

## **Trends in Voting Patterns by Age Group in South Africa 2003-2013**

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**A paper for presentation at the 7th African Population Conference  
Gauteng, South Africa  
Session 651 Youth Trends in South Africa**

### **Abstract**

This paper analyses voting preferences of young South Africans (age 18-35) in comparison to older South Africans, based on data from the South African Social Attitudes Surveys (SASAS) 2003-2013. Voting preferences are strongly related to population group, even after aspects of socio-economic status have been taken into account. In 2004, Africans were more likely to vote than non-Africans. In 2013, race did not matter for voting. However, young non-Africans are significantly more likely to vote for the African National Congress (ANC) than older non-Africans and young Africans are somewhat more likely to vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA) than older Africans. By 2012, tertiary-educated Africans, both younger and older, were less likely to support the ANC than less educated Africans, while older tertiary-educated Africans were more likely than less educated older Africans to support the DA. Thus, by 2012, there is some evidence that more educated Africans were feeling less connection with the ANC and somewhat more connection with the DA. In the 2013 SASAS, 9% of young voting-age Africans and 6% of older Africans supported the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Among both young and older Africans, those who were more educated were more likely to support the EFF. Thus, the shift in the extremely strong connection between population group and voting choice that many have long speculated would weaken over time, by 2012 seems to have begun to happen.

### **Introduction**

Voting preferences and behaviours are of interest in any country. However, they are especially interesting in South Africa, in which the African National Congress (ANC), a leading opponent of apartheid, has been in power at the national level since the formation of the new South Africa in 1994. Such revolutionary parties often retain power for an extended number of years. How people's party preferences are determined and how they change over time has attracted a great deal of attention. Of

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared with the support of Statistics South Africa, Human Sciences Research Council and an NICHD center grant to the Population Studies Center of the University of Michigan (R24 HD041028). Research assistance was provided by Gabriel Kahn, University of Michigan. Helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper were provided at a Center for Political Studies talk at the University of Michigan, 11 February, 2015.

special interest are the roles of race, socio-economic status and age in the determination of whether people vote and of party choice.

### South African Population Groups

There are four population groups in South Africa: African, Coloured, Asian and White. Africans are members of Indigenous-language speaking African groups. In current South Africa, there are nine different officially recognised African languages, which correspond to nine different ethnic groups. Coloured persons are mainly descendants of Malays, Portuguese and the members of one African ethnic group, the Xhosa. Asians are mainly descendants of those from the Indian sub-continent. Whites are comprised both of those with Afrikaans native language and of those with English native language. Members of different population groups had different legal rights under apartheid, and the population groups continue to be important in contemporary South Africa. The percentages of the population from the 2011 South African census and their relative situations under apartheid are as follows:

African: 79%, most restricted under apartheid

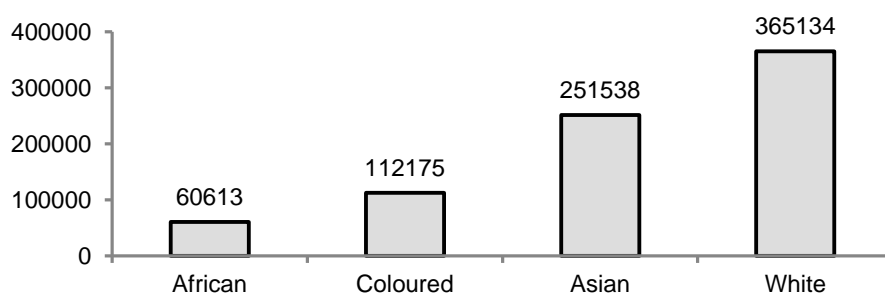
Coloured: 9%, somewhat restricted under apartheid, but less than Africans

Asian: 3%, some restrictions under apartheid, but less than the Coloured population

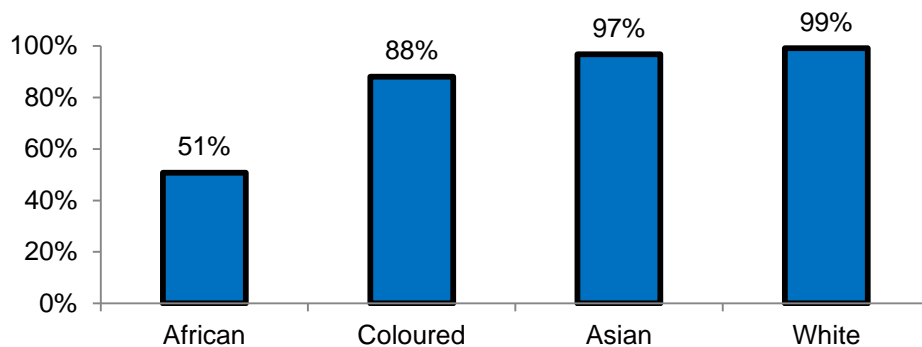
White: 9%, Apartheid was designed to serve their interests

### Characteristics of Population Groups

We group the three non-African groups into one group called non-Africans for the purpose of this study. The analysis in this paper looks at behaviours and preferences of Africans in comparison to non-Africans as a group. The three non-African groups are considered together due to some similarities in characteristics and behaviour in comparison to Africans and also for reasons of sample size.



**Figure 1. Per Capita Income 2011 in Rand by Population Group**



**Figure 2. Percentage of Households with a Flush Toilet 2011 by Population Group**

Even after the end of apartheid, there remained substantial differences among population groups, as indicated in Figures 1 (Statistics South Africa, 2012b) and 2 (Statistics South Africa, 2012a: 87). On a wide variety of indicators, besides having been the most oppressed group under apartheid, Africans continue to fare worse than other groups. The order of the groups shown in Figures 1 and 2 is similar to the degree of restriction under apartheid.

### **South African Voting**

There is great interest in whether and when a party other than the ANC will gain political control in South Africa. An analogy is often drawn to India, which gained independence in 1947. The Congress Party played a similar role in the struggle for independence in India to the ANC in South Africa. The Congress Party lost power 30 years later in 1977 and has returned to power various times since 1977 (Heller, 2009, 2011; Reddy, 2005).

