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

Mosidi S. Nhlapo, Statistics South Africa
Barbara A. Anderson, University of Michigan
Marie Wentzel, Human Sciences Research Council (South Africa)

Abstract
This paper analyzes voting preferences of South Africans based on data from the South African Social Attitudes Surveys (SASAS) 2003-2013. The focus is on differences by race and age. In election years, respondents were asked whether they voted and what party they voted for. In every year respondents were asked whether they would vote and what party they would vote for if the election were held tomorrow. After the end of apartheid in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) dominated elections, attracting the support of almost all Africans, while non-Africans increasingly supported the main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA). There has been much speculation about when African allegiance to the ANC might weaken. There also has been speculation that the allegiance of better educated Africans to the ANC would weaken before that of Africans with lower educational attainment. Another aspect of possible change in voting preference and behavior relates to age. As more people who spent little of their lives under apartheid reached voting age, it was thought that the allegiance of young Africans to the ANC might be weaker than of older Africans. Also, sometimes young people view issues differently than older people. In 2004, Africans were more likely to vote than non-Africans. In 2013, race did not matter for whether a person voted. It seems that over time non-Africans felt they had more of a stake in the system and thought that voting was worthwhile. However, young non-Africans are significantly more likely to vote for the ANC than older non-Africans, and young Africans are somewhat more likely to vote for the DA than older Africans. Thus young voters are less tied than older voters to the party favored by most members of their racial group. By 2012, tertiary-educated Africans, both young and older, were less likely to support the ANC than less educated Africans, and older tertiary-educated Africans were more likely than less educated older Africans to support the DA. Thus, by 2012, more educated Africans were feeling somewhat less allegiance to the ANC and somewhat more connection with the DA. In 2013, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a revolutionary socialist party, broke off from the ANC. In the 2014 national election, the EFF won 6% of the vote. In the 2013 SASAS, 9% of young voting-age Africans and 6% of older Africans supported the EFF. Among both young and older Africans, education was positively related to supporting the EFF. However, African support for the ANC remained very high. In 2013, 87% of older Africans and 79% of young Africans who intended to vote supported the ANC, which was a decline from 94% for older Africans and 92% for young Africans in 2010. The disappearance of the significance of race for voting is a positive development, as is some convergence in voting preferences of young voters. However, this convergence is limited. In 2013, 5% of young Africans supported the DA (compared to 3% of older Africans), and 16% of young non-Africans supported the ANC (compared to 11% of older non-Africans).

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. Johannes Norling and Howard Kimeldorf of the University of Michigan provided helpful comments. Helpful comments on an earlier version were also provided at a Center for Political Studies talk at the University of Michigan, February 11, 2015. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Union of African Population Studies (UAPS) conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, December 4, 2015.
Introduction
Whether people vote and party choice among voters are of interest in every country. These 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. Often when there is a major political change, such as a revolution or the end of apartheid, the newly empowered group long feels allegiance to the revolutionary party and shows continued allegiance to them, despite any shortcomings or problems in the ruling party’s performance. On the other hand, people remaining in the country who are members of the group that was formerly in control or relatively advantaged feel that there is little point in their political participation. When and whether a feeling of political connectedness increases is very important for nation-building. Of special interest are the roles of race, age and education in the determination of whether people vote and the party they choose.

South African Population Groups
There are four population groups in South Africa. They had different legal rights under apartheid, and the groups continue to be important in contemporary South Africa. Under apartheid, population group membership was a matter of legal designation. Since the end of apartheid, it is a matter of self-identification.

The percentages of the population from the 2011 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

In South Africa, Africans are considered to be Bantu-language speaking persons, indigenous to Africa. Coloured persons are mainly the descendants of a mixture of Portuguese, Malays and other groups and members of one ethnic group, the Khokkoi. Coloured persons have been concentrated in the Cape area. Asians are mainly descendants of persons from India. Whites are both English-speaking descendants of persons from Great Britain and Afrikaans-speaking descendants of persons from the Netherlands.

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 behaviors and preferences of Africans in comparison to non-Africans as a group. The three non-African groups are considered together due to similarities in characteristics and behavior in comparison to Africans and also for reasons of sample size.

