwazulu-Natal where the party also increased its votes in the 2009 national elections buoyed by

the popularity of President Jacob Zuma and the decline of the IFP. The party had its sharpest decline in electoral support in its traditional heartland, the Eastern Cape where its share of the vote fell from 81.75 percent in 2006 to 71.37 percent in 2011.

Given the apparent dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance in local government and the squabbles over candidate lists it is puzzling that the party managed to hold onto a significant proportion of electoral support. How did the party fare in areas that have been hit by service delivery protests? Did turnout drop? Did disgruntled communities shift their vote to other parties?

Let's consider Meqheleng in Ficksburg, Free State where Andries Tatane was killed by police during a protest at the offices of the Setsoto municipality. In Setsoto 50 percent of voters turned out to vote in these elections, virtually unchanged from the 49.97 percent of who voted in 2006. However in this election the wards in Meqheleng Township had a lower turnout than the municipal average. This seems to be consistent with Idasa's previous analysis that high levels of dissatisfaction with government could result in low voter turnout in elections. But given that turnout increased overall, it may have much more to do with violent service delivery protests and violent responses by the state.

Table 5: ANC Electoral Support in 4 Meqheleng Wards		
Ward	Turnout %	Total Votes %
41901012	48.47	86.13
41901014	45.25	80
41901016	37	77.11
41901017	36.73	77.34
<i>SABC News Research and IEC</i>		

The ANC won 74.94 percent of the vote in Setsoto municipality, while the DA won the second-highest proportion of votes, 17.61 percent. In Meqheleng the ANC won all the wards convincingly indicating that those who voted did not shift their support to other parties, despite the problems they faced with the local government.

The town of Balfour in the Dipaleseng local municipality in Mpumalanga is another that has been rocked by service delivery protests. In 2009 and 2010 residents protested, demanding improved water and sanitation, infrastructure, housing, policing and emergency services. The town is also at the centre of a demarcation dispute after it was moved from Gauteng to Mpumalanga, with apparently little consultation with residents.¹²

¹² Good Governance Learning Network, *Recognising Community Voice and Dissonance*, 2011

Table 6: Electoral Support in Dipaliseng Municipality by Party		
POLITICAL PARTY	Total	
	Total	% Total
	Valid Votes	Valid Votes
ACDP	264	0.80%
ANC	19 683	59.82%
COPE	614	1.87%
DA	4 645	14.12%
FC	25	0.08%
Indep.	3 378	10.27%
IRASA	105	0.32%
PAC	1 187	3.61%
SCM	2 897	8.81%
VF PLUS	103	0.31%
Total Valid Votes	32 901	100.00%
Total Spoilt Votes	2 766	
Total Votes Cast	35 667	
Total Voter Turnout	12 076	
<i>SABC News Research and IEC</i>		

Turnout was higher in these elections than in 2006 with 61.51 percent of registered voters coming out compared to 52.89 percent in 2006. The ANC won the highest proportion of votes in the municipality, 59.82 percent, while the DA received 14.12 percent. This reflects a drop in the share of the vote for both parties. In 2006 the ANC received 75 percent while the DA received 15.16 percent. The electoral race was more contested in Dipaleseng this year than in 2006, with independents receiving 10.27 percent of the vote and the Socialist Civic Movement receiving 8.82 percent. It would appear that, despite it winning overall, independents and an alternative political party ate into some of the ANC's share of support.

The Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale municipalities have been at the centre of a demarcation row since the previous local government elections in 2006 when the Moutse area was moved from Mpumalanga to Limpopo despite the objections of residents. Disgruntlement with the demarcation has led to several community protests since 2006 and the community launching legal action against the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. The matter was heard by the Constitutional Court in March this year; judgment is pending.

Despite these difficulties the ANC retained control of both municipalities. It won 23 seats out of 32 in Ephraim Mogale and 41 seats out of 60 in Elias Motsoaledi. Turnout in both municipalities increased from 2006. In Elias Motsoaledi turnout was 51.98 percent compared with 40.64 percent in 2006, while Ephraim Mogale had a turnout of 49.89 percent compared to 47.08 percent in 2006. Residents of Moutse formed the Mpumalanga Party (MP) to contest this year's elections. The party's mandate is to move the municipality back to Mpumalanga. In both municipalities the MP has the second highest number of seats, dislodging the DA from second position in the municipality. It holds 3 seats in Ephraim Mogale and 4 seats in Elias Motsoaledi.