Researchers and the press have speculated that:

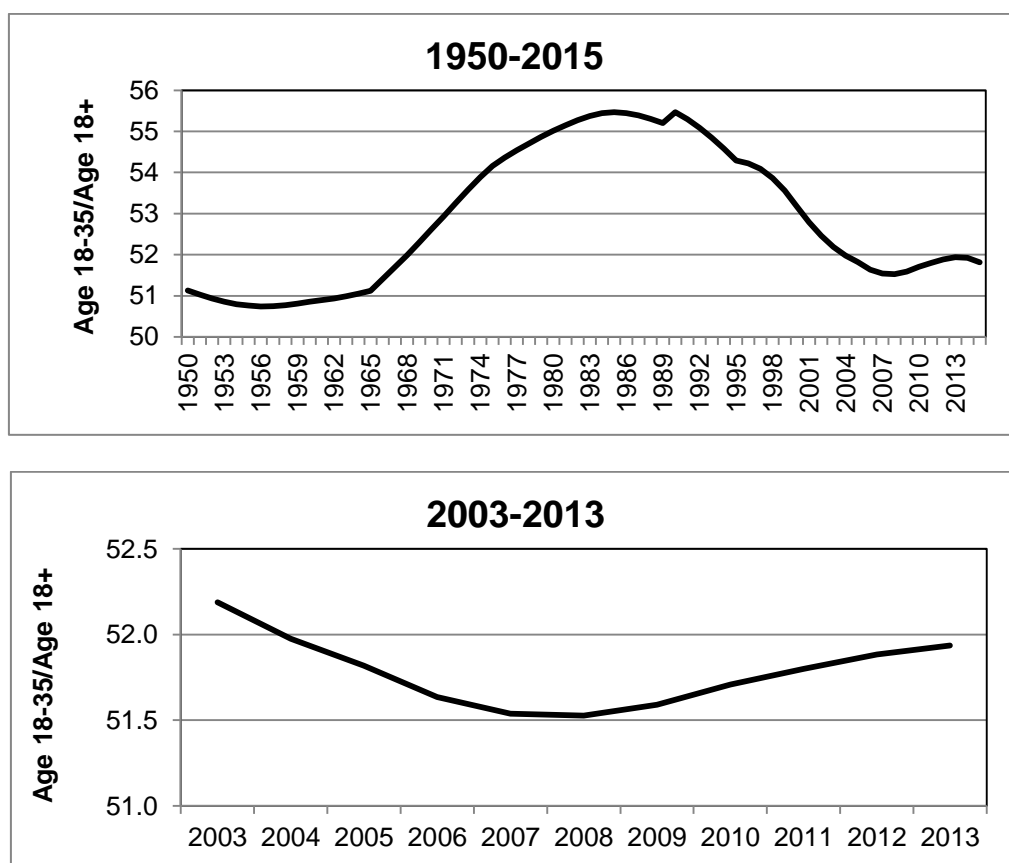
1. Dissatisfaction about service delivery among all groups, including Africans, would lead to a decline in support for the ANC among Africans (Alexander, 2010; Etzo, 2010).
2. DA efforts to attract Africans would be increasingly successful (Nuijit, 2013; Southall, 2014).
3. Better-off Africans would stop supporting the ANC and instead would: 1) vote for the DA, 2) vote for a third party or 3) not vote (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009; Nuijit, 2013).
4. Others have thought that parties other than the ANC are not very attractive to Africans, partially because the ANC has successfully characterised the DA as a "White party" (Langfield, 2014; Southern, 2011).
5. African support for the ANC would decline as younger Africans who were born after the end of apartheid or who were very young at the end of apartheid reached voting age (Mattes, 2012; Smith, 2014; Southall, 2014).
6. Many have wondered whether the emergence of the Economic Freedom Fighters, with its strong showing in the 2014 national election, was a protest vote or whether it indicates a more

fundamental shift in African support away from the ANC (African Globe, 2015; Engler, 2014; Southall, 2014).

### Young Adults and Social Behaviours

This paper looks at factors related to voting behaviour, with a focus on young voters (age 18-35) and older voters (age 36+).<sup>2</sup> There has been much speculation about whether voting patterns would change as young voters increasingly included those who were born after the end of apartheid (called the Born Frees) or who were small children when apartheid ended. Those born in 1994 would have reached age 18 (voting age) in 2012, and those born in 1984, and thus age 10 or less in 1994, would have reached age 18 in 2002.

There has also been general interest in the effects of the age distribution of the population on social phenomena and behaviours. Figure 3 shows the proportion of those aged 18+ who were age 18-35 for 1950-2015 and also for 2003-2013. The years 1950-2015 reflect all the years for which estimates are available, while 2003-2013 covers the survey years used in the analysis in this paper.



**Figure 3. Percentage of Those Age 18+ Who Were Age 18-35, South Africa, 1950-2015 and 2003-2013**

<sup>2</sup> In South Africa, those age 18-35 are considered young voters.

We see in the top panel of Figure 3 that in the 1970s through the late 1990s, South Africa experienced a youth bulge, which has often been thought to contribute to social unrest but also to hold the potential for increased productivity (Assaad and Roudi-Fahimi. 2007; Urdal, 2006). The youth bulge period roughly corresponds to the years of intense anti-Apartheid agitation. We see in the bottom panel of Figure 3 for 2003-2013 that within the range of the survey dates, the proportion of voting age persons age 18-35 increased somewhat after 2008, although in that period it only varied between 51.3% and 52.2%.

### **Data Source**

This study uses data from the South African Social Attitudes Surveys (SASAS). The surveys have been conducted annually by Human Sciences Research Council since 2003. The fieldwork takes place sometime between August and November. South African elections occur in April or May. The focus of the surveys is on attitudes and perceptions, with some questions about behaviours. Other annual scholarly surveys in South Africa do not ask political questions, while other scholarly political surveys are not annual. SASAS are cross-sectional surveys with a large number of identical questions in each year (SASAS, 2015).

The surveys are representative of the South African population age 16+. This study uses data for those age 18+ at the time of the survey. As of September 2015, SASAS surveys through 2013 are in the public domain. All the results shown are based on weighted data. In statistical tests the weights are scaled so that the weighted number of cases in the analysis equals the actual number of cases in the given survey year.