Even after the end of apartheid, there remained substantial differences among population groups, as indicated in the percentage of households with a flush toilet in the dwelling shown in Figure 1 (Statistics South Africa, 2012: 87). On a wide variety of indicators, besides having been the most oppressed group under apartheid, Africans continue to fare worse than other groups (Statistics South Africa, 2010).
South African Political History

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

In a party list system, people vote for a party rather than for an individual candidate. Seats are allocated to a party proportionately to that party’s share of the vote. Each party has candidates in an ordered list. Which candidates assume office depends on the candidate’s place on the list and the proportion of the total vote that the party obtained. Thus, if there are 100 seats available in a legislature, and each party has a list of 100 candidates, if a party receives 20% of the vote, the first twenty candidates on that party’s list will gain seats in the legislature.

The major South African political parties are:

The African National Congress (ANC) - The ANC played a major role in the anti-apartheid movement. From the time of apartheid, the ANC has been 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 and led to tensions within the Tripartite Alliance. The ANC has won every national election.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) - The DA grew out of a merger between the Progressive Party, the Democratic Party and the New National Party. The New National Party was a breakaway group from National Party, which was the ruling party during apartheid, but a few members of the National Party joined the ANC. During apartheid, the Progressive Party was the only opposition party in the South African Parliament to the National Party’s apartheid policies. After the end of apartheid it was renamed the Democratic Party and merged with others to form the DA. The National Party won the second most votes in 1994. It failed to garner any significant votes in the 1999 elections. The National Party dissolved in 2005. The DA won Cape Town municipal elections in 2001 and 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. The DA has been characterized as a “white party,” which the DA has tried hard to refute. In May 2015, Mmusi Maimane, who is African, became the leader of the DA. The DA has won the second most votes in every national election since 1999.
Other than the ANC, the DA, and the National Party, parties that have done well in some post-apartheid elections in South African include:

**The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)** - The IFP is a Zulu-based party centered in KwaZulu-Natal. It advocated for 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, the third most votes in 1999 and 2004, and the fourth most in 2009 and 2014. The party’s support has declined in subsequent elections, even in KwaZulu-Natal. One reason for its decline has been the rise of Jacob Zuma, the current South African president. Jacob Zuma is Zulu.

**The Congress of the People (COPE)** - Cope broke off from the ANC and was formed mostly by supporters of the views of Thabo Mbeki, who was President after Nelson Mandela. In 2009, Mbeki was defeated by Jacob Zuma for leadership of the ANC and for the South African Presidency. Cope won the third most votes in 2009. Cope still exists, but it weakened considerably due to internal conflicts.

**The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)** – The EFF emerged from a split between the ANC Youth League and the rest of the ANC in 2013. The EFF considers itself a revolutionary socialist party. The split reflects a long-standing tension between the more neo-liberal and the more leftist factions within the Tripartite alliance. The EFF won the third most votes in 2014.

![Figure 2. Percentage Distribution of Votes by Party According to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) 1994-2014](image)

Figure 2 shows the distribution of votes for the ANC, the DA and all other parties in every post-apartheid South African election. The ANC share rose until the 2004 election and declined after that, but it has always been more than 60%. The increase in the DA share of votes is very impressive. As discussed, the composition of the Other Parties has changed over time, from the National Party to the Inkatha Freedom Party and Cope, to the EFF.

**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 and corruption among all groups, including Africans, would lead to a decline in support for the ANC among Africans (Alexander, 2010; Bassett and Clarke, 2008; Bond and Mottiar, 2013; 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. Parties other than the ANC are not very attractive to Africans, partially because the ANC has successfully characterized the DA as a “White party” (Langfield, 2014; Southern, 2011).

5. African support for the ANC would decline as 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. Young people often have different political views and priorities than older people and thus could make different political choices (Harris, Wyn, and Younes, 2010; Henn and Foard, 2012).

7. 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 if it indicates a more fundamental shift in African political support (African Globe, 2015; Engler, 2014; Southall, 2014).

**Young Adults and Social Behaviors**

This paper looks at factors related to voting intentions, with a focus on young voters (age 18-35) and older voters (age 36+). The young voters correspond to the Millennials discussed in the United States 2016 election. American Millennials are usually defined as those born since 1980 and are under age 36 in 2016.

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 had been 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. The importance of when people were born is related to theories that cohorts differ throughout their lives as a result of situations that they experienced at crucial times in the life course (Dietz et al., 1998; Harding and Jencks, 2003).

Figure 3 shows the proportion of those born in 1984 or later, and thus age 10 or younger when apartheid ended in 1994. This is shown for all of those of voting age and among those age 18-35 for every year 2003-2013. By 2013, 65% of voting age persons under age 36 and 34% of all voting age persons had been born since 1984.

