

**THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES OF
SOUTH AFRICA'S 2009 GENERAL ELECTION**

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Introduction

South Africa's fourth post-apartheid election confirms the country's place among a dozen or so African states with institutionalised party systems characterised by relative predictability and stability of electoral outcomes. Stability in Africa seems, however, to mean stable one-party dominance rather than decreasing shares of representation by the largest party (Lindberg, 2007), with a single dominant party surrounded by several small, sometimes unstable parties (van der Walle, 2003). A minority premium to assist opposition parties has even been (optimistically) suggested, to increase competitiveness in the short-term and contribute to the eventual emergence of a two-party system (Bogaards, 2000).

South Africa conforms to the dominant party model. Critics from both left and right concur that the ANC record over its fifteen years in government offered plenty for opposition parties to exploit (Johnson, 2009; Bond 2009). Its many policy failures include erratic service delivery to its primary constituency in the black townships, dysfunctional provincial and local authorities, too rapid trade liberalisation leading to deindustrialisation and increased unemployment, loss of farm employment following the elimination of agricultural subsidies, ill-conceived affirmative action policies leading to a (mainly white) brain-drain, catastrophic mismanagement of HIV-AIDS leading to a sharp drop in life expectancy, mishandling of the Zimbabwe crisis and inability to control borders contributing to growing xenophobia towards immigrants, many of them fleeing Zimbabwe. All this has been accompanied by increased authoritarianism and serious corruption (Pottinger, 2008; Gevisser, 2009; Feinstein, 2009). The persistence of ANC electoral dominance in the face of such a record appears to lend support to Leysens' (2006) finding that the marginalised are less likely to protest, more tolerant of authoritarianism and inclined to accord more legitimacy to the state than other groups.

It is, however, necessary to go beyond such general formulations and examine the specificities of the political environment in which opposition parties must operate. The ANC entered government as victor in the liberation struggle, but with another liberation struggle ahead, namely transformation of the racial nature of the political economy, whereas the opposition parties have a more modest, instrumental view of politics (Schrire, 2001). The persistence of racial division in South Africa enables the ANC to deligitimise the opposition as racist defenders of minority privilege (Giliomee et al., 2001). Given the effective exclusion of democratic minorities from participating in government, some argue that opposition in South Africa should not seek to take an adversarial form, but rather adopt a co-operative model of political conduct (Saravinsky, 2001) which could create scope for support amongst black South Africans (Kotzé, 2001). Similarly Butler (2003) and Lodge (2006) conclude that the best hope of entrenching democracy rest in ANC dominance within a collaborative political order, but the former later recognised that the ANC is far from seeking 'to endow liberal institutions and pluralist politics with independent authority, to prepare

them for the more turbulent conditions that liberation movement fragmentation and the growth of multi-party competition must eventually herald' (Butler, 2005: 736).

The turbulent eighteen months preceding the 2009 election witnessed the hardening of internal ANC divisions and the formation of a breakaway party, the Congress of the People (COPE) in December 2008. Whilst this certainly represented a degree of liberation movement fragmentation, the establishment of COPE did nothing to fill the fundamental vacuum in the South African political spectrum, namely an effective party to the left of the ANC which could appeal effectively to the poor and the marginalised. In the absence of such a party, it might be supposed that disillusionment would lead to reduced levels of registration and turnout, whereas in practice registration increased substantially, especially among younger people, turnout remained the same as in 2004, and overall opposition support increased by only 3.8 percentage points. Some of the reasons for this may be found in the nature of the main opposition parties and the ways they are perceived, which will be explored further below.

Two factors concerning the ANC itself are also of critical importance. First, the ANC under Mbeki had not ignored the needs of the poor. Old-age pensions had increased, disability grants had been introduced (and are now claimed by many of South Africa's estimated 5.35m. HIV-prevalent population), and child allowances introduced for those up to the age of 15 (with a promise to increase the qualifying age to 18), a critical factor in a country where 32% of the population was under 15 in 2008 (SSA, 2008). This vastly increases the number of people and households who are directly dependent on government handouts for their survival. Secondly, Jacob Zuma brought with him the support of the trade unions and, helped by a far more populist appeal than Mbeki, was seen to offer a new direction, perhaps allowing COSATU to press more successfully for redistributive policies as part of the 'bargained liberalisation' envisaged by Webster (2001). Hopes of a leftward move are likely to be disappointed in practice (Bond, 2009) but undoubtedly encouraged many poor blacks to vote once more for the ANC.

This chapter continues with a brief summary of opposition voting since 1994. Discussion of overall opposition performance in 2009 focuses on evidence of consolidation of support at the expense of smaller parties, whose geographical distribution of votes is briefly considered in relation to nature and sources of their support. The two major opposition parties are discussed at greater length. COPE, the first potentially credible breakaway from the ANC, is considered in relation to its formation, leadership, campaign and performance across the country. COPE represented a potential challenge to the continuing growth of the Democratic Alliance (DA), whose campaign focus and leadership choices are examined in relation to its performance in the Western Cape and nationally. The continuing decline of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) is discussed. The final section of the chapter focuses specifically on Cape Town, analysing the results in over 800 voting districts to construct a more detailed picture of the support bases of each party and examining the degree of spatial polarisation which exists in voting patterns. The chapter concludes with discussion of the prospects for both growth and further consolidation of opposition support.

Opposition voting: previous post-apartheid elections and opinion polls in 2008-9

The history of political opposition in South Africa in its first decade of open democracy is one of internal fragmentation and electoral competition between opposition parties while the ANC has gained increased majorities. The opposition share of the vote decreased steadily from 37% in 1994 to just over 30% in 2004. Opposition fragmentation increased significantly between 1994, when six opposition parties won parliamentary representation, and 1999 when twelve parties did so. Twelve parties again won representation in 2004 (reduced to eleven once the New National Party (NNP) decided to disband); there was some concentration of the opposition vote behind the Democratic Party, but with 50 seats it remained far behind the 82 won by the NNP in 1994. In the provinces, several parties that previously earned seats in most provincial legislatures won seats in only a few provinces in 2004, while the ANC's share of seats increased in several provinces.