In 2004 and 2009 SASAS asked what party the respondent had voted for in the previous election, and whether the respondent voted. In every survey, a question was also asked about what party the respondent would vote for (including whether the respondent would vote) if an election were held tomorrow. In each survey, there were about 1,800 African respondents and 1,200 non-African respondents. Of the non-African respondents, there were about 500 Coloured respondents, 400 White respondents and 300 Asian respondents. Due to sample size, some analyses can only reasonably be done for Africans and non-Africans as a whole.

### **South African Political History**

Apartheid officially ended in 1994. The first post-apartheid election in South Africa was held in 1994. National elections occur every 5 years. South Africa has a parliamentary system, with party list elections.

**The African National Congress (ANC)** - The ANC played a major role in the anti-apartheid movement. From the time of apartheid, the ANC was part of a Tripartite Alliance with the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, a socialist trade union

group. After apartheid, the ANC-controlled government cooperated with the International Monetary Fund and pursued a macro-social structural adjustment agenda, which was criticized by some on the political left. The ANC has won every national election.

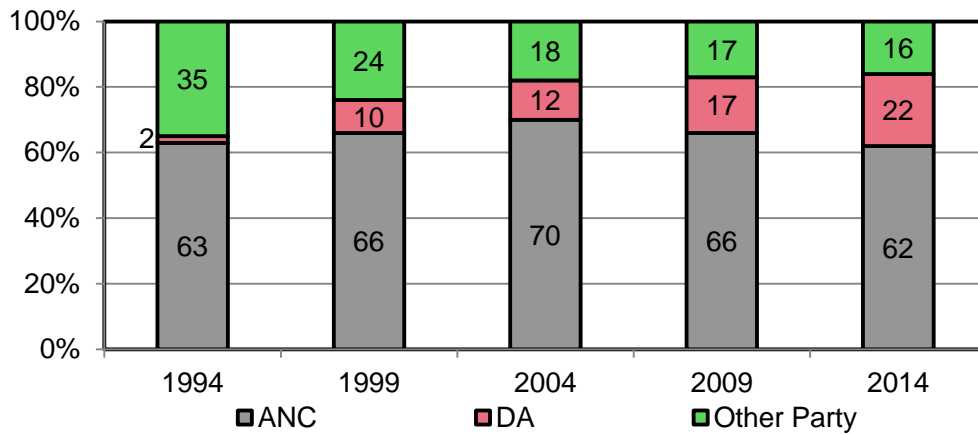
**The Democratic Alliance (DA)** - The DA grew out of a merger between the Progressive Party, the Federal Alliance and the New National Party. The New National Party was a breakaway group from National Party, but a few members of the National Party joined the ANC. During apartheid, the Progressive Party was the only opposition party to National Party's apartheid policies in parliament. After the end of apartheid it was renamed the Democratic Party and later merged with others to form the DA. The National Party, the ruling party during apartheid, won the second most votes in 1994 (82 seats in the National Assembly). After it failed to garner any significant votes in the 1999 elections, the National Party dissolved in 2005. The DA won Western Cape provincial elections in 2009 and 2014. DA support has overwhelmingly come from non-Africans. In 2011, only 33% of the population of Western Cape was comprised of Africans, compared to 79% of all South Africans.

Other than the ANC and the DA, parties that have done well in some post-apartheid elections in South African include:

**The Inkhata Freedom Party (IFP)** - The IFP is a Zulu-based party centred in KwaZulu-Natal. It advocated a federal system of government in the run-up to the 1994 elections and called for more power to the provinces and less to the national government. It won Kwazulu-Natal provincial elections in 1994 and 1999. It won the second most votes in 1994 and the third most votes in 1999 and 2004. The party's support has declined in subsequent elections, even in KwaZulu-Natal.

**The Congress of the People (COPE)** - Cope broke off from the ANC in 2008. It was formed mostly by supporters of the views of Thabo Mbeki, who was President after Nelson Mandela. It still exists, but it weakened considerably due to internal conflicts. It won the third most votes in 2009.

**The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)** – The EFF emerged from the split within the ANC Youth League in 2013, the youth wing of the ANC. The EFF considers itself a revolutionary socialist party. It won the third most votes in 2014 (6.4% of votes).



**Figure 4. Percentage Distribution of Votes by Party According to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) 1994-2014**

Figure 4 shows the official vote by party in South African national elections since the end of apartheid (IEC, 2015). Since 2004, the proportion of votes for the ANC has declined, the proportion of votes for the DA has increased, and the proportion of votes for parties other than the ANC or the DA has declined.

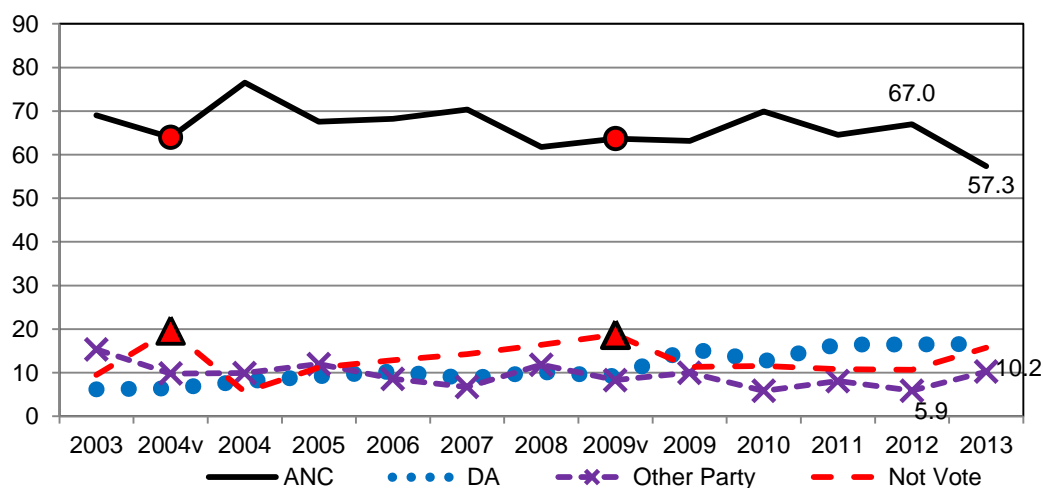
**Table 1. Comparison of the Percentage of Votes by Party in 2004 and 2009 from the IEC and from SASAS**

	2004		2009	
	IEC	SASAS	IEC	SASAS
ANC	70%	80%	66%	79%
DA	12%	8%	17%	11%
Other Party	18%	12%	17%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1 compares the distribution of votes by party in the 2004 and 2009 national elections according to the IEC and as estimated from SASAS responses. It is clear from Table 1 that SASAS underestimates voting for parties other than the ANC and overestimates voting for the ANC. This could be due to the mix of respondents, with non-Africans being more likely to refuse to participate in the surveys, although this should be taken care of by weighting. Response rates in SASAS have been high: 78%-88%. The results could also be due to item non-response if those who voted for a party other than the ANC were more likely to refuse to answer the voting question. It would be possible to adjust the estimated proportions by party choice in SASAS to those in the IEC figures for 2004 and 2009, but this would not be helpful in bivariate or multivariate analyses.