---

2 In South Africa, those age 18-35 are considered young voters. This is also the age range eligible for membership in the ANC Youth League.
There has also been interest in the effects of the age distribution of the population on social phenomena and behaviors. Figure 4 shows the proportion of those age 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.
We see in the top panel of Figure 4 that in the 1970s through the late 1990s, South Africa experienced a youth bulge, which has 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 4 for 2003-2013 that within the range of the survey dates, the proportion of voting age persons age 18-35 was slightly more than 50%.

Data Source
This study uses data from the South African Social Attitudes Surveys (SASAS). The surveys have been conducted annually since 2003 by the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa. 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 behaviors. 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 since those are the people who would be of voting age at the time of the survey. Response rates in SASAS have been high: 78%-88%. As of March 2016, the most recent SASAS survey available is the 2013 survey.

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 election years, whether the respondent had voted and if so what party was chosen was asked. In every survey, a question was asked about what party the respondent would vote for (including whether the respondent would vote) if an election were held tomorrow. This paper analyzes voting intentions in order to use data for 11 years rather than for only the two election years. In each survey, there were about 1,800 African respondents and 1,200 non-African respondents, of which about 500 were Coloured, 400 were White, and 300 were Asian. This paper focuses on a comparison of Africans and non-Africans as a whole. Intention to vote and party that the respondent would choose are the subjects of analysis.

Explanatory Variables in the Analysis
Table 1 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. Whether the respondent thinks that whether he or she votes matters is an indicator of feeling of connection with and stake in the system, while listing of corruption as one of the top three problems facing South Africa is an indicator of the degree of concern about the danger from corruption. Corruption was a choice from a list of 18 potential problems facing South Africa, including HIV, Racism, Poverty, Crime and Safety, Education and Human Rights.

3 Analyzes that were run on reported actual voting in election years show results virtually identical to those for voting intentions in that year, with the exception that the proportion that reported they actually voted is somewhat lower than the proportion who state they would intend to vote if an election were held tomorrow. This is consistent with the observation that many people intend to vote, but sometimes on election day something comes up so they are not able to vote.
Table 1. Explanatory Variables in the Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>No schooling=0, Primary=1, Grade 8-11=2, Secondary school grad=4, Tertiary=4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Non-African=1, African=2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young/Older</td>
<td>Age 18-35=0, Age 36+=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age in years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year of survey, 2003 through 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether I vote matters (Votematter)</td>
<td>Strongly disagree=1, Disagree-2, Neither=3, Agree=4, Strongly agree=5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will life improve in next 5 years? (LifeImprove)</td>
<td>Worse=1, Same=2, Improve=3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in national government (Trustnatgov)</td>
<td>Strongly distrust=1, Distrust=2, Neither=3, Trust=4, Strongly trust=5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption in top 3 problems facing South Africa (CorruptProb)</td>
<td>Not in top 3 problems=0 In top 3 problems=1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Views of South Africa by Race and Age Group

Table 2 shows the mean values of the explanatory variables used in this paper. This is shown by race and age group in 2004 and 2013.

In the top of the table, significant differences for each year 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 red if Africans have a significantly higher value and green if non-Africans have a significantly higher value.

In the bottom of the table, significant differences for each year between young and older Africans and between young and older non-Africans are indicated by bolding of the higher value. The value is red if those who are Young have a significantly higher value and green if those who are older have a significantly higher value.

Looking at the top part of the table, for both young and older persons in both 2004 and 2013, Africans were more optimistic that their lives would improve and had a higher level of trust in national government than non-Africans. For every group, mean education increased between 2004 and 2013. For every group, non-Africans had significantly higher education than Africans. However, for all of the attitudinal and perception variables, except for votematter for young non-Africans which was unchanged, the evaluation of the situation in South Africa worsened over time. The values for trust in national government and whether life will improve by 2013 for young and older Africans had declined to about the values for young and older non-Africans in 2004.