Both the 1999 and 2004 elections witnessed challenges from new parties. The United Democratic Movement (UDM) was formed in 1997 by Bantu Holomisa, a former President of the Transkei who had joined the ANC and enjoyed minor ministerial office until he was expelled after submitting evidence of corruption in the ANC to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Roelf Meyer, formerly Minister of Constitutional Development in both the outgoing National Party government and the Government of National Unity, who had played a key role in the negotiating process. It fought the 1999 election on the basis of a new multi-racial politics, winning 3.4% of the vote in the 1999 election and performing most strongly in the Eastern Cape, but declined subsequently. The Independent Democrats (ID) were formed in 2003 by former Pan African Congress MP Patricia de Lille who had risen to prominence by championing inquiries into corruption allegations against high-ranking ANC officials. The ID won 1.7% of the vote in 2004, slightly more than the waning NNP and the same percentage with which the Democratic Party (DP) had begun its post-apartheid representation in 1994.

The decline and eventual extinction of the NNP was attributable to several factors, but was perhaps above all due to its repeated engagement in coalitions and alliances, leaving voters unsure what it stood for other than its own survival. The DP transformed itself, under the leadership of Tony Leon, from a liberal, English-dominated voice for freedom to a more conservative party offering vocal, aggressive opposition to the ANC. This enabled it to win much of the Afrikaner vote from the NNP. It then entered into a brief alliance with the NNP in 2000 and retained its new name – the Democratic Alliance – after the NNP withdrew. The DA's aggressive style led to its being perceived by many as primarily representing minority interests, but it drew support from coloured and Indian voters as well as whites in 2004.

None of these opposition parties made serious inroads into ANC support in 2004 and the same was to prove true in 2009. Opinion surveys suggest, however, that there were moments when a major growth of opposition support seemed possible in face of ANC policy failures together with post-Polokwane fall-out, the removal of Mbeki from the presidency and disorganisation and in-fighting at provincial and local levels, especially in the Western Cape. In October/November 2008 *Afrobarometer* put ANC support at only 45% and the HSRC survey in December recorded 47%. By March 2009, however, *Plus 94* and *Ipsos Markinor* placed ANC support at 61% and

65% respectively. Low ANC support levels towards the end of 2008 appear to offer some opportunity for opposition growth, though increased abstention was perhaps more probable. Instead the ANC made a rapid recovery which clearly continued in its electoral performance in April.

Overall performance: opposition consolidation?

The number of registered parties declined from 132 in 2004 to 117 in 2009. Of these, only 42 contested the 2009 elections, 28 of them at national level. Collectively these parties increased opposition support by 3.8 percentage points, to 34.1 per cent. The number of parties with parliamentary representation increased from eleven in the outgoing parliament to thirteen, the newcomers being COPE with 30 seats and the Africa People's Convention (formed by floor-crossing in 2007) with a single seat. Opposition parties continued to make least impact in Mpumalanga (14.3%) and Limpopo (15.0%), both provinces with only small racial minority populations and neither providing the regional base of an opposition party.

The results do, however, suggest some degree of opposition consolidation, as most of the smaller parties experienced significant reductions in support levels (Table 1). The percentage share of the nine opposition parties other than the DA with parliamentary representation in both 2004 and 2009 declined from 15.6 to only 9.1, whereas the DA increased its percentage share from 12.4 to 16.7. Their total votes decreased by more than one-third, from just over 2.4m. to 1.6m., despite an overall increase of 1.7m. in votes cast, and the disappearance of the NNP which won over quarter of a million votes in 2004. Among these parties only the Vryheidsfront Plus (VF+) slightly increased its vote (but not its share). Among established parties the DA was the clear beneficiary, increasing its share of the poll in every province, while COPE won 7.4% of the votes nationwide. These two parties together have 97 seats in the new parliament, leaving only 39 for all the other opposition parties. Unlike most of the opposition parties, the DA and COPE enjoyed nationwide support, notwithstanding clear regional strengths (Table 2) which will be explored below.

Given the number of parties contesting the election only at provincial level, and the possible operation of locally specific factors, it is interesting to compare national and provincial results for the three main parties (Table 3). In almost all cases the provincial vote of the ANC and DA was slightly below their national vote, but the differences are usually less than one per cent. COPE's provincial support was slightly better in six provinces (including the home provinces of its three main leaders) than its support in the national election. The most notable variation, however, was in the Western Cape, where the DA won an overall majority in the provincial election but not in the national election. The DA's additional votes in the provincial election appear to have been mainly at the expense of COPE, some of whose national supporters probably backed the DA at provincial level because of its record in the Cape Town Metro, home to two-thirds of Western Cape voters, and its serious chance of winning the province with its national leader, Helen Zille, becoming provincial premier.

Smaller opposition parties

By 2004 most of the smaller opposition parties either already were, or were fast becoming, essentially regional or local in their support patterns, and were in many cases identified with one prominent figure. This trend continued in 2009 (Table 2, Fig. 1). The Minority Front (MF) was the creation of Amichand Rajbansi, former leader of the National People's Party which won control of the Indian House of Delegates in the 1984 elections. Since its formation in 1994 it has been a localised, one-man party and won 75.7% of its national support in eThekweni (Durban Metro). The Independent Democratic Party (ID) was formed in 1993 by former Pan African Congress MP, Patricia de Lille, who was the initial whistle-blower on corruption surrounding the now notorious arms deal. The party won 1.7% of the votes in its first general election in 2007, the same share as the Democratic Party in 1994, but its share halved in 2009, with more than half the party's votes coming from the Western Cape where de Lille was born.

The IFP (see below) and United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP) are the only two former governing parties in the apartheid black homelands which continued to compete and win parliamentary representation after the transition. The fate of the other homeland parties no doubt reflects the low level of genuine support they enjoyed given their collaboration with apartheid and the territorial politics it created. The UCDP won 13.5% of the votes in Mafikeng, which includes the former Bophuthatswana capital of Mmabatho, but exceeded 10% in only two other largely rural districts. The United Democratic Movement (UDM), although founded as a party intended to bridge the racial divide (Holomisa and Meyer, 1999), now resembles the UCDP in the distribution of its support, which is focused primarily in the former Transkei where its leader, Bantu Holomisa, was President between 1987 and 1994. Its support is negligible in major urban areas but rose to 24.0% in the former Transkeian capital, Umtata, some of whose inhabitants, like those of Mmabatho, may resent loss of government employment in the former homelands. The geography of UDM and UCDP support suggests that they derive the great majority of their votes from rural Xhosa and Tswana voters respectively, but the small proportion of such voters supporting these parties demonstrates that, even to the extent that these parties seek to mobilise ethnic constituencies, they have limited success, suggesting that ethnicity has not significantly influenced voting behaviour in their regional support bases.

