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Political Institutions, Social Demographics and the Decline of Ethnic Mobilisation in South Africa, 1994 - 1999

Abstract

Before the advent of democratic rule in South Africa, most had expected the country to experience an explosion of politicised ethnicity when minority rule was replaced. Yet this has not come to pass, and ethnic political parties have declined in number and influence in post-apartheid South Africa. Instead, between 1994 and 1999, partisan politics developed in a multipolar direction, with some parties embracing racial mobilisation and others attempting to build multi-ethnic, non-racial entities. In most instances, parties have explicitly turned away from mobilisation based on purely ethnic criteria, and instead have embraced more diverse strategies. This paper explains these developments as a product of the ways that political parties have responded to the incentives established by political institutions on the one hand, and the structure of social divisions, on the other. The analysis holds implications for our understanding of the ways in which social cleavages in ethnically divided societies become politically salient, and for the lessons of institutional and constitutional engineering, particularly with respect to how proportional representation systems interact with other factors to shape politics in ethnically diverse societies.

Introduction: Shaping Political Mobilisation in Deeply Divided Societies

Are ethnically divided societies doomed to replicate their societal divisions in the political arena? Is it possible to prevent the emergence of ethnic political parties in a society with deep communal cleavages? If it is possible, what are the most efficient mechanisms to achieve this goal? The effectiveness of constitutional engineering to mitigate the effects of communal divisions has been the subject of great debate in both academic and policy circles. Discussions often hinge on the type of electoral system most appropriate to prevent the

emergence of divisive ethnic conflict in democratic divided societies.[1] Within this debate, analysts have devoted most of their attention to the relationship between ethnic divisions, electoral systems, and the nature of political parties and political competition. For example, in 1985, Donald Horowitz posed the question of whether the imposition of an electoral system based on party-list proportional representation with large multimember constituencies and no cut-offs for minority parties could prevent the emergence of ethnic parties in a plural society (Horowitz 1985).

The treatment of ethnic divisions and political parties, however, needs to be expanded upon on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Theoretically, the discussion must begin to include the effect of the structure of government, whether it is federal or unitary, on the relationship between ethnic division and political party development. Most analysts discuss federalism when contemplating mechanisms to reduce the stakes of political competition, rather than as an instrument to shape the form that political competition takes in the first place. Thus, the debate of federal versus unitary states enters the discussion at the level of conflict-resolution measures.[2] Yet the nexus between electoral rules and the level at which parties compete (national, regional or local) holds enormous implications for the types of social cleavages that political parties will attempt to exploit as they seek political power.

The argument for the importance of federalism gains further importance based on the experience of South Africa between 1994 and 1999. Considered by many to be one of the archetypes of the 'deeply divided society', post-apartheid South Africa has witnessed a dramatic decline in the number of explicitly ethnic political parties. South Africa's past history of deep ethnic and racial divisions makes it a crucial case for studying the emergence of ethnic parties and the influence of electoral systems on party systems. Experts on electoral systems had anticipated that the country's permissive proportional representation electoral system would spur the country to develop an ethnically fragmented party system. Area specialists had expected ethnic politics to emerge once White domination had been removed. The fact that this has not occurred has been explained in current analyses as the result of a 'natural' political party alignment in a country that had experienced decades of race-based discrimination.

An explanation based on the experience of racial discrimination, however, overlooks critical variables in the development of the South African political party system. This type of explanation overlooks proximate cause of political

[1] See, for example, Reilly (2001) for one of the most recent and comprehensive works on the subject.
[2] Horowitz (1985) provides a prime example of this focus, as does Reilly (2002).

agency: opposition party leaders made conscious decisions to turn away from strategies that exploited potential ethnic divisions within the ruling African National Congress (ANC), and instead embraced a variety of strategies. Party strategists made these decisions in response to underlying factors that included the ANC's narrowing of the ideological spectrum, the incentive structures created by the interaction of a closed-list proportional electoral system, weak federal structure, and the structure of social cleavages in the South Africa.

Between 1994 and 1999, opposition politics in South Africa developed in a multi-polar direction, rather than along purely race-based lines. The general political cleavage that has emerged runs along an African-minority cleavage that belies the ethnic diversity on both sides. Political mobilisation has emerged in this pattern primarily in reaction to the structural factors listed above: the electoral system, federal system and demographic divisions of South African society. In South Africa, the interaction of a weak federal and permissive electoral system created incentives that led parties to construct large electoral coalitions capable of delivering national level representation, rather than sub-national level representation.

Once the political institutions set this incentive, particular parties began constructing support blocks out of the most easily manipulable societal cleavages, given the party's situation in the political marketplace. Most opposition party strategists rejected a long-term strategy that had the potential to woo supporters away from the ANC, but that was likely to deliver only a small payoff in the 1999 election. Instead, they focused on the short-term goal of fighting against each other for the small pool of voters outside the ANC's support base. Thus, the Democratic Party (DP) and New National Party (NNP) attempted to define political competition along lines based on the overlap of race and class divisions, while other parties, such as the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), responded to these incentives by attempting to move beyond a purely ethnic appeal.

Based on this analysis of South Africa between 1994 and 1999, the paper presents theoretical arguments of broad significance for several lines of research. First, political elites in counties with sharp ascriptively-based divides develop strategies in response to incentives generated by political institutions and social demographics, just as political parties do in countries without these divisions. Second, the article contributes to the literature on ethnic politics, since it highlights the ways in which various aspects of the institutional structure of South African politics have worked against the emergence and maintenance of ethnic political parties. Finally, the analysis makes the broader claim that scholars of party systems and electoral systems need develop research agendas that analyse the interaction of electoral and federal systems. In South Africa,

these two sets of rules created joint incentive structures that in turn shaped the strategic choices of political parties in seemingly counter-intuitive ways, a dynamic that is likely to be reproduced in a variety of other settings.

The Ethnic Implosion that Never Came

Many analysts now consider the supposed racialisation of post-apartheid South African politics to be a natural occurrence. Yet, this assessment can only be made by a complete disregard of the widespread predictions that ethnic conflict would replace racial divisions in post-apartheid South Africa. Before the 1994 transition, analysts predicted that once in power, the ANC would splinter along ethnic lines, similar to what had happened to the Zambian Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in the 1980s, and following the pattern laid down by many other African countries in the 1960s.

Corresponding to this concern, the most intense debates over designing a post-apartheid political system had revolved around the issue of how to construct an electoral system that would not exacerbate ethnic conflict. On the one hand, proponents of a proportionality-based, power sharing system argued that the model's inclusiveness would allay the fears of domination and exclusion that the minority groups would feel once White rule had ended (Lijphart 1985, 1993). Advocates for a plurality-based electoral system argued that the centralising tendency of this system would force parties to make broad appeals, resisting the supposedly inherent tendency for proportional and consociational systems to balkanise and reify ethnic divisions (Horowitz 1991).

Underlying both of these arguments was the belief that South Africa would witness a sharp increase in divisive ethnic mobilisation once the liberation struggle had been won. For example, when arguing for the adoption of