## Reporting of Actual Voting and of Voting Intentions

Figure 5 shows for all of those of voting age, reported voting behaviour for 2004 and 2009 and voting (and non-voting) intentions for every year 2003-2013. The values for reporting of actual voting are further indicated by 2004v or 2009v on the horizontal axis. For reported actual voting for 2004 and 2009, the values for ANC vote and for not voting are indicated by filled in markers.



**Figure 5. Intended and Reported Actual Voting 2003-2013, All South Africans**

Except for whether people voted, there is an amazing smoothness over time between the voting behaviour and the voting intentions. In countries throughout the world, many people intend to vote and then on election day something comes up, and they do not vote. The higher percentage reporting they did not actually vote in elections than the percentage intending not to vote is plausible. The results also mean that for voting intentions by party, intentions can be analysed as if they reflect actual voting. This yield 10 years of voting intentions that can be examined rather than only two years of actual voting. The increase in DA support after 2008 is clear. Also, support for other parties increased between 2012 and 2013. This is due to the appearance of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in voting intentions in 2013. Four percent of all respondents in 2013 supported the EFF, the third most after the ANC and the DA.

## Explanatory Variables in the Analysis

Table 2 gives information about the explanatory variables used in the analysis. Education is an indicator of socio-economic status. Whether the respondent thinks life will improve in the next 10 years and the degree of trust in national government are indicators of views of the current and prospective situation in South Africa. Satisfaction with service delivery and with cutting crime have been proposed as important in whether people support the ruling party, the ANC, or support some other party.



Table 3 shows the mean values of the explanatory variables for all young and older voters in 2004 and 2013. Significant differences for each year between all young and older voting age persons, between young Africans and young non-Africans, and between older Africans and older non-Africans are indicated by bolding of the higher value, indicating higher average education, a higher level of trust or a higher level of satisfaction. The value is bolded and italicised if the Young or Africans have a significantly higher value and bolded but non-italicised if those who are Older or non-Africans have a significantly higher value.

Not surprisingly, in both years, young people had higher average educational attainment than older people. In both years, young people also had a more optimistic view of the future and a higher level of trust in national government. Older people were more satisfied with some aspects of service delivery.

**Table 2. Explanatory Variables in the Analysis**

Variable	Codes
Education	Primary schooling or less=1, Tertiary=4
Will life improve in next 5 years? (Lifeimprove)	Worse=1, Same=2, Improve=3
How satisfied with democracy in South Africa? (Satdem)	Very dissatisfied=1, Very Satisfied=5
Trust in national government (Trustnatgov)	Strongly distrust=1, Strongly trust=5
Satisfaction with water & sanitation (Satwatsan)	Very dissatisfied=1, Very satisfied=5
Satisfaction with providing electricity (Satelec)	Very dissatisfied=1, Very satisfied=5
Satisfaction with refuse removal (Satrefuserem)	Very dissatisfied=1, Very satisfied=5
Satisfaction with cutting crime (Satcutcrime)	Very dissatisfied=1, Very satisfied=5

**Table 3. Values of Independent Variables in 2004 and 2013, Younger and Older Persons and Younger and Older Africans and non-Africans**

All South Africans	2004		2013	
	Young	Older	Young	Older
Mean Education	<b>2.46</b>	1.94	<b>2.49</b>	2.20
Mean view of whether life will improve in next 5 years?	<b>2.62</b>	2.44	<b>2.31</b>	1.98
Mean satisfaction with democracy in South Africa?	<b>3.57</b>	3.35	2.68	2.60
Mean trust in national government	<b>3.70</b>	3.56	<b>2.86</b>	2.72
Mean satisfaction with water & sanitation	3.30	3.29	3.14	<b>3.27</b>
Mean satisfaction with providing electricity	3.53	3.53	3.40	3.42
Mean satisfaction with refuse removal	3.12	3.17	3.02	<b>3.26</b>
Mean satisfaction with cutting crime	2.17	<b>2.35</b>	2.29	2.18
Young	2004		2013	
	African	non-African	African	non-African
Mean Education	2.42	<b>2.64</b>	2.45	<b>2.75</b>
Mean view of whether life will improve in next 5 years?	<b>2.66</b>	2.40	<b>2.35</b>	2.08
Mean satisfaction with democracy in South Africa?	<b>3.65</b>	3.14	<b>2.73</b>	2.36
Mean trust in national government	<b>3.83</b>	2.99	<b>2.94</b>	2.37
Mean satisfaction with water & sanitation	3.20	<b>3.76</b>	3.04	<b>3.71</b>

Mean satisfaction with providing electricity	3.47	<b>3.83</b>	3.36	<b>3.62</b>
Mean satisfaction with refuse removal	2.95	<b>3.93</b>	2.91	<b>3.66</b>
Mean satisfaction with cutting crime	2.19	2.07	<b>2.22</b>	2.01
<b>Older</b>	<b>2004</b>		<b>2013</b>	
	African	non-African	African	non-African
Mean Education	1.71	<b>2.45</b>	1.99	<b>2.66</b>
Mean view of whether life will improve in next 5 years?	<b>2.62</b>	2.06	<b>2.07</b>	1.77
Mean satisfaction with democracy in South Africa?	<b>3.51</b>	3.01	<b>2.73</b>	2.32
Mean trust in national government	<b>3.91</b>	2.80	<b>2.96</b>	2.20
Mean satisfaction with water & sanitation	3.03	<b>3.88</b>	3.07	<b>3.71</b>
Mean satisfaction with providing electricity	3.38	<b>3.85</b>	3.36	<b>3.55</b>
Mean satisfaction with refuse removal	2.80	<b>3.94</b>	3.05	<b>3.72</b>
Mean satisfaction with cutting crime	2.37	2.31	<b>2.22</b>	2.08

Among both young and older people, non-Africans had higher average education. In both years for both young and older people, Africans had a more optimistic view of the future, were more satisfied with democracy and had a higher level of trust in national government. Non-Africans tended to be more satisfied with service delivery, which is probably because they actually had better service delivery.