Other small parties gaining parliamentary representation have a more geographically even distribution of support. The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), is a conservative party supporting Christian family values, founded in 1993. Its support halved in 2009, exceeding 1% only in the Western and Northern Cape provinces. The VF+, founded in 1993 to win parliamentary representation for conservative Afrikaners, also emphasises Christian values. It no longer advocates an Afrikaner *volkstaat* (homeland) but continues to appeal specifically to Afrikaners, stressing promotion of Afrikaans language and protection of culture, education and values (Vryheidsfront Plus, 2009). It maintained its 0.9% vote share in 2009, exceeding 1% in the Free State, North West, Gauteng and Northern Cape.

Three small parties, two of them old-established, represent the left of political spectrum, but none of them effectively. The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), founded in 1959 as a breakaway movement from the ANC, has never enjoyed significant

electoral support and continued its decline in 2009, winning less than a fifth of the votes it won in 1994. Its vote share varied from 0.15% in the Northern Cape to 0.52% in the Eastern Cape. In 2007 the PAC suffered the defection of its deputy president and its only two provincial representatives who launched a new party, the African People's Convention (APC), to be 'the credible and progressive voice that will not betray the revolution' (APC, 2009). The APC effectively divided remaining PAC support in two, winning only 10,000 fewer votes than the PAC itself, with a surprisingly even spread of support across the provinces. The Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) continues to represent the black consciousness tradition of the Black People's Convention from which it emerged in 1978. AZAPO support in 2009 fell back to the level of 1999, only slightly above that of the APC, but again spread across all provinces.

That these three very small parties should exist separately despite the closeness of their political philosophies highlights the weakness of opposition fragmentation. South Africa's list system of PR guarantees a parliamentary seat to any party with 0.25% of the votes, and has in practice awarded a seat to both AZAPO and the APC with even fewer votes. Such a low target – in contrast to Mozambique, for example, with its 5% minimum threshold for parliamentary representation (Lemon, 2007) – encourages very small parties to continue and new ones to form in the face of often minor disagreements which could be resolved for the sake of party unity in a different electoral system.

A black challenge to the ANC: the Congress of the People

The recall and enforced resignation of President Mbeki in September 2008 led to the simultaneous resignation of many members of his cabinet in solidarity. Mosiuoa Lekota, former Free State premier, ANC national chairperson and Minister of Defence, announced the holding of a national convention to discuss the future of South African politics and the possible formation of a new political movement. The convention took place in November and was attended by over 5,000 delegates, including major political figures and some delegates from other parties. The new party was subsequently formed in December, winning the right to use the name 'Congress of the People' in the face of an ANC legal challenge. It gained an early success in municipal by-elections in the Western Cape, five days before its official registration, with its candidates running as independents and winning 10 of 27 wards.

In an interview for the South African *Sunday Times* Lekota indicated that the party would be pro-business, free from Marxist rhetoric and determined to end the emigration of talented whites; COPE would welcome white, Indian and coloured South Africans into its leadership (Johnson, 2008). The new party's position on the political spectrum was signposted in several ways: willingness to enter coalition with the DA to form a government, reference to the black middle class that found Zuma's behaviour offputting (including his willingness to encourage Zulu tribalism and the expectation that it was their turn to have a president) and a firm assertion of the irreversibility of South Africa's position in the free market economy.

Such comments, and COPE's close association with the 'Mbeki-ites', allowed the ANC to portray it as part of a rich black and white cabal, a 'coalition of the

dispossessed', opposed to the poor black majority. Along with other opposition parties COPE campaigned under a 'morality' and corruption-free banner. Its co-option of Mvume Dandala, a Methodist Bishop and former President of the Southern African Council of Churches, as its presidential candidate reinforced this stance and resolved for the moment the evident rivalry of the party's two leading figures, Lekota and Mbhazima Shilowa, former premier of Gauteng, and the problem of their close association with the record of the ANC that they were now opposing. Dandala was 'untarnished, but unknown' outside church circles, except in his native Eastern Cape, where Methodism is strong. Lekota accepted Dandala's nomination because of COPE's strong Eastern Cape membership – 160,000 of its 300,000 members by the end of 2008 – and Shilowa, who had the support of six provinces, withdrew to support Dandala's nomination (Jolobe, 2009). Many observers saw the choice of Dandala as a serious mistake, which was arguably compounded by the confusing decision to put Lekota's face on the ballot paper, as party leader.

The choice of Dandala underlined COPE's hopes of a strong provincial performance in the Eastern Cape. It appeared to be particularly strong in Port Elizabeth, and hoped to mobilise conservative, churchgoing rural voters too. The recall of Mbeki had caused resentment in the province, given his rural Eastern Cape origins, notwithstanding his singular unwillingness to return to his birthplace or his mother's home since returning from exile (Gevisser, 2009). Once Zuma had been elected ANC leader, his supporters had sought to purge provincial administrations of Mbeki supporters, including the Premiers of both the Eastern and Western Cape. Wiseman Nkhulu, a prominent Eastern Cape businessman and COPE candidate for provincial premier, had been Economic Adviser to Mbeki. Many other prominent business people in the province, together with mayors and farmers, also joined COPE. At one stage the party entertained serious hopes of winning the province, or at least governing in coalition with the UDM and perhaps the DA.

In the event the party's expectations in the province were to be disappointed, as they were nationally. Initially, in the heat of Mbeki's 'recall' and evidence that the new party was splitting the ANC, COPE's formation generated considerable excitement among those disillusioned with ANC performance and governance who were interested in a new opposition with demonstrable political credentials. Some translated Mbeki's roughly 40% support at Polokwane into at least 20% support in an election. But COPE had little unhindered space and time to solidify as a party while the ANC regrouped, mobilising its formidable election machine, reconnecting with grassroots and mobilising in new, more populist forms (Booyesen, 2009). A month before the election COPE's national communications manager predicted that the party would win a 20-30% poll share, based on its performance in recent by-elections (Dexter, 2009). Academic political scientists were understandably more cautious, but still estimated 12-14% (Mattes, 2009) and 15-20% (Jolobe, 2009), whereas its actual share was just 7.4%. It more than doubled this figure among the small Northern Cape electorate, and more predictably did well in the Eastern Cape (13.3%), winning 17.0% of votes in the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality which includes Port Elizabeth, and also in the Free State (11.3%), home to Lekota (Fig. 1). In these three provinces, and also in Limpopo and the NorthWest, COPE became the official opposition. However it made almost no impact in KwaZulu-Natal, where the ANC benefited from 'Zumania', or in Mpumalanga.