Table 7: Electoral Support in Ephraim Mogale Municipality by Party											
Party	2011				2011F			2006			
	Seats Contested	Won	Ward Seats	PR Seats	Total Seats	Ward Seats	PR Seats	Seats Contested	Won	Ward Seats	PR Seats
ANC	31	23	14	9	24	14	10	32	24	14	10
MP	14	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IDP	6	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DA	25	2	0	2	2	0	2	30	2	0	2
PAC	28	1	0	1	1	0	1	27	1	0	1
COPE	25	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	129	32	16	16	27	14	13	89			
Source: SABC News Research											

Table 8: Electoral Support in Elias Motsoaledi Municipality by Party											
Party	2011				2011F			2006			
	Seats Contested	Won	Ward Seats	PR Seats	Total Seats	Ward Seats	PR Seats	Seats Contested	Won	Ward Seats	PR Seats
ANC	60	41	25	16	45	28	17	60	45	28	17
MP	60	12	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DA	60	4	1	3	5	1	4	53	5	1	4
AZAPO	45	1	0	1	4	0	4	37	4	0	4
COPE	57	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
APC	49	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	331	60	30	30	54	29	25	150			
Source: SABC News Research											

In the days after election results were announced residents of communities in the Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal have protested against the process for compiling candidate lists in the election. Protesters have demanded that the ANC leadership keep its promise to remove candidates who were irregularly added to the nominations lists. According to media reports communities in Bizana in the Eastern Cape and Waterloo in Kwazulu-Natal rejected the candidates on their lists and demanded that their demands for change be met before the winners were sworn in¹³.

In Bizana, turnout was 57 percent in this election, the same as in 2006. The ANC won 82.12 percent of the vote compared to 93.12 percent in 2006. It appears that voters still voted for the ANC, despite their unhappiness with the candidates put forward by the party, perhaps with the understanding that they would be able to put their preferred candidates into power after the election. It is yet to be seen how the disputes over candidate lists will be resolved. It is also difficult to tell whether the case of Bizana is replicated in other parts of the country.

¹³ Dominic Mahlangu, Poll revolt hits ANC, *TimesLive*, 23 May 2011

Table 9: Electoral Support in Bizana Municipality by Party				
Political Party	DC 40%		Total	
	Total	% Total	Total	% Total
	Valid Votes	Valid Votes	Valid Votes	Valid Votes
ACDP	-	-	489	0.26%
AIC	3,246	5.22%	5 639	2.97%
ANC	53,658	86.34%	155 992	82.12%
APC	-	-	813	0.43%
COPE	2,472	3.98%	6 390	3.36%
DA	1,582	2.55%	4 272	2.25%
ID	-	-	11 464	6.04%
NFP	-	-	2 118	1.12%
PAC	440	0.71%	1 079	0.57%
UDM	748	1.20%	1 697	0.89%
Total Valid Votes	62 146	100.00%	189 953	100.00%
Total Spoilt Votes	3 801		8 907	
Total Votes Cast	65 947		198 860	
SABC News Research				

These examples illustrate that despite losing some of its share of the proportional vote, the ANC still dominates the electoral landscape. Even in areas with high levels of dissatisfaction with the performance of the party in local government, the ANC managed to win a large proportion of the vote. It is notable that turnout rose in Balfour and Moutse where the increase in independents and civic movements contesting the elections raised the level of competition and presented alternatives for disgruntled ANC supporters to vent their frustrations. Overall the ANC, despite having lost support predominantly among minorities and the middle classes, continues to hold onto its electoral base that is firmly rooted among the poor. Why is this so in spite of the challenges within local governance and an increasing level of civil unrest?

The answer perhaps lies largely within the ruling party's hegemony over the discourses on socio-economic transformation. The Tripartite Alliance with its broad cross section of political interests and traditions in particular is adept at mobilising around these issues, thus providing the ANC with a formidable structure with which to retain its electoral support. Moreover, it is able to use this structure to mobilise supporters to turnout at the polls. The ANC also continues to hold a significant amount of partisan electoral support within its base, although this accounts for much less than half of this base support. So perhaps the ANC's increasingly disaffected base continues to rather choose to vent its frustrations through a "stay away" from the polls rather than shifting support to the opposition. Incumbency also provides electoral benefits particularly since South Africa continues to hold elections within an unregulated space with regards to private funding of political parties. But this applies equally to the opposition, some of whom also benefit from this lack of regulation.