### Bivariate Relations with Voting Behaviour

Table 4 shows Spearman correlations between aspects of voting behaviour and the independent variables mentioned earlier. Significant correlations are bolded. Correlations are not shown for Africans and DA voting in 2004, because almost no Africans voted for the DA in 2004. The approximate number of cases in each situation is indicated.

**Table 4. Spearman Correlations Between Aspects of Voting Behaviour, Age Group and Race, 2004 and 2013**

2004	Young			Older		
	Whether Vote n~1150	Vote ANC n~848	Vote DA n~848	Whether Vote n~1023	Vote ANC n~929	Vote DA n~929
*p <.05, **p<.01						
Education	<b>.095**</b>	<b>-.095**</b>	<b>.200**</b>	<b>-.123**</b>	<b>-.236**</b>	<b>.259**</b>
Lifeimprove	<b>.076*</b>	<b>.126**</b>	-.047	<b>.163**</b>	<b>.345**</b>	<b>-.291**</b>
Satdem	<b>.124**</b>	<b>.146**</b>	<b>-.146**</b>	<b>.143**</b>	<b>.211**</b>	<b>-.096**</b>
Trustnatgov	<b>.183**</b>	<b>.287**</b>	<b>-.320**</b>	<b>.161**</b>	<b>.359**</b>	<b>-.297**</b>
Satwatsan	<b>-.063*</b>	-.038	<b>.101**</b>	<b>-.181**</b>	<b>-.114**</b>	<b>.167**</b>
Satelec	.027	.036	.035	<b>-.123**</b>	.003	<b>.078*</b>
Satrefuserem	.023	-.005	-.005	<b>-.148**</b>	<b>-.198**</b>	<b>.184**</b>
Satcutcrime	<b>.109**</b>	<b>.110**</b>	<b>.110**</b>	-.035	.064	.012
African	<b>.117**</b>	<b>.528**</b>	<b>.528**</b>	<b>.268**</b>	<b>.577**</b>	<b>-.565**</b>
<b>2013</b>						
	Whether Vote n~1040	Vote ANC n~847	Vote DA n~847	Whether Vote n~950	Vote ANC n~840	Vote DA n~840
Education	.012	<b>-.140**</b>	<b>.178**</b>	.024	<b>-.394**</b>	<b>.350**</b>
Lifeimprove	-.017	.048	<b>-.079*</b>	<b>.104**</b>	<b>.222**</b>	<b>-.211**</b>
Satdem	.051	<b>.192**</b>	<b>-.105**</b>	<b>.103**</b>	<b>.190**</b>	<b>-.229**</b>
Trustnatgov	.006	<b>.239**</b>	<b>-.214**</b>	<b>.135**</b>	<b>.323**</b>	<b>-.313**</b>

Satwatsan	-.030	-.002	<b>.106**</b>	-.032	<b>-.196**</b>	<b>.149**</b>
Satelec	-.032	<b>.093**</b>	.000	.046	-.060	.045
Satrefuserem	-.019	<b>-.103**</b>	<b>.142**</b>	-.016	<b>-.191**</b>	<b>.224**</b>
Satcutcrime	.033	<b>.170**</b>	-.067	.014	.044	-.047
African	-.009	<b>.426**</b>	<b>-.662**</b>	.049	<b>.726**</b>	<b>-.834**</b>

2004	African Young			Non-African Young		
	Whether Vote n~1016	Vote ANC n~750	Vote DA	Whether Vote n~169	Vote ANC n~81	Vote DA n~81
Education	<b>.126**</b>	-.006		.001	<b>-.447**</b>	<b>.619**</b>
Lifeimprove	<b>.064*</b>	<b>.117**</b>		.036	.034	-.006
Satdem	<b>.113**</b>	<b>.087*</b>		.031	.089	-.183
Trustnatgov	<b>.195**</b>	<b>.107**</b>		-.137	<b>.360**</b>	<b>-.519**</b>
Satwatsan	-.040	.043		-.112	-.176	<b>.279**</b>
Satelec	.053	<b>.072*</b>		<b>-.173*</b>	<b>-.211*</b>	<b>.351**</b>
Satrefuserem	<b>.087**</b>	<b>.150**</b>		<b>-.194*</b>	-.094	<b>.325**</b>
Satcutcrime	<b>.139**</b>	.056		.093	.182	-.141
2013	Whether Vote n~916	Vote ANC n~740	Vote DA n~740	Whether Vote n~114	Vote ANC n~93	Vote DA n~93
Education	.021	<b>-.074*</b>	.061	-.067	<b>-.222*</b>	<b>.325**</b>
Lifeimprove	-.033	.003	-.017	.076	.145	-.141
Satdem	.059	<b>.154**</b>	.011	-.021	.141	-.194
Trustnatgov	.010	<b>.163**</b>	<b>-.094*</b>	-.050	<b>.380**</b>	<b>-.413**</b>
Satwatsan	-.038	<b>.076*</b>	.012	.084	-.056	.084
Satelec	-.045	<b>.148**</b>	<b>-.079*</b>	.112	.078	-.038
Satrefuserem	-.017	-.036	.039	-.024	.090	-.008
Satcutcrime	.051	<b>.152**</b>	.005	-.124	.073	-.070