In general terms COPE's disappointing performance, at least when measured against its own expectations, is not difficult to explain. As a party that had existed for only five months, its resources and organisation were limited, notwithstanding its success in taking control over many ANC branches in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere. Uncertainty and controversy over its choice of presidential candidate received much press coverage, as did doubts over whether or not particular political figures were going to join, leading to the raising and sometimes dashing of expectations. In some cases its invitations to stand were declined, as in the Western Cape where the candidacy for premier was offered to the Rector of Stellenbosch University and then, when he declined, to Allan Boesak, the former church leader and ANC candidate for the same post in 1994 before his imprisonment for misuse of aid funds. As a new party COPE received no state funding, which goes only to parties with existing representation. It therefore relied on individual subscriptions and donations. It put up few election posters until the last few weeks of the campaign, timing them to make the best of limited resources (Dexter, 2009), but the lack of visible campaigning undermined the potential appeal of a party dependent on swing voters. It did, however, receive free air time on television, thanks to a new provision (from March 2009) rationing such time among parties according to the number of candidates – a change very helpful to COPE, as previously parties had not been allowed to make any political broadcasts on television.

COPE's performance naturally depended in part on its ability to distinguish itself from the ANC through its policy proposals and approach to governance. However its break from the ANC was not based on policy divisions and the timing of the election restricted its opportunity to develop and articulate distinctive policies. Its manifesto was published scarcely more than a month after its launch, and included much unexceptional aspiration including a promise of honest government and respect for core values, economic growth with people's participation, fighting poverty, improving education, health care and service delivery, but it was necessarily thin on specifics and essentially promised to do what the ANC had promised but failed to deliver. Specific commitments included introduction of a mixed electoral system combining direct election and proportional representation (recommended by an official Electoral Task Team in 2003 but ignored by the government) and a change to the direct popular election of President, provincial premiers and mayors.

As in most democracies, however, few people actually read party manifestos. What matters more is popular perception of a party's identity and what it stands for. This has been, and continues to be, a problem for other opposition parties, especially the DA. Voters are unlikely to identify policy differences between the parties, in part because of the emphasis on personalities within relatively small parties but mainly because the ideological divide between them (and between opposition parties and the ANC in government) is neither wide nor clear, so the opposition is left with limited space in which to differentiate itself ((Sylvester, 2009). COPE was damaged by evidence of internal factionalism which gave the impression that they were bound together by little more than being bad losers. Perceptions of COPE were inevitably linked to the association of most of its prominent figures with Mbeki who, while he did not join the party (though his mother did), was widely assumed to be sympathetic towards it. COPE's leaders found it difficult to dissociate themselves in people's minds from the failures of the ANC government in which they had so recently served. They were, damagingly, seen to represent the class interest of the growing black

middle class – a significant constituency, certainly, but one with nothing like the electoral strength to challenge ANC dominance. Thus COPE quickly acquired similar problems to the DA in terms of class identification, but with a black rather than white/coloured face. Underlying this is the very nature of the post-Polokwane split, which reversed conventional expectations that an ANC split, if and when it came, would be to the left. Instead it was the left that backed Zuma, mobilising around an apparently flexible candidate who seemed ready to further its cause. This enabled the ANC to retain its image of ‘the party of the poor’, leaving COPE to join the DA as an opposition identified as middle-class and so potentially sharing the latter’s ‘glass ceiling’ in terms of class if not race.

A more optimistic view of COPE’s performance is possible. Its 7.4% vote share compares favourably with that of the UDM (3.4%) and the ID (1.7%) in their first elections. Early expectations were unrealistic given the problems faced by a new party and timing of the election. With thirty seats in Parliament and as official opposition in five provinces, COPE has a firm base from which to advance. Its prospects of doing so depend in part on its internal dynamics but are also intertwined with those of the DA and an ANC administration under new leadership.

Challenge from the Cape: Helen Zille and the Democratic Alliance

For the DA the election represented both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity rested on three factors: the progress made in 2004, ANC divisions in the Western Cape and failure in the Cape Town Metro, and the indisputable dynamism of Helen Zille, its leader since 2007. Zille continued the unflinching oppositional stance of her predecessor, Tony Leon, but without alienating people. She became Mayor of Cape Town in 2006 and her effectiveness in that role was recognised internationally by her selection, from a field of 800 candidates, as World Mayor of the Year in 2008 – a not insignificant accolade for any party leader. The challenge may also be represented as threefold: how to change the enduring perception of the DA as a white-led party representative of minority interests, how to maintain and expand the party’s geographical support base outside the Western Cape, and how to respond to the formation of COPE, far more sympathetic to the DA than the ANC had ever been but, precisely because of its liberal, pro-business stance, more acceptable to whites and a potential competitor for elements of the DA’s existing constituency.

For the moment the DA clearly set its sights on the goal of winning power in the Western Cape which had been under ANC control since 2004. The enforced resignation of Ebrahim Rasool and his replacement with Lynne Brown as premier in 2008 reflected internal ANC divisions which seriously undermined the ANC’s effectiveness in the province. In the Cape Town Metro the DA had led a multi-party coalition since 2006, initially fragile but more stable after it was joined by the ID in January 2007, and able to lay claim to a positive track record. The party’s position in Cape Town was helped when Wilmot James, a prominent coloured academic and former President of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), announced that he was joining the DA. Helen Zille’s decision as party leader to offer herself as the DP candidate for Western Cape premier rather than to continue as opposition leader in Parliament reflected the importance she attaches to the province, as a laboratory in which to demonstrate the positive effects of DA policies and encourage

wider support for the DA in the 2011 local elections and beyond. Whether such electoral diffusion is possible, given the distinctive racial composition of the Western Cape (54% coloured and 18% white in 2001) remains doubtful, and the use of Zille, undoubtedly by far the DA's strongest asset, in the Western Cape runs the risk of identifying the DA as a regional party. That said, the party's outright victory in the provincial election exceeded expectations and should allow it a stable period in which to govern, at a time when the Western Cape ANC continues to suffer factionalism and division. It is notable, too, that DA support was almost as high outside Cape Town (45.1%) as within it (50.9%), and above 30% in all municipalities.