Looking at the bottom part of the table, in 2004 young persons of both racial groups were significantly more educated than older persons. This was the only significant difference between young and older Africans. Young non-Africans had a more optimistic view of whether their lives would improve than older non-Africans. In 2013 young people of both races were more optimistic that their lives would improve than older persons. Older non-Africans were more concerned about corruption as a problem than young non-Africans in both 2004 and 2013. In 2013, young Africans also had higher average education than older Africans and were more likely to feel that their vote mattered than older Africans.
### Table 2. Mean Values of Explanatory Variables by Race and Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young 2004</th>
<th>Young 2013</th>
<th>Older 2004</th>
<th>Older 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African</td>
<td>non-African</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>non-African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Education</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean value of whether I vote matters</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean view of whether life will improve in next 5 years?</td>
<td><strong>2.66</strong></td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td><strong>2.35</strong></td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean trust in national government</td>
<td><strong>3.83</strong></td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td><strong>2.94</strong></td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion with corruption in top 3 problems</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td><strong>.314</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the difference in the mean between Africans and non-Africans within the given year and age group is significantly different, the higher value is bolded, **red** if the higher is African and **green** if the higher is non-African.

### Age, Race and Whether People Vote

After a major political change, those allied with the new dominant party are likely to be more politically engaged. The anti-apartheid struggle was a struggle among population groups in which Africans had been subjected to the greatest legal discrimination.

Figure 5 shows the proportion intending to vote over time by race. In the surveys shortly after elections (2004 and 2009) vote intentions increased for both Africans and non-Africans. Through most of the period 2003-2013, Africans were much more likely than non-Africans to intend to vote. After 2008 and especially after 2011 the racial gap narrowed, and in 2013, there was no racial difference in intention to vote. The racial gap narrowed both because non-Africans became more likely to intend to vote, and Africans became less likely to intend to vote.
In many countries, older people are more likely to vote than young people (Gorres, 2007; Wass, 2007). In the 2008 Presidential election in the United States when Barack Obama was elected, voter turnout among those age 18-29 was 51%, which was 11 percentage points higher than it had been in the 2000 Presidential election. However even in the 2008 American election, the voter turnout among those age 18-29 was lower than for older persons (Kirby and Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2009).

Figure 6 shows similar information to that in Figure 5, but also for young and older voting age persons. Older persons were more likely than young persons of the same race to intend to vote.

In every year except 2007, a question was asked about whether the respondent thought that his or her vote mattered. The mean values in whether the respondent that his or her vote mattered by race and age group by year are shown in Figure 7. Like intention to vote,
feeling that whether an individual voted mattered increased in election years (2004 and 2009). Among Africans feeling that voting mattered decreased over time, while among non-Africans, after about 2006, there was an increase in the feeling that voting mattered. There is no particular pattern in whether young or older persons of a given race were more likely to feel that their vote mattered, but in 2012 and 2013, young and older non-Africans were more likely than young and older Africans to feel that their vote mattered.

![Figure 7. Extent of Agreement that Voting Makes a Difference by Race and Age Group](image)

Table 3 shows the results of logistic regressions of voting intention. First look at Columns 1 through 3, which show results for 2004, 2009 and 2013. Education usually did not matter, being statistically significant only in 2009. A dummy variable for African is positive and significant in 2004 and 2009 but is not significant in 2013. Age was always significant, with older persons more likely than young persons to intend to vote. In every year feeling that your vote mattered was significantly related to intending to vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votematter</td>
<td>-.106</td>
<td>.167**</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>.863**</td>
<td>1.259**</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.788**</td>
<td>222.027**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.043**</td>
<td>.035**</td>
<td>.018**</td>
<td>.022**</td>
<td>.022**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.025**</td>
<td>.053**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African*Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.111**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.107</td>
<td>-1.499</td>
<td>-.173</td>
<td>50.282</td>
<td>-107.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X²</td>
<td>237.27**</td>
<td>153.11**</td>
<td>83.58**</td>
<td>1116.35**</td>
<td>1166.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>2206</td>
<td>3201</td>
<td>2056</td>
<td>22,311</td>
<td>22,311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Columns 4 and 5 show results for the pooled data over time. In Column 4 we see that overall being African was related to intention to vote and that intention to vote declined over time. In Column 5, an African*Year interaction is added. We see that although overall being African is

---

4 Data for 2007 are not included in the pooled data, since the votematter item was not asked in 2007.
related to greater intention to vote, the significant negative coefficient of the African*Year interaction shows that vote intention among Africans declined over time. When the African*Year interaction is included, the coefficient for Year is significant and positive, reflecting the increase in vote intention among non-Africans over time. We also see that in every year and in the pooled data, voting is significantly positively related to age.

It seems that over time, Africans were less energized by the prospect of voting and felt that whether they voted was less important, while the opposite was true of non-Africans. It seems that non-Africans increasingly felt they had a stake in the electoral system, and this was reflected in a greater tendency to vote over time.