Recent events in Bizana indicate that the bargain made by ANC leaders with voters before the election to calm disputes over party lists will come back to haunt them in the coming months. How the party

deals with the expectations of its voters on this issue and how it chooses address the challenges it faces in local government will test its ability to retain the faith of an electoral base that is growing tired of promises that create expectations that remain unfulfilled. So while the ANC did not suffer a resounding defeat in these elections, the cracks are beginning to show. It is somewhat weaker as infighting and a poor record in local government are beginning to cost it in electoral support. Much of its electoral future will hinge on whether the opposition will be able to provide an alternative choice for its base, which they deem credible.

The Democratic Alliance: Still Consolidating the Opposition

This election was a crucial test for the opposition and particularly the Democratic Alliance (DA). The DA wanted to achieve a number of goals in these elections. The party wishes to grow itself into a serious alternative for disaffected ANC supporters; its election campaign illustrated this. Its success could also be measured by whether it would increase its proportional share of the national vote above the 20 percent mark. But success could also be measured as to how many more municipalities it would capture. And more so by whether it would run the ANC close in one of the major metros outside of the Western Cape such as in Nelson Mandela Bay and Tshwane.

Table 10: DA Percentage share of Proportional Vote by Province					
Province	2011			2006	2000
	Vd Dec	Turnout	Votes	Votes	Votes
	%	%	%	%	%
Eastern Cape	100	56.9	16.2	8.63	11.65
Free State	100	54.42	20.02	12.36	17.86
Gauteng	100	55.13	33.43	26.27	31.89
KwaZulu-Natal	100	60.55	11.88	7.49	14.55
Limpopo	100	49.23	6.52	5.39	8.09
Mpumalanga	100	54.92	13.78	10.44	13.17
North West	100	52.14	15.98	8.85	9.71
Northern Cape	100	62.46	21.99	10.52	28.65
Western Cape	100	63.85	57.7	33.31	50.98
NATIONAL	100	56.69	23.94	16.18	22.14
<i>Source: SABC News Research</i>					

The DA did well in these elections having increased its proportional share of the national vote from 16.18 percent in 2006 to 23.94 percent in 2011. Moreover, in the Western Cape they increased their proportional share from 33.31 percent in 2006 to 57.7 percent in 2011. While their result in the City of Cape Town increased from 41.67 percent in 2006 to 60.92 percent in 2011, thus leaving the City of Cape Town as the only metro where the opposition governs and the ANC is in opposition. In 2006 the DA received 42 percent of the electoral support while the ANC received 38 percent. And so in 2006 the DA fell short of the required 106 seats in the council in order to form a local government. But the DA was able to constitute a government by forming a coalition with several other opposition parties such as the FF+; the ACDP, the AMP, the UDM, the UIF and the UDP in order to block the ANC from retaining control of the council. This coalition was further cemented by the inclusion of the ID at a later stage with the ACDP leaving the coalition. But what accounts for this seeming swing in support towards the DA?

Table 11: DA Percentage share of Proportional Vote by Metro					
Metro	2011			2006	2000
	Vds Dec	Turnout	Votes	Votes	Votes
	%	%	%	%	%
Buffalo City	100	55.59	20.48	12.37	12.93
City of Cape Town	100	64.44	60.92	41.67	52.86
City of Johannesburg	100	54.47	34.62	26.92	33.56
City of Tshwane	100	54.84	38.65	28.87	34.54
Ekurhuleni	100	55.66	30.29	25.61	31.2
Ethekwini	100	58.63	21.02	16.66	26.16
Mangaung	100	54.52	27.11	15.68	20.69
Nelson Mandela Bay	100	64.27	40.13	25.17	28.48
NATIONAL	100	56.69	23.94	16.18	22.14
<i>Source: SABC News Research</i>					

A few dimensions could be at play here. The first dimension is the voter turnout, which was exceptionally high in the Western Cape and in the Cape Town metro. In 2006 the turnout across the Western Cape Province totaled 51.78 percent of registered voters and increased to 64.37 percent this time around (See Table 1). In the City of Cape Town turnout increased from 51.96 percent in 2006 to 64.44 percent in 2011 (See Table 2). Thus it may be that much of the increase in this support for the DA was driven by the increase in turnout among traditional opposition constituencies indicating a feature of differential turnout. This trend continues when one looks at electoral contests in the Hessequa, George, Stellenbosch and Theewaterskloof municipalities where jumps in turnout within traditional opposition constituencies led to significant DA increases. Even in electoral contests such as Laingsburg and Bitou, where the DA forced hung councils, this seems to be the case.