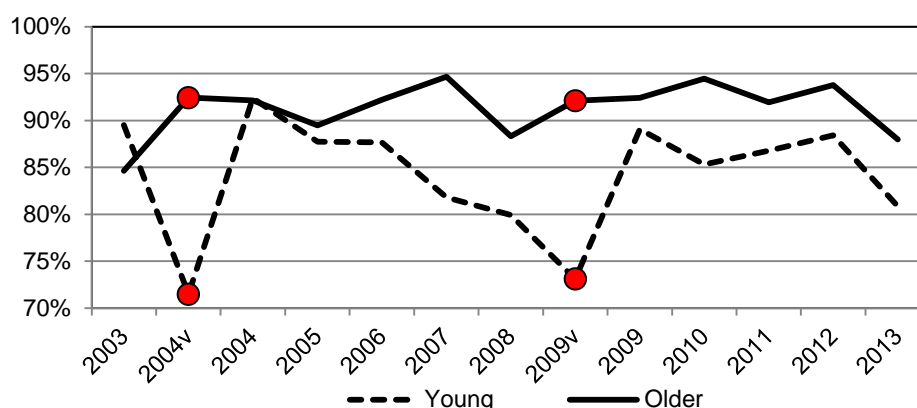
2004	African Older			Non-African Older		
	Whether Vote n~736	Vote ANC n~706	Vote DA	Whether Vote n~283	Vote ANC n~228	Vote DA n~228
Education	-.003	<b>.088*</b>		.000	<b>-.252**</b>	.079
Lifeimprove	.032	<b>.088*</b>		<b>.121*</b>	<b>.394**</b>	<b>-.244**</b>
Satdem	.020	<b>.087*</b>		<b>.220**</b>	<b>.377**</b>	-.119
Trustnatgov	-.038	.058		<b>.180**</b>	<b>.489**</b>	<b>-.281**</b>
Satwatsan	<b>-.167**</b>	<b>.095*</b>		-.058	-.108	.013
Satelec	<b>-.104**</b>	<b>.111**</b>		-.083	.066	.065
Satrefuserem	<b>-.080*</b>	.016		-.052	-.062	-.109
Satcutcrime	.021	.048		<b>-.116*</b>	.071	-.022
2013	Whether Vote n~695	Vote ANC n~623	Vote DA n~623	Whether Vote n~245	Vote ANC n~208	Vote DA n~208
Education	-.013	<b>-.223**</b>	<b>.168**</b>	<b>.181**</b>	<b>-.168*</b>	.033
Lifeimprove	<b>.150**</b>	<b>.086*</b>	-.031	-.023	.107	-.099
Satdem	<b>.140**</b>	.052	<b>-.092*</b>	-.023	.135	<b>-.175*</b>
Trustnatgov	<b>.199**</b>	<b>.115**</b>	-.033	-.073	<b>.208**</b>	<b>-.201**</b>
Satwatsan	-.028	<b>-.081*</b>	-.062	-.024	.026	-.047
Satelec	<b>.084*</b>	-.021	.028	-.053	.023	-.112
Satrefuserem	-.026	.004	.032	.036	-.004	-.023
Satcutcrime	.041	.043	-.073	-.064	-.031	.015

For young voting-age persons in 2004, factors related to voting are similar to factors related to voting for the ANC, while in 2013, none of the variables considered were significantly related to whether a young person had voted. This was also true to some extent for older voting-age persons. Young Africans showed a similar pattern for voting as all young persons. Very little was related to voting

among young non-Africans in either 2004 or 2013. Among older persons, several factors were related to voting in 2004, while almost nothing was related to voting in 2013. Thus, voting had become a more mass phenomenon by 2013, while in 2004, voting was more selective of those who were inclined to support the ANC. Generally, educational attainment was negatively related to supporting the ANC and positively related to supporting the DA.

### Age, Race and Voting

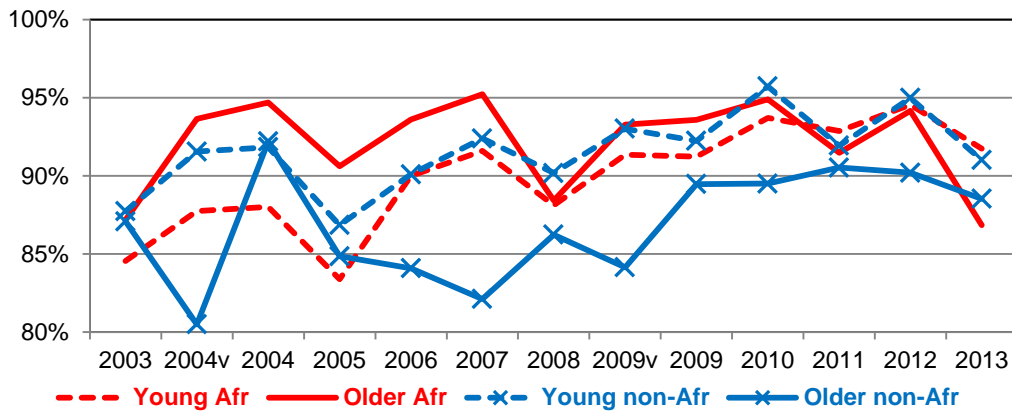
In many countries, older people are more likely to vote than younger people (Gorres, 2007). This was also true in South Africa, as indicated in Figure 6, which shows the percentage voting among younger voters and among older voters.



**Figure 6. Intended and Reported Actual Percentage Voting, Young and Older Voters, South Africa 2003-2013**

In every year except 2004 the percentage of young people who voted was lower than the percentage of older people who voted. In 2004 the percentage for young and older voting-age persons was identical. It is also clear from Figure 6 that the gap between intended and reported actual voting was much greater for younger than for older voters around both the 2004 and 2009 elections.

Figure 7 shows similar information to that in Figure 6, but separately for Africans and non-Africans. Older voting age Africans were more likely to intend to vote than young voting age Africans before 2011, after which young Africans were more likely to intend to vote than older Africans. Perhaps young Africans were energized by something since 2011. Among non-Africans, older persons were almost always less likely to vote or to intend to vote than young non-Africans. Among non-Africans, the percentage voting or intending to vote increased over time. This might reflect that over time non-Africans felt more of a stake in the system and felt that voting would not be a waste of their time.