**Trends in Party Choice by Race and Age Group**

Figures 8-11 show trends in party choice by race and age group. It is clear that party choice is much more similar between young and older persons of the same race than between members of the same age group across racial lines. However, in recent years, the proportion of young Africans who supported the DA was higher than for older Africans, and the proportion of young non-Africans who supported the ANC was higher than for older non-Africans. Similarly, a higher proportion of older Africans than young Africans supported the ANC, and a higher proportion of older non-Africans than young non-Africans supported the DA. These issues will be pursued further later in this paper.
Figure 8. Party Choice by Young Africans

Figure 9. Party Choice by Older Africans
Figure 10. Party Choice by Young non-Africans

Figure 11. Party Choice by Older non-Africans
Trends in Views of South Africa
Views of the national government and whether people think their lives will improve in the future can influence party choice, especially whether to support the current party in power or to favour a change in the party in power. In many less developed countries, political corruption has been seen as a major problem. In South Africa there have been increasing accusations by the DA and political commentators of corruption by ANC politicians, including Jacob Zuma, who has been South African President since 2009. Thus views of the extent to which corruption is seen as a major problem in South Africa could also influence party choice, especially whether the ruling ANC is supported.

![Figure 12. Extent of Trust in National Government by Race and Age Group](image)

![Figure 13. Extent of Belief that Life Will Improve in Next 5 Years for Persons Like You by Race and Age Group](image)
Figure 12 shows the extent of trust in the national government over time by race and age group, and Figure 13 shows similar information for whether people think that life will improve in the next five years for people like themselves. For both trust in national government and whether life will improve, Africans have a much more positive view than non-Africans. Also, the views of young and older persons of a given race are more similar than the views of a given age group across races. For trust in national government, for a given race there are almost no differences between older and young persons. However, for whether life will improve, young people are substantially more optimistic than older persons. There was decline in trust in national government and in optimism about the future among all groups after about 2004, but the decline in optimism about the future was greater for older than young persons, especially among Africans.

Figure 14 shows the proportion who listed corruption among the top three problems facing South Africa by race and age group. Concern about corruption increased among all groups, but non-Africans were always substantially more concerned about corruption than Africans. The increase after about 2009 could be related to the numerous scandals in which Jacob Zuma was involved.

![Figure 14. Proportion Listing Corruption in Top Three Problems in South Africa by Race and Age Group](image)

**Race, Age and Party Support**

In the United States, after the Civil War African-Americans tended to support the Republican Party, which was the party of Lincoln. However, at least since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, African-Americans have overwhelmingly supported the Democratic Party. African-American support of the Democratic Party remains strong, despite the agreement of many African-Americans with some conservative positions held by the Republican Party. Democratic Party identification of a candidate remains a strong influence on African-American candidate choice, even after other factors have been taken into account (Wallace et al., 2009; Kidd et al., 2007; Watson, 1998).

Figure 15 shows the percentage of young and older Africans and non-Africans intending to vote for the ANC, and Figure 16 shows similar information for support of the DA. In every year, a much higher percentage of Africans than non-Africans supported the ANC. Until 2012, there
was little decline in African support of the ANC, while with the exception of 2012, there was a more rapid decline in non-African support of the ANC, especially among older non-Africans.

Before 2007, young Africans were more likely than older Africans to support the ANC, while after 2007 a higher proportion of older than young Africans supported the ANC. There is a decline in support for the ANC after 2010, especially among young Africans. The decline was especially large between 2012 and 2013 due to support of the EFF. We have yet to see whether this decline in 2013 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. We are still seeking an explanation for...
the results for 2012. Even in 2013, 87% of older Africans and 78% of young Africans supported the ANC. Throughout 2003-2013, young non-Africans were more likely to support the ANC than older non-Africans.

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. There was always higher DA support among older than young non-Africans, and higher DA support among young than older Africans. African support of the DA remained very low. In 2013, only 3% of older Africans and 5% of young Africans supported the DA.

We see in Figures 15 and 16 that voting has been very racially divided. 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. Among non-Africans the proportion supporting the DA is always high and has a steep upward trend over time, although even in 2013, it had not reached the level of African support of the ANC. Thus voting has become increasing 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). There has been extended discussion of when and whether class might become more important than race (Ferree, 2011; Garcia-Rivero, 2006; Southall, 2004; Taylor and Hoeane, 1999).