Table 12: Electoral Support in Ward 19100059 in Claremont/Newlands by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
DA	91.63	10 105	80.97	6283
ANC	6.36	701	9.18	712
ID			5.85	454
ACDP			2.9	225
Total		10 806		7 674
<i>Source: SABC News Research</i>				

To demonstrate, it is best that this analysis be taken to ward level. In an analysis of 9 VDs in Ward 19100059, comprising middle class areas such as Newlands and Claremont in the City of Cape Town we observe far higher numbers of votes cast with a total of 7674 cast in 2006, compared to the total of 10 806 in 2011. However, the number of votes cast for the ANC, remain stable at approximately 712 votes and 701 votes in 2006 and 2011 respectively. So the ANC votes have predominantly stayed the same, but the increased turnout has pushed the DA's support upwards. In other words the increase in

the absolute number of votes cast was disproportionately enjoyed by the DA. And this holds true even when including the 454 votes cast for the Independent Democrats (ID) in 2006 and assuming that this support went to the DA.¹⁴ So it is more likely that there is a significant proportional swing, not people actually switching votes from the ANC to the DA.

The other dimension may be that the proportional swing in support towards the DA observed within working class areas of the City of Cape Town in 2009, as a result of differential turnout, has continued but also been boosted with higher numbers in turnout. In other words, the ANC vote totals are generally constant (in real terms, not proportional), but opposition constituencies voted in higher numbers as a consolidated block behind the DA brand.

Thus, explaining the swings in support towards the DA in the Western Cape's other municipalities. When looking at 9 VDs in areas like Heathfield and Retreat in Ward 19100072 in Table 13 (demographically a coloured middle and working class area), we observe higher numbers of votes cast in the 2011 (10 268 votes) compared to 2006 (6 625 votes). The ACDP also loses support from 2006 to 2011, with its support presumably going to the DA. The ANC's support sees a decline in this ward from 994 votes cast in 2006, down to 749 cast in 2011. But the bulk of the increase in votes cast goes to the DA, with voter turnout once again playing a significant role. The ACDP also loses support with its sum total of 464 votes cast in 2006, decreasing to a total of 237 votes cast in 2011. Meanwhile the AMP's total of 124 votes cast in 2006, does not feature in 2011 at all.

Thus, in Heathfield we see an increased turnout illustrated by the increase in number of votes cast. The bulk of this support went to the DA, in addition to the effects of the ID's merger with the DA. Also, we observe the loss of support among smaller opposition parties such as the ACDP and AMP to the DA indicating a consolidation of traditional opposition support behind the DA.

Table 13: Electoral Support in Ward 19100072 Heathfield/Retreat by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
DA	87.08	9282	50.47	3413
ID			24.11	1630
ANC	7.03	749	14.7	994
ACDP	2.22	237	6.86	464
AMP			1.83	124
Total		10 268		6 625
<i>Source: SABC News Research and IEC</i>				

In 6 VDs in Ward 191900082 in Mitchell's Plain (demographically a coloured working class area) the same trend is repeated with higher numbers. The DA received 2 227 votes in 2006 but saw a significant increase in 2011 with 9 282 votes cast in its support. The ACDP and the AMP also featured in 2006, but have not in 2011. The number of votes cast for the ID in 2006 (2329 votes) plus the overall increased

¹⁴ The DA and the ID are in the process of a merger, meaning that the ID did not contest the 2011 LGE. The process will be completed in 2014 when the ID will cease to exist and its members contest the 2014 general elections under the auspices of the DA.

numbers of votes cast boosted the DA's sum total. But the ANC received a similar number of absolute votes with 863 cast in 2006 compared to the 746 votes cast in 2011. Thus, in Mitchells Plain we see an increased turnout with the bulk of this support going again to the DA, in addition to the effects of the ID's merger with the DA. Moreover, the impact of the differential turnout may also have been boosted by a re-mobilised electoral bloc on the Cape Flats, turning out for the DA. This bloc previously supported the New National Party but stayed away in 2006 LGE after this party's implosion.¹⁵

Table 14: Electoral Support in Ward 191900082 in Mitchell's Plain by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
DA	81.58	7462	36.9	2227
ID			38.59	2329
ANC	8.16	746	14.3	863
NP	1.83	167		
COMCO	1.8	165		
AMP			3.84	232
ACDP	1.68	154	3.58	216
AIJAh	1.1	101		
CMC	1.01	92		
Total		8 887		5 867
<i>Source: SABC News Research and IEC</i>				

Interestingly in Hangberg, in Ward 19100074, the situation seems quite different to the trends across the City of Cape Town in coloured working class areas. The ANC actually increased its share of support from 36.7 percent in 2006 to 50.18 percent in 2011. The DA showed only an increase from 24.78 percent in 2006 to 38.28 percent in 2011. This is presumably because of the violent clashes between police and residents in November 2010 after attempts by the city to remove residents from a section of Hangberg. And thus the widely publicized and brutally violent clashes may have cost the DA further increases in support in this voting district as seen in similar communities in other parts of the City of Cape Town.