**Figure 7. Intended and Reported Actual Percentage Voting, Young and Older Voting Age Persons, Africans and non-Africans 2003-2013**

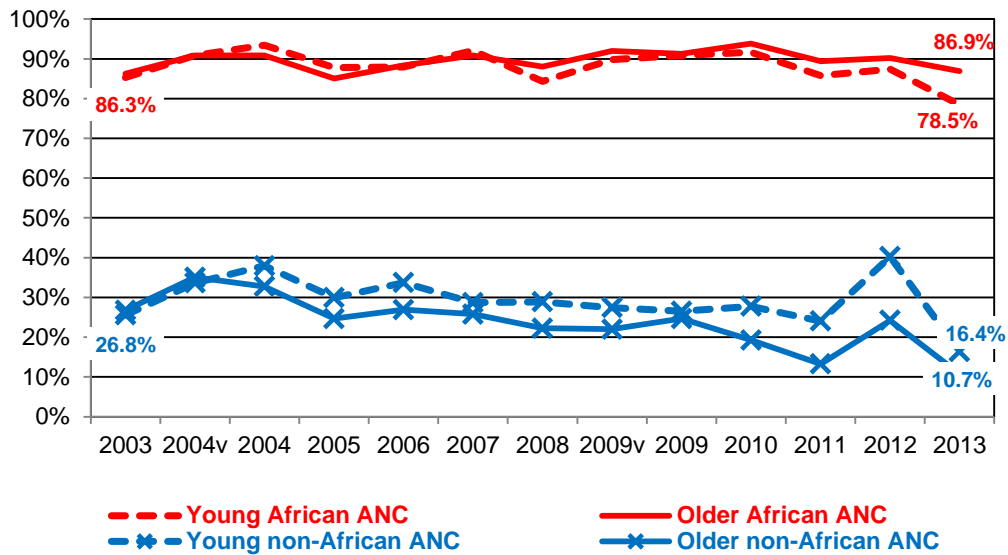
Also, for both Africans and non-Africans, there was some convergence over time in voting and voting intentions between young and older voting age persons. In 2004, for example, older persons and Africans were significantly more likely to vote than non-Africans and young persons. By 2013, age and whether someone was African were not significantly related to voting intention.

These results suggest that distinctions by race and age have grown less important in whether people felt they had a stake in elections and felt that voting was worthwhile. Next we turn to the parties that voters supported and investigate whether there was a similar coming together in party choice. In building a unified society, this convergence in voting by age and by race is important.

### **Race, Age and Support of the ANC**

Figure 8 shows the percentage of young and older Africans and non-Africans voting or intending to vote for the ANC. In every year, a much higher percentage of Africans than non-Africans supported the ANC. For both Africans and non-Africans, there was no difference between young and older voting age persons in 2004 in the percentage supporting the ANC.

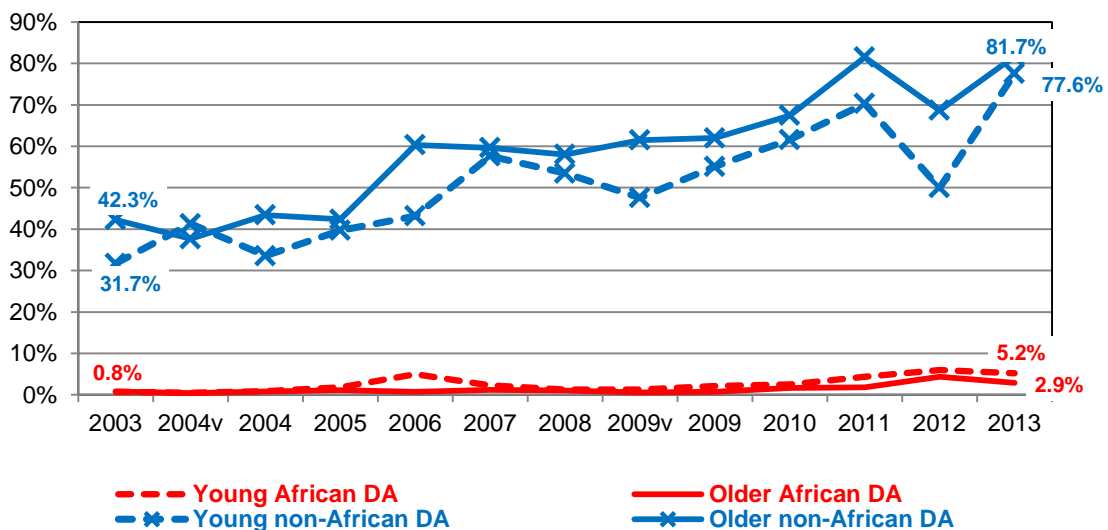
After 2007, older Africans were more likely than young Africans to support the ANC. After 2004, a higher percentage of young than older non-Africans supported the ANC. There is a decline in support for the ANC between 2012 and 2013, especially among younger Africans. We have yet to see whether this decline was an anomaly, a temporary reaction to the rise of the EFF, or whether it signals the beginning of a long-term trend. Except for the results for 2012, non-African support for the ANC tended to decline after 2004. Thus, although voting converged between older and younger persons, support for the ANC between age groups diverged over time for both Africans and non-Africans.



**Figure 8. Intended and reported actual percentage voting for the ANC among those voting or intending to vote among young and older voters, Africans and Non-Africans, South Africa 2003-2013**

**Race, Age and Support of the DA**

Figure 9 shows the percentage of young and older Africans and non-Africans voting or intending to vote for the DA. In every year, a much higher percentage of non-Africans than Africans supported the DA. For both young and older non-Africans, there was an enormous increase in DA support over time. Among Africans, there was some increase in support for the DA over time, but DA support remained very low. After 2004, a higher percentage of older than young non-Africans supported the DA, and after 2005 a higher percentage of young than older Africans supported the DA.



**Figure 9. Intended and reported actual percentage voting for the DA among those voting or intending to vote among young and older voters, Africans and Non-Africans, South Africa 2003-2013**

We see in Figures 8 and 9 that voting has been very racially divided in South Africa. At all dates both young and older Africans overwhelmingly voted for the ANC, with at least 78% of voters supporting the ANC in every election. There is no clear trend in support for the ANC, except for a decline between 2012 and 2013. Among non-Africans the proportion supporting the DA is always high and has a steep upward trend over time. Thus voting has become increasingly racially bifurcated over time, partially due to increased support of the DA among non-Africans. There has been discussion since the 1994 South African election about the extent to which party choice in South Africa was mainly determined by race and when or whether this relationship between race and party choice might weaken (Davis, 2004). Some have proposed that party choice in South Africa has been a kind of “racial census” (Ferree, 2006; McLaughlin, 2007). Especially, there has been discussion of when and whether class might become more important than race (Ferree, 2011; Garcia-Rivero, 2006; Southall, 2004; Taylor and Hoeane, 1999).