The DA's national performance slightly exceeded most predictions, increasing its share of the poll by more than four percentage points despite the threat from COPE. Equally important is the DA's achievement of at least some improvement of its percentage share in every province. Its 23.4% poll share in Gauteng, up from 20.3% in 2004, is important in South Africa's economic heartland where one in five South Africans live, and signposts Gauteng as the province most likely to follow the Western Cape example. However Gauteng's population was 74% black in 2001, compared with a mere 27% in the Western Cape. In other provinces the DA poll share varied from 3.9% in Limpopo to 13.3% in the Northern Cape. Such figures do not suggest any significant black support, despite the party's most concerted effort to date to win such support and its 'unashamedly pro-poor' manifesto (Zille, 2009). This remains the party's glass ceiling, a conclusion reinforced by the analysis of voting district data in Cape Town below. The post-Mbeki political landscape may, however, offer the DA new opportunities, which will be explored further in the conclusion.

The Inkatha Freedom Party: ethnic mobilisation reversed

The IFP, former governing party in the KwaZulu 'homeland', was the only such party to win parliamentary representation in 1994. It represents a classic example of ethnic political mobilisation, although at a level which has never rivalled that of the National Party during the apartheid era (Maré, 1993). In the first open election in 1994 the IFP won 10.5% of the poll, albeit with the inclusion of some contested votes (Johnson 1996). It was heavily dependent on support in KwaZulu-Natal but with outliers in neighbouring Mpumalanga and among migrant labourers in Gauteng. This figure declined steeply as soon as 1996 in the local elections, with the disappearance of much of the party's urban support in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, a trend reflected in the party's 8.6% share of the poll in 1999 and its continued decline to 7.0% in 2004, when the ANC President Mbeki no longer judged it prudent to include the IFP founder and leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, in his government. The IFP has struggled to replace elderly leaders and has virtually no organised presence in cities (Lodge, 2006).

In 2009 the IFP won a mere 4.55% of the poll, winning 90% of its votes in KwaZulu-Natal where it nevertheless fell back to a poll share of only 20.5%. Its former outposts in Gauteng and Mpumalanga were reduced to vestigial poll shares of 1.5% and 0.5% respectively, and it was virtually wiped out elsewhere. Its ethnic political mobilisation appears to be nearing an end. Whilst this clearly results in part from the ANC's rival capitalisation of Zuma's rural Zulu origins – many of his supporters briefly wore teeshirts emblazoned '100% Zulu boy' and the ANC

campaigned vigorously, particularly in former rural ‘no-go’ areas which were traditional IPF strongholds – it seems unlikely that the IFP will recover as a significant political force.

Polarisation dissected: voting districts in the Cape Metro and Stellenbosch

General relationships between race and voting behaviour are readily apparent from national and provincial data, but availability of voting district data enables more detailed spatial analysis. Cape Town Metro (CTM) was chosen as a case study primarily because it is home to two-thirds of the population of the Western Cape, which was electorally the most interesting province given the strength of the opposition challenge, especially from the DA. Stellenbosch was included as a small town no further from the centre of Cape Town than some parts of the CTM area which it could easily have been included within the CTM, and because some of its residential areas retain a high degree of residential segregation and offer useful micro-scale evidence of racial voting behaviour.

The analysis relies on two data sources. Data for 809 CTM and 37 Stellenbosch voting districts were obtained from the Independent Electoral Commission website (IEC, 2009), which provides a detailed breakdown of votes for each district. Census data for 2001 were used to check the racial composition of the population of individual suburbs using data compiled for the City of Cape Town (Cape Town, undated). The 2001 census measures post-apartheid racial residential mixing for only half the period since 1994, but progress was slow between 1996 and 2001 (Christopher, 2005) and there is evidence of deepening social and spatial polarisation in Cape Town (Lemanski, 2007). Not all the addresses of voting districts could be accurately placed within particular suburbs, but this was possible for the majority and enabled selection of a representative range of suburbs, including the major coloured and black areas, to observe relationships between racial composition and voting behaviour.

In the CTM as a whole the extent of electoral polarisation emerges clearly. The DA won more than 75% of the votes in 318 of the 809 voting districts (39%) and the DA won more than 75% in 221 districts (27%). If the threshold is reduced to 65% these figures increase to 54% for the DA and 39% for the ANC, thus in no less than 93% of all districts one or other main party won 65% of the votes cast. Stellenbosch appears less polarised, with the DA above 75% in only 10 of the 37 districts and the ANC in 6. The 65% threshold makes no difference to the ANC figure here, but the DA passed this threshold in 17 districts (46%).

The picture is clearest in dominantly black African districts of both Cape Town and Stellenbosch (Table 4 / i), where the ANC exceeded 75% (and usually 80%) in the overwhelming majority of voting districts. These are places with almost 100% black African populations living at high densities which might be expected to encourage a strong sense of social and political identity. It is also interesting to examine their non-ANC vote. Most of this went to COPE, with tiny but consistent support of 1-4% for the UDM that probably reflects relatively recent migrants from rural areas of the Eastern Cape, especially the former Transkei homeland, where UDM support remains significant. The PAC vote exceeded 1% only in a handful of

districts. The DA received little reward for its effort to reach out into black areas: its poll share reached 1% only in 7 of the 81 voting districts of Khayelitsha, 4 of the 20 districts in Philippi and in 15 of the 48 districts of Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu, and was below 2% almost everywhere. The ID fared even worse, winning negligible support in all dominantly black voting districts.

A small group of black settlements within predominantly white areas are grouped separately in Table 4 / ii, in order to see whether people in such areas display distinctive voting behaviour. They did not: in all 17 voting districts the ANC share of the poll exceeded 75%. In the single voting district of Joe Slovo Park, an informal settlement in Milnerton, 88.9% of voters supported the ANC. Such settlements represent examples of what Saff (1998) called *deracialisation* rather than desegregation, where blacks live adjacent to whites without sharing facilities and amenities and without micro-scale spatial integration. In such circumstances it is not surprising that there is no departure from normal black voting behaviour.

In dominantly white voting districts the DA won more than 75% of votes in 41 out of 48 districts in the suburbs shown in Table 4 / iii and 65% in all but three districts. COPE won votes in all these areas, typically 5-10%, but notably less in Durbanville and Belleville where the white population is predominantly Afrikaans-speaking and where 3% or so voters supported the FF+. Relatively large black minorities in Rondebosch and Sea Point probably explain significant ANC poll shares there, but these average only about half the black percentage of the population, suggesting that more middle-class blacks living in these suburbs may be voting less monolithically for the ANC than their compatriots in townships and informal settlements.