Table 15: Electoral Support in Hangberg VD by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
ANC	50.18	818	36.7	425
DA	38.28	624	24.78	287
ID			33.85	392
NICO	7.3	119		
CAP	1.35	22		
ACDP			1.55	18
AMP			1.21	14
Total		1 583		1 136
<i>Source: SABC News Research and IEC</i>				

¹⁵ See Jonathan Faull, *How the West was Won (and Lost)*, Idasa, 2004. Available at: http://www.idasa.org/our_products/resources/output/chronicle_of_a_death_foretold/

Nevertheless, the question remains whether the DA make inroads into traditional ANC strongholds in the City of Cape Town? These ANC strongholds tend to be the working class black townships. It is in communities such as these where the ANC has its base constituency and it is also these communities that hold the electoral power in South Africa.

If we look at the elections results in 8 VDs of Ward 19100090 in Khayelitsha, we see the same upsurge in turnout illustrated by the total number of votes cast in 2006 (6 990), compared to the total of votes cast in 2011 (10 445) observed in other areas of the City of Cape Town. Interestingly, in this ward the DA has increased its number of votes cast from zero votes in 2006, to 174 votes cast in 2011. Thus, we see that the DA has not made any inroads in this poor black township, at least not significantly enough to challenge the ANC's dominance in such areas. Meaning that the DA is yet to challenge the ANC at its core electoral base, which is the base of electoral power in South Africa that enables the ANC's dominance on the political landscape.

Table 16: Electoral Support in Khayelitsha by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
ANC	93.91	9955	91.94	6557
DA	1.64	174		
COPE	1.55	164		
UDM	1.43	152	2.8	200
PAC			1.91	136
ID			1.36	97
Total		10 445		6 990
<i>Source: SABC News Research and IEC</i>				

But this trend is not isolated only to the City of Cape Town. Below in Table 17 we consider 6 VDs in Ward 79800032 in the City of Johannesburg, which comprises five middle class areas such as Klipfontein, Iliondale, Greenstone, Buccleuch and Linbro Park as well as a section of Alexandra Township. The DA will presumably control this ward from the ANC when comparing the percentage of vote cast for either party in 2006 and 2011 and that it may enter into a coalition with COPE. The DA has also significantly increased the number of votes cast for it from 1 602 in 2006, to 4 234 in 2011. We also observe that the turnout has clearly increased when comparing the 4 160 votes cast in 2006 with the 8 305 votes cast in 2011.

Table 17: Electoral Support in Johannesburg Ward 79800032 by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
DA	50.18	4234	37.5	1602
ANC	46.41	3946	56.02	2393
COPE	1.47	125		
ID			1.5	64
ACDP			1.29	55
UDM			1.08	46
Total		8 305		4 160
<i>Source: SABC News Research and IEC</i>				

Meanwhile, the ANC has also increased its share of the total number of votes cast from 2 393 votes cast in 2006, to 3 946 votes cast in 2011. But the ANC's proportional share of the vote has decreased from 56.02 percent in 2006 to 46.41 percent in 2011, whereas the DA has increased its proportional share from 37.5 percent in 2006 to 49.8 percent in 2011. Thus, higher numbers of votes cast, boosted by increased turnout, have gone to the DA.

Table 18: Electoral Support Alexandra VD in Ward 32 in Johannesburg by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
ANC	90.99	1282	90.35	1002
DA	4.76	67	2.43	27
COPE	1.7	24		
PAC			1.35	15
UDM			2.61	29
Total		1 373		1 073
<i>Source: SABC News Research and IEC</i>				

But when assessing whether the DA has in fact gained support from the ANC's electoral base in Alexandra, which is a working class township in this ward, we observe that the DA did indeed increase its number of votes from 27 in 2006 to 67 in 2011. This is significant in that it shows that the opposition may be chipping away slightly at the ANC's base. But in proportional terms, this pales in comparison to the ANC's 90 percent share of support in this VD, illustrating that the bulk of the DA increases in the entire ward came from the other middle class suburbs in the ward, rather than from within Alexandra township. We therefore see similar trends in the City of Johannesburg in the country's northern regions as observed in the City of Cape Town.