Tables 4 and 5 show the results of logistic regressions of ANC support and of DA support. These tables are based on the pooled data for all surveys. In Table 4 education is negatively related to ANC support, while trust in government and being optimistic about the future are positively related to ANC support. The opposite of these are related to DA support. The relation of seeing corruption as a top problem is more mixed, with concern about corruption significantly positively related to ANC support for Africans but significantly negatively related to ANC support among non-Africans. Concern about corruption is significantly positively related to DA support among non-Africans. Over time, there is no significant trend in support of the ANC, while for both Africans and non-Africans support of the DA has significantly increased with time.

The results by age are especially interesting. Young non-Africans are significantly more likely to support the ANC than older non-Africans, and young non-Africans are significantly less likely to support the DA than older non-Africans. Young Africans are significantly more likely than older Africans to support the DA. The coefficient for Age for African support of the ANC is positive but barely insignificant, with a p value of .06. Thus, for both Africans and non-Africans, young people are more likely than older members of the same race to support the party other than that which has usually been supported by their race.

In Table 5, we see that the general results seen in Table 4 remain. Education was negatively related to ANC support for young Africans and for young and older non-Africans. For all groups, education was positively related to DA support. We see that among Africans the insignificant coefficient for Year in analysis of ANC support in Table 4 was the result of a significant decline in ANC support over time among young Africans and a significant increase in ANC support over time among older Africans. There is no significant trend in support of the ANC among young or older non-Africans. There was a significant increase over time in DA support among young and older non-Africans and among young Africans. Thus, there are some indications that trends in party support have been going in opposite directions for young and for older Africans.
Table 4. Logistic Regression Results for Intention to Vote for ANC and for the DA by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support ANC</th>
<th>Support DA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African</td>
<td>Non-African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-.660**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustnatgov</td>
<td>.263**</td>
<td>.524**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifelImprove</td>
<td>.195**</td>
<td>.432**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CorruptProb</td>
<td>.159*</td>
<td>-.376**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.010**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.126**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>42.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Χ²</td>
<td>261.01**</td>
<td>737.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>13,674</td>
<td>6330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant positive results are in bold red. Significant negative results are bold green. * p<.05; ** p<.01

Table 5. Logistic Regression Results for Intention to Vote for ANC and for the DA by Race and Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Young African</th>
<th>Older African</th>
<th>Young non-African</th>
<th>Older non-African</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support ANC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support DA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.095*</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>-.733**</td>
<td>-.612**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustnatgov</td>
<td>.280**</td>
<td>.236**</td>
<td>.510**</td>
<td>.528**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifelImprove</td>
<td>.185**</td>
<td>.224**</td>
<td>.331**</td>
<td>.505**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CorruptProb</td>
<td>.275**</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.214</td>
<td>-.490**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>-.037**</td>
<td>.050**</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>-.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>74.69**</td>
<td>-99.38**</td>
<td>58.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Χ²</td>
<td>191.85**</td>
<td>99.074**</td>
<td>204.17**</td>
<td>514.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>6896</td>
<td>6779</td>
<td>1856</td>
<td>4474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support DA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.404**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustnatgov</td>
<td>-.379**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifelImprove</td>
<td>-.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CorruptProb</td>
<td>-.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>.129**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-261.30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Χ²</td>
<td>141.84**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>6896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant positive results are in bold green. Significant negative results are bold red. * p<.05; ** p<.01

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. 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 significantly positively correlated with education. In the 2013 SASAS, 5.2% of young Africans and 2.9% of older Africans supported the DA. Thus in 2013, substantially more Africans, both young and older, supported the EFF than supported the DA. In 2013, at least, the EFF seems to have taken substantial African support away from the DA.
Concluding Comments

There are encouraging and less encouraging developments in South African voting. On the one hand intention to vote among non-Africans has increased, to the point where race does not matter for intention to vote. On the other hand, party choice has overall become more bifurcated by race. However, young Africans and young non-Africans have become less tied to the party that their racial group has traditionally supported. For both young and older Africans, education is positively related to supporting 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.

However, this movement away from the usual party of a person’s race has been slow. Even in 2013, 78% of young Africans (compared to 87% of older Africans) supported the ANC, and 77% of young non-Africans (compared to 82% of older non-Africans) supported the DA. A time when race does not matter for party choice seems very far in the future. In 2013, 68% of those who intended to vote supported the ANC. It will be a long time before a party other than the ANC come to power at the national level.

References