In most dominantly coloured districts more than 90% of the population was still coloured in 2001 (Table 4 / iv). DA dominance is slightly less pronounced than in white areas but the party still won more than 75% of the votes in 74 out of the 111 voting districts represented in table 4 / iv, and 65% in all but eight districts. Particularly striking is the DA dominance in Cape Town's largest coloured area, Mitchell's Plain, which had a population of more than over 300,000 in 2001. This confirms that the DA has become the natural party of choice for most coloured voters in Cape Town. To test whether this is so in a part of the country where the ANC is dominant, the results for the dominantly coloured area of Eldorado Park in Johannesburg were examined. The DA was again well ahead, but less dominant than in Cape Town, winning an average of 57% across the 12 districts compared with 15.5% for the ANC, 12.0% for COPE and 11.1% the ID. In Cape Town, figures for all three of these parties were much smaller, and non-DA opposition voting also included 1-3% for the ACDP in most districts. An additional element in many coloured districts of Cape Town is Al Jamah-ah, a party formed in 2007 to support Muslim interests and uphold shariah law. Its support varied a good deal between suburbs, averaging 2.3% in Mitchell's Plain and rising to more than 3% in Hanover Park and Grassy Park, but almost disappearing in Ottery and Ocean View. Given the nature of the party, such variations may reflect the distribution of Muslims within predominantly coloured areas.

Only 1.4% of Cape Town's population was recorded as Indian in 2001, and Indians are less clearly distinguishable from coloureds than is true elsewhere in South

Africa (Lemon and Battersby-Lennard, 2009), thus no valid conclusions about Indian voting behaviour may be drawn from Cape Town itself. In the former Indian group area of Rylands the DA won an average of 59.4%, with the ANC averaging 17.7%. This compared favourably with the DA's performance in a major Indian area of Durban, Chatsworth, but the Minority Front won many Indian votes there. The ANC share in Chatsworth was, interestingly, comparable with that in Rylands, which suggests that there may be somewhat greater ANC support among Indian than coloured voters. This could reflect the somewhat higher socio-economic profile of the Indian minority, as among coloured voters support for the ANC has come mainly from middle-class elements of the community. It is also consistent with the pro-transformation attitudes of a minority of Indians identified by the author in Pietermaritzburg (Lemon, 2007).

A small number of more racially mixed suburbs were also included considered (Table 4 / v). Mowbray, Woodstock and Observatory are all inner suburbs but the largest group is black African, white and coloured respectively. The voting outcomes shown in the table are broadly consistent with the racial patterns of voting behaviour identified above, with notably higher ANC support in Mowbray and DA support in Woodstock and Observatory, but these suburbs have quite a complex socio-economic mix, including student concentrations in Mowbray and 'yuppification' in Observatory and increasingly Woodstock, thus simple relationships between race and voting behaviour cannot be assumed. Parow has a relatively even coloured/white balance and a strong DA profile. Delft, has a 3:1 coloured:black African ratio, but the DA won less than 35% of the votes in two-thirds of its voting districts. This apparent departure from general voting behaviour is accentuated by the somewhat smaller average poll in districts with a DA majority. The explanation may relate to Delft's origins as an integrated project for coloureds and black Africans, and its present mix of government housing projects and informal settlements which may reduce polarisation between the two groups.

One final observation concerns the performance of COPE. Disappointing though this may have been in terms of its overall number of votes, it emerges very clearly from this analysis of the CTM and Stellenbosch that COPE is the one party which wins votes in all districts regardless of racial composition. In Stellenbosch its percentage share of the poll varied from 5.3 to 16.0, but this was unrelated to the racial composition of the voting districts. In Cape Town the variation was somewhat larger, but almost all districts COPE won between 3% and 20% of the poll, with black districts tending towards the upper end of the spectrum and more conservative areas (as reflected in some support for the FF+) towards the lower end. In South Africa's generally polarised electoral climate, the breadth of COPE's appeal is a notable exception.

Conclusion

After the 2009 election it remains the case, to no one's surprise, that political opposition in South Africa 'does not yet realistically embody the idea of "alternative government"' (Southall, 2001: 284). The overall strength of the opposition parties has changed remarkably little given the internal turbulence of the ANC and its failures on many fronts, together with the emergence of COPE and a strong DA challenge

underscored by a serious effort to bring its message to the black majority. The election results do, however, indicate some consolidation of opposition support behind the DA and COPE. The DA has succeeded well in holding off the threat posed to its existing support from COPE, continuing to increase its percentage share of the poll and winning the Western Cape, but in doing so it appears to have moved nearer to the party's glass ceiling. Micro-scale analysis confirms what was strongly suggested by the national and provincial picture, namely that voting remains polarised between most whites, coloureds and (to a slightly lesser extent) Indians supporting the DA and blacks continuing to support the ANC despite considerable dissatisfaction and a willingness to criticise the party's record. COPE achieved a smaller share of the poll than it hoped and expected, but did succeed in winning votes from all races. However the emergence of COPE, together with the election of Zuma as President, makes the emergence of a left-based opposition party even less likely in the foreseeable future.

The next five years nevertheless promise to be interesting and not without hope for South Africa's parliamentary opposition. The interest and the hope revolve around four things: the performance of the new ANC government; the performance of the DA provincial government in the Western Cape; opposition relations with the government; and prospects for opposition consolidation. Jacob Zuma received a largely positive report sheet from the national and overseas media for his first hundred days, but he has assumed the Presidency at a time of recession which will seriously hinder his government's attempts to improve life for the poor majority. Within three months of the election there were constant threats of strike action and vocal expressions of discontent from COSATU, but ANC policy choices are limited, as ever, by the international context. There remains, too, the possibility that as memories of the liberation struggle recede natural loyalty to the ANC may eventually diminish. If the DA administration in the Western Cape succeeds in delivering benefits to poorer communities this may help to increase its popularity elsewhere, provided that the party can project its achievements in office imaginatively (Lodge, 2006: 165).