Over time, young voters increasingly were more likely to vote for the party that their race had not been traditionally associated with than older voters – young Africans were more likely than older Africans to support the DA and young non-Africans were more likely than older non-Africans to support the ANC. However, while African support for the ANC has remained essentially unchanged, non-African support for the DA has risen greatly, indicating greater dissimilarity in overall voting by race over time.

### **Are Higher SES Africans abandoning the ANC and going to the DA?**

Many have thought that African support for the ANC would decrease over time, especially among more educated Africans. Also, many thought that this support could shift to the DA. Tables 5 and 6 investigate this for all Africans as well as for young and older Africans. Table 5 looks at the proportion choosing the ANC for all Africans, young voting age Africans and older voting age Africans. This is examined in light of educational attainment. For each group in a given year, the value for the educational group with the lowest proportion supporting the ANC is bolded. If more educated Africans are abandoning the ANC, then those with tertiary education should have the lowest proportion supporting the ANC. Results are shown for 2004, 2009, 2012 and 2013. Results for both 2012 and 2013 are shown because of the noticeable change in voting behaviour between 2012 and 2013.

**Table 5. Proportion of Africans Supporting the ANC by Age Group and Education, 2004, 2009, 2012 and 2013**

All Africans	N	2004	n	2009	n	2012	N	2013
Tertiary	126	.9809	170	.9039	109	<b>.7612</b>	85	<b>.7226</b>
Matric	360	<b>.8855</b>	603	.8993	410	.8862	428	.7698
Grade 8-11	566	.9120	554	<b>.8939</b>	487	.9177	566	.8241
Primary or less	480	.9004	496	.9384	286	.8822	327	.9172
<b>Young Africans</b>								
Tertiary	88	1.0000	80	.9220	58	<b>.7236</b>	40	<b>.7478</b>
Matric	278	<b>.8716</b>	468	.8986	316	.8892	125	.7534
Grade 8-11	331	.8975	308	<b>.8816</b>	314	.9054	235	.8069
Primary or less	81	.9807	64	.9444	83	.7887	240	.8218
<b>Older Africans</b>								
Tertiary	38	.9373	89	<b>.8876</b>	54	<b>.8015</b>	45	<b>.6942</b>
Matric	83	.9320	135	.9016	93	.8761	302	.8094
Grade 8-11	236	.9324	246	.9093	173	.9399	330	.8482
Primary or less	399	<b>.8841</b>	432	.9375	204	.9201	88	.9521
The <b>lowest</b> proportion voting for the ANC within each group in a given year is bolded.								

In 2004, there is no group of Africans for which those with tertiary education had the lowest proportion supporting the ANC. In 2009, for older voting age Africans, those with tertiary education did have the lowest proportion supporting the ANC. By 2012, for all three groups all Africans, young Africans and older Africans, those with tertiary education had the lowest proportion supporting the ANC. This is also the situation in 2013, which suggests that this was not just a temporary phenomenon. These results suggest that more highly educated Africans have become somewhat less committed to the ANC.

It is not clear that Africans who became less committed to the ANC were necessarily becoming more committed to the DA. Some scholars have long argued that disaffection with the ANC among Africans would not necessarily lead to support for other parties, if no other party was seen as an acceptable alternative (Mattes and Piombo, 2001). In Table 6, in 2009, 2012 and 2013 tertiary-educated older Africans were more likely than less educated Africans to support the DA. However, this was not true for young Africans.



**Table 6. Proportion of Africans Supporting the DA by Age Group and Education, 2004, 2009, 2012 and 2013**

All Africans	n	2004	n	2009	n	2012	n	2013
Tertiary	126	.0000	170	.0091	109	<b>.1278</b>	85	<b>.1174</b>
Matric	360	<b>.0190</b>	603	.0041	410	.0683	428	.0552
Grade 8-11	566	.0000	554	<b>.0150</b>	487	.0350	566	.0401
Primary or less	480	.0004	496	.0087	286	.0397	327	.0067
<b>Young Africans</b>								
Tertiary	88	.0000	80	.0135	58	.0699	40	.0387
Matric	278	<b>.0152</b>	468	.0046	316	<b>.0745</b>	125	<b>.0648</b>
Grade 8-11	331	.0000	308	<b>.0270</b>	314	.0375	235	.0561
Primary or less	81	.0000	64	.0000	83	.0860	240	.0000
<b>Older Africans</b>								
Tertiary	38	.0000	89	<b>.0051</b>	54	<b>.1881</b>	45	<b>.2062</b>
Matric	83	<b>.0319</b>	135	.0023	93	.0471	302	.0321
Grade 8-11	236	.0000	246	.0000	173	.0305	330	.0176
Primary or less	399	.0005	432	.0100	204	.0210	88	.0091
The <b>highest</b> proportion voting for the DA within each group in a given year is bolded.								

### The Nature of EFF Support

In the 2013 SASAS, 6.2% of those who intended to vote chose the EFF. This is very close to the 6.4% of actual voters who chose the EFF in the 2014 national election, according to the IEC (2015). In the 2013 SASAS, 99% of those choosing the EFF were African. Among African supporters, 64% were young and 36% were older voting age persons. This constituted 9.1% of young Africans who intended to vote and 6.0% of older Africans who intended to vote. Thus, the appeal of the EFF among young Africans was clear in October/November 2013 when the 2013 SASAS was in the field, six months before the 2014 national election.

In the 2013 SASAS, for both young and older Africans support of the EFF was positively related to education and negatively to various aspects of satisfaction with the national government (*Satdem* and *Trustnatgov* for young Africans and *Lifeimprove* for older Africans), characteristics that have often been related to support of the DA. Also, in 2013, substantially more Africans, both young and older, supported the EFF than supported the DA. Thus, in 2013, at least, the EFF seems to have taken potential African support away from the DA more than away from the ANC.

## **Concluding Comments**

There are encouraging and less encouraging developments in South African voting. On the one hand voting among non-Africans has increased. On the other hand, party choice has overall become more bifurcated by race. However, younger Africans and younger non-Africans have become less tied to the party that their racial group has traditionally supported. Also, there is some indication that among highly educated Africans, there is somewhat less allegiance to the ANC and more allegiance to the DA. Thus, South Africa might be slowly moving toward a situation in which the ANC, the party of the anti-apartheid struggle will no longer continuously hold power at the national level and in which party choice might be less tied to population group membership.

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