Nelson Mandela Bay: A Key Electoral Race

The City of Nelson Mandela Bay municipality provided the best possibility of an opposition win in these elections. In 2006 the ANC received 67 percent support and the DA received 25 percent, while voter turnout was significantly higher than the national average at 56 percent. In the 2009 general elections the ANC support dropped slightly below 50 percent in this metro, mostly due to the emergence of COPE, which received 17 percent. And so the ANC entered these elections in a weakened position in this metro. The ANC also endured factionalism in this region with many similarities to its organisational troubles in the Western Cape and Cape Town. Thus, COPE and the DA were in an improved position to possibly force a hung council, if not win the metro outright, governing as a coalition.

In Table 19 it becomes clear that the race in the Nelson Mandela Bay metro was a tight electoral contest, with the ANC narrowly holding onto the metro with an approximately 52.13 percent share of the proportional vote, which was a decline from a previous figure of 66.85 percent in 2006. The DA enjoyed a significant increase from a proportional share of 24.9 percent in 2006 to a 40.24 share in 2011. Meanwhile COPE received a 4.88 percent share. Thus, the DA and COPE's combined share fell significantly short of forcing a governing coalition. But why did this mooted COPE/DA coalition fail to capture the city?

Table 19: Proportional Electoral Performance in Nelson Mandela Bay by Party and Year							
Party	2011		Diff	2006	2011		2006
	Party Votes %	%PR	%pts	%PR	%ward	%pts	%ward
ANC	51.91	52.13	-14.72	66.85	51.69	-13	64.69
DA	40.13	40.24	15.34	24.9	40.02	14.58	25.44
COPE	4.95	4.88	4.88	0	5.01	5.01	0
UDM	0.55	0.54	-0.62	1.16	0.55	-0.05	0.6
PAC	0.54	0.52	-0.24	0.76	0.57	-0.13	0.7
APC	0.22	0.43			0.01		
ACDP	0.38	0.36	-0.41	0.77	0.4	-0.32	0.72
AZAPO	0.25	0.28	-0.05	0.33	0.22	-0.14	0.36
VF PLUS	0.23	0.2	-0.86	1.06	0.25	-1.01	1.26
CDP	0.17	0.16			0.18		
ACM	0.16	0.14			0.18		
UIF	0.07	0.06	-0.37	0.43	0.08	-0.41	0.49
SAPCO	0.05	0.05			0.05		
Source: SABC News Research							

We can assess this by looking at the electoral contest in three different areas of the Nelson Mandela Bay metro. The first is the predominantly coloured working class area of Gelvandale/Schauder represented by 4 VDs in Ward 29300010, in Table 23. When looking at the sum totals of votes cast in this area in 2006 compared to 2011 we see a significant increase in turnout. In 2006 a total of 3 878 votes were cast whereas in 2011, 6 494 votes were cast. We also observe that in 2006, 2 017 votes were cast in support of the DA and this more than doubled in 2011 with 5 966 votes cast for the DA. Clearly the DA gained a significant increase in this area on the back of increased turnout.

Table 20: Electoral Support in Gelvandale/Schauder by Party				
Party Name	2011		2006	
	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
DA	89.26	5966	50.01	2017
ANC	7.90	528	22.84	921
ID			14.01	565
CMCP			9.3	375
ACDP			1.79	72
Total		6 494		3 878
Source: SABC News Research				

The ANC's support in this area decreased significantly however, from 921 votes cast for the party in 2006 and only 528 votes cast for it in 2011. Thus, the bulk of the increased turnout vote went to the DA at the expense of the ANC as well as other opposition parties such as the ACDP. The trend observed in other demographically similar areas seems to hold true for this area as well.

When looking at 3 VDs in the Walmer/Newton Park area in Ward 2930006 (Table 21), which is a predominantly middle class suburban area, a similar trend exists. Firstly, turnout again increased as illustrated in Table 25 where a total of 4 885 votes were cast in 2006 and a total of 6 850 cast in 2011. The number of votes cast for the ANC remained stable from 303 in 2006 and 293 in 2011. But the DA's percentage is boosted by an increase from 4 231 votes in 2006 to 6 557 votes in 2011. Moreover, other opposition parties such as the ACDP and the VF Plus, after having played a minor role in 2006, receive no support in 2011; presumably also to the gain of the DA.