Soon after the election, President Zuma stated his intention promised 'to start a new chapter in relations between government and the opposition' (Zuma, 2009). He reiterated this in his State of the Nation Address, when the ANC chief whip subsequently promised that the ruling party would work with all parties in Parliament to deepen its oversight role (SA Parliament, 2009). In return the new DA opposition leader, Athol Trollip, said 'I will try to make sure we can build bridges' (SABC News, 2009). Initial signs suggest that these may be more than formal expressions of goodwill at the beginning of a new parliament, as Zuma arranged to meet leaders of opposition parties at the end of August, raising hopes that they would be invited to contribute to the development of state policies while maintaining their oppositional role. This would have been difficult to imagine during the Presidency of Mbeki, who appeared to view opposition parties as acceptable only when, like the former NNP, they could deliver support for the his government from non-ANC voters (Lemon, 2007). At provincial level, news of co-operation between the new housing minister, Tokyo Sexwale, and Helen Zille over housing delivery in the Western Cape is highly encouraging after the ANC's disastrous failure to deliver the N2 Gateway project and subsequent DA/ANC squabbling (Legassick, 2009). Improved relations and greater acceptance by the ANC of the DA's opposition role could be instrumental in bringing the DA within the political spectrum of consideration of more black voters.

The DA's future also clearly depends on relations with other opposition parties, especially COPE, and there are signs that these too may become more constructive. Athol Trollip, in the speech cited above, also welcomed COPE as an important element of the realignment of South African politics, expressing the hope of close co-operation with the new party, which appeared to be reciprocated. Opposition leaders met twice in July 2009 to discuss possibilities of co-operation and opposition realignment. A meeting between the UDM and the ID was followed two weeks later by one between leading figures in the DA and COPE, and further meetings were planned. Such an initiative clearly needs more than a desire to win power from the ANC to succeed, and it will not be easy to achieve a common vision and policy platform, nor to suppress personal ego and ambition given an electoral system which virtually guarantees leaders of very small parties seats in parliament. Declining support for small parties may, however, encourage them to see their future in a larger grouping. The DA, as the largest opposition party, would presumably expect to provide the leader of a united opposition, but its own leadership is white, which could perpetuate the growth problem it now experiences. Yet co-operation with COPE offers the DA the opportunity to work with an authentic black-led party with 'liberation credentials', albeit a party currently perceived like itself to represent middle-class interests. In this sense the emergence of COPE may change the perspective of Pottie (2001), who argued that efforts by opposition parties to overcome fragmentation could actually further racial polarisation. The DA hope would then be, first that a united opposition could no longer be labelled racist and hence delegitimized, which has been the DA experience hitherto (Maré, 2001), and secondly that perceptions of class interest could be more easily countered at the ballot box than perceptions of racial minority interests.

Alternative government or not, the effective practice of opposition is essential for democratic participation and consolidation. The indications are that the 2009 general election has improved prospects for the exercise of such opposition in terms of both its own potential for consolidation and growth and its ability to play a constructive opposition role in the national interest.

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Table 1
Votes and seats by party in South Africa, general elections 1999-2009

Party	1999 votes (%)	1999 seats	2004 votes (%)	2004 seats	2009 votes	2009 votes (%)	2009 seats
African Christian Democratic Party	1.4	6	1.6	6	142,648	0.8	3
African National Congress	66.4	266	69.7	279	11,650,748	65.9	264
African People's Convention					35,867	0.2	1
Azanian People's Organisation	0.2	1	0.3	2	38,245	0.2	1
Congress of the People					1,311,027	7.4	30
Democratic Alliance	9.6	38	12.4	50	2,945,829	16.7	67
Independent Democrats			1.7	7	162,915	0.9	4
Inkatha Freedom Party	8.6	34	7.0	28	804,260	4.6	18
Minority Front	0.3	1	0.35	2	43,474	0.3	1
New National Party	6.9	28	1.7	7			
Pan Africanist Congress	0.7	3	0.7	3	48,530	0.3	1
United Christian Democratic Party	0.8	3	0.8	3	66,086	0.4	2
United Democratic Movement	3.4	14	2.3	9	149,680	0.9	4
Vryheidsfront Plus	0.8	3	0.9	4	146,796	0.9	4
Total (inc. others)	15,985, 000	400	15,612, 667	400	17,680,729	100.0	400

Source: Lemon (2005) and Independent Electoral Commission, South Africa (<http://www.elections.org.za>).

Table 2
Regional bases and prominent politicians associated with opposition parties

<i>Party</i>	<i>Regional base</i>	<i>% of national support</i>	<i>Prominent leader</i>
IFP	KwaZulu-Natal	91.5	Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi
MF	KwaZulu-Natal	89.6	Amichand Rajbansi
UCDP	North West	69.1	Chief Lucas Mangope
UDM	Eastern Cape	68.7	Bantu Holomisa
ID	Western Cape	52.9	Patricia de Lille
COPE	Eastern Cape	28.9	
DA	Western Cape	27.9	Helen Zille

Table 3 Variations in percentage party support between national (N) and provincial (P) elections

<i>Province</i>	ANC (N)	ANC (P)	DA (N)	DA (P)	COPE (N)	COPE (P)
E Cape	69.73	68.82	10.06	9.99	13.27	13.67
Free State	71.92	71.10	11.88	11.60	11.30	11.61
Gauteng	62.96	64.04	23.45	21.86	7.42	7.78
KZ-N	63.58	62.95	9.41	9.15	1.37	1.29
Limpopo	85.00	84.88	3.89	3.48	7.26	7.53
Mpumalanga	85.68	85.55	7.77	7.49	2.84	2.91
North West	73.78	72.89	8.74	8.25	8.45	8.33
N Cape	62.37	60.75	13.25	12.57	15.61	16.67
W Cape	32.16	31.55	48.84	51.46	9.05	7.74
TOTAL	65.90	65.06	16.66	16.74	7.42	7.32

Table 4 Cape Town: dominant party and dominant racial group in selected voting districts

(i) dominantly African districts

	<i>Voting districts</i>	<i>Districts where ANC vote >75%</i>	<i>Population 2001 % black African</i>
Khayelitsha	81	77	99.4
Phillipi	21	20	94.4
Guguletu	20	11	98.8
Langa	15	9	99.55
Nyanga	13	12	99.5
Crossroads	6	6	98.3
Mfuleni	5	5	91.1
Kayamandi (Stellenbosch)	6	6	nd

(ii) dominantly African settlements in majority white suburbs and mixed suburbs

	<i>Voting districts</i>	<i>Districts where ANC vote >75%</i>	<i>Population 2001 % black African</i>
Du Noon (Killarney Gardens)	5	5	89.65
Masiphumele (Fish Hoek)	4	4	97.1
Lwandle and Nomzomo (both Strand)	4	4	nd
Imzamo Yethu (Hout Bay)	2	2	95.4
Redhill informal settlement (Simonstown)	1	1	nd
Joe Slovo (Milnerton)	1	1	nd

Note: the ANC vote was more than 80% in all 21 voting districts except one in Masiphumele.

(iii) dominantly white districts

	<i>Voting districts</i>	<i>DA vote</i>		<i>Population 2001</i>
		<i>>75%</i>	<i>>65%</i>	<i>% white</i>
Belleville	16	14	14	84.6
Durbanville				
Milnerton	7	5	7	86.0
Claremont	6	4	6	80.35
Rondebosch	5	4	4	72.6 (14.0 black)
Sea Point	5	5	5	76.1 (12.2 black)
Plumstead	5	5	5	75.2 (19.5 coloured)
Constantia	4	4	4	86.8

(iv) Dominantly coloured districts

	<i>Voting Districts</i>	<i>DA vote</i>		<i>Population 2001</i>
		<i>>75%</i>	<i>>65%</i>	<i>% coloured</i>
Mitchell's Plain	25	23	23	89.6
Elsies River	15	6	15	91.7
Belhar	12	8	10	94.0
Grassy Park	11	6	11	94.0
Retreat	10	5	10	94.2
Bonteheuwel	9	9	9	95.4
Bishop Lavis	8	7	7	96.9
Manenberg	7	4	5	94.4
Hanover Park	7	6	7	97.1
Ocean View	4	0	4	97.7
Ottery	4	1	3	72.2 (18.9 white)

(v) more racially mixed areas

	<i>Racial composition (%, 2001)</i>	<i>Voting districts</i>	<i>DA vote share (%)</i>	<i>ANC vote share (%)</i>
Mowbray	46.6A, 36.7W, 14.1C	3	22.6, 31.45, 73.5	46.0, 35.4, 7.0
Observatory	57.4W, 20.3A, 14.1C	3	53-66	14-20
Woodstock	67.5C, 17.75W, 7.6A, 7.2I	4	60-68	9-15
Delft	73.3C, 25.55A	18	6 districts >75 12 districts <35	12 districts >54 6 districts < 9
Parow	53.0C, 42.0W	15	9 districts >75 14 districts >70	27.2 in 1 district

Key: A= African, W=White, C=Coloured, I=Indian/Asian

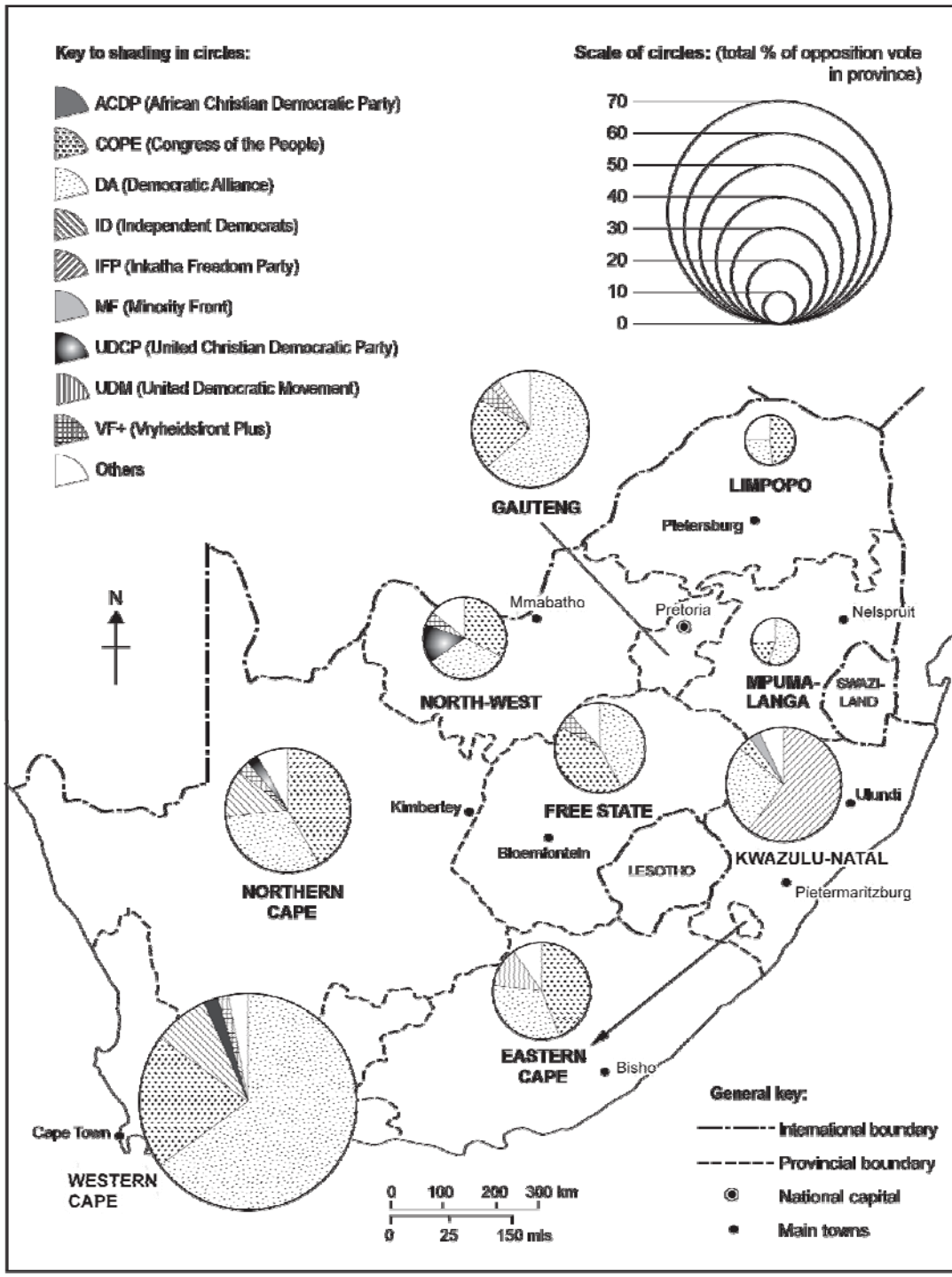


Fig. 4.1 Provincial patterns of support for opposition parties in 2009