Table 21: Electoral Support in Walmer/Newton Park by Party				
	2011		2006	
Party Name	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
DA	93.43	6557	86.19	4231
ANC	4.17	293	6.17	303
VF PLUS			3.32	163
ACDP			2.59	127
ID			1.24	61
Total		6 850		4 885
<i>Source: SABC News Research</i>				

In Table 22 below is an assessment of the electoral support in 4 VDs in a predominantly demographically poor working class area such as Kwazakhele Township in Ward 2930018. The first interesting observation is that there was not an increase in turnout in this area when comparing the number of votes cast in 2006 to 2011; in fact there was a slight decrease. Nevertheless, the ANC lost some votes in this area where it received 5 124 votes cast in 2006 but only 4 905 votes cast in 2011. But COPE received 312 vote cast and the DA received 103 votes cast. The UDM and the PAC however, after having received 179 votes and 63 votes in 2006 respectively, received none in 2011.

Thus, presumably COPE and to a lesser extent, the DA, won a significant number votes from the ANC. Whereas the ANC stemmed this loss of support by presumably receiving most of the UDM and PAC's lost support. So the trends in this area are once again similar where despite some marginal increases the DA was unable to win significant percentages of support from the ANC.

Table 22: Electoral Support in Kwazakhele by Party				
	2011		2006	
Party Name	Percent	Votes	Percent	Votes
ANC	90.08	4905	93.42	5124
COPE	5.73	312		
DA	1.89	103		
UDM			3.26	179
PAC			1.15	63
Total		5 320		5 366
<i>Source: SABC News Research</i>				

But what is interesting is that during the 2009 general elections COPE received a total of 1 259 votes cast, which amounted to a 17.35 percent share of the total vote cast in that election. That electoral support came at the expense of the ANC. So COPE has lost some support in these elections in this area. In other words, despite its increases in support across the board, the DA is only slightly chipping away at the ANC's core support base in the Nelson Mandela Bay metro. But COPE, being a breakaway party from the ANC, is in a much better placed position to do achieve this and did exactly that in 2009. But given that COPE's ongoing internal turmoil its performance in these elections was less successful than its showing during the 2009 elections. COPE was unable to win enough support from the ANC's traditional base in order to create the situation that it and the DA were hoping for; pushing the ANC under the 50 percent threshold.

Thus, the DA enjoyed similar increases on the back of boosted turnout in traditional opposition supporting areas in this election as was the case in other parts of the country, hence its overall significant increases in support. It would also be conceivable that the ANC, like other dominant political parties in Southern Africa, would first lose support in highly urbanized areas rather than in rural areas. This is predominantly due to the difficulties of service delivery and governance in urban areas where citizen expectations are much higher than in rural areas; despite the often higher levels of delivery. And so any opposition party wishing to challenge such dominance would focus its attention on urban areas, which is exactly what the DA did during its election campaign by focusing much of its energy on the electoral races in Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay.

However, the DA was unable to shift significant proportions of the ANC's electoral support its way. In any event, its success in the Nelson Mandela Bay metro was always hinged on the back of COPE's electoral prospects. And it is this ceiling that the DA must crack in order to challenge the ANC's dominance in the future.

But despite its relative failure to penetrate the ANC's core electoral base, the DA still achieved a great deal in this election. In the 2006 LGE, with a 48 percent turnout (9 852 099 voters), the ANC received 65.67 percent (6 469 420 votes) and the DA received 16.32 percent (1 608 154 votes). In 2009 general elections there were 17 680 729 voters with the ANC winning 65.895 percent (11 650 748 votes) and the DA 16.661 percent (2 945 829 votes) - these are all figures for PR votes only.

But in 2011 LGE with A 55 percent turnout (13 368 423 voters) the ANC received 63.01 percent (8 277 303 votes) and the DA 23.95 percent (3 146 513 votes). This means that the DA received more votes in this election than in every election it contested preceding 2011. This is a major achievement for the party in terms of its growth and credibility as a possible future alternative to the ruling party. But the critical challenge of winning support among the ANC's core base constituency remains.

Small Opposition Parties: Losing support, but still relevant

Similarly smaller opposition parties made a weak showing in these polls. Having haemorrhaged support in 2009, small parties continued to lose support to the DA and the ANC. But some parties such as COPE and the National Freedom Party (a breakaway party from the IFP) have found themselves in disproportionately stronger positions in hung councils where they will surely be courted by the ANC and the DA to form coalition governments. How these small parties manage such situations could have a strengthening or weakening effect on their long terms prospects for survival. And more importantly, they would want to ensure that they enter such coalitions on the strongest terms possible. At the time of writing it seems that the DA and COPE are in the process of ironing out a national agreement to co-

operate in hung councils across the country. However, the internal wrangling of COPE seems to be far from over and may create instability in these coalitions in the future.

Likewise the DA will want to steer clear of forming coalitions with a multitude of parties, as was the case in 2006 in the City of Cape Town. These, by their very nature, are fragile coalitions and prone to failure resulting in instability within municipalities. But the decline of smaller opposition parties indicates the continued consolidation of electoral support behind the ANC and the DA, hinting at future two-horse electoral races. This may be a concern in the sense that South Africa's democratic project is predicated on multiparty democracy.

A more interesting feature of these elections was the rise in the number of independent ward candidates, mostly as a result of the ANC's fraught list nomination process. It may be that the presence of the ward-based ballots in the local government elections system is providing some a kind of alternative for disaffected ANC members who fall out with the ruling party. Moreover, this also provides voters with more choice in the polling booths. The success of the KGP in the Prince Albert Municipality and the ICOSA in Kannaland Municipality are also instructive. A number of civic organizations and social movements campaigned for voters to stay away from the polls, but a more significant number decided to contest the elections and the electoral success of these two organizations may be a sign of future things to come.

Conclusion

The main story in these local government elections has been one about voter turnout and the impact it can have on electoral support in South Africa. These elections were a crucial test for local governance itself as a low voter turnout may have indicated a severe loss of confidence in the local governance system. Thankfully, this was not the case. The higher levels of electoral competition has boosted turnout. Moreover, the loss of confidence has perhaps in some areas led to the formation of civics and social movements contesting elections, with the Karoo Gemeenskaps Partei and ICOSA being interesting examples of having won Prince Albert and Kannaland.

But the increased turnout should not be seen as a signal that all is well within governance at grassroots level. Citizens may have turned out in higher numbers but this was driven by higher levels of competition in a more contested political landscape. The increased turnout should rather be viewed as a indication of the health of the institutions that administer and run our elections, most notably the Independent Electoral Commission, and the maturation within the electorate. But this should not mask the challenges at local government level, which are both complex and difficult. Meeting these challenges will require sustained levels of citizen participation. Citizen participation is not only a matter of having increased voter turnouts for elections, although it is an important one. But it is the quality of participation and engagement that citizens enjoy between elections that will have the most beneficial effect on the quality of local governance.

As for the state of South Africa's politics, these election results were not a surprise. The opposition, after having fragmented within itself for over decade is now gradually being consolidated behind the DA. Although the DA has performed better in these elections than any it has ever contested and although it is beginning to knock on the door of the ANC's core electoral base, it is yet to crack this ceiling. The party has come some way since the days of "Fight Back" and has marginally broadened its appeal. But it will have to continue its internal transformation in order to project an image that will provide it with the mass appeal among citizens that it craves.

So despite some decline in its proportional share of the electoral support, the ANC remains the dominant political party on the electoral landscape. But the ruling party should be mindful that its internal wrangling and stewardship over the bulk of local governance is beginning to cost it at the ballot box. Some deep and honest introspection and reflection is required if it is to meet the challenges of local governance. Its electoral base has grown weary of the toxic mix between over-promise and under-deliver, illustrated by violent protests. Moreover, it will have to reflect on its own rhetorical image and the growing perception that it is less and less an inclusive home for minorities.

Thus, these local government elections were in large part a continuation of many of the trends observed during the 2009 general elections. A consolidation of support behind the ANC and the DA continues at the expense of small opposition parties. But observers would be thoughtful to note that these results may not necessarily be replicated in the 2014 national and provincial elections. South African voters separate local issues from national issues and at the national level the system still provides an inclusive space for smaller parties. What is also a concern is the mooted idea that all elections should be held concurrently. Any attempts to bundle local, provincial and national elections into a single election will drown out citizen's most pressing concerns. The challenges and politics at local level are starkly different to those at provincial and national level.

Separating the spin from the reality in these elections is an attempt to provide a clearer picture of voter behaviour in South Africa and the ongoing trends in electoral support. This allows for an assessment of the health of our elections as an institution, the quality of our governance, politics and South Africa's overall democratic project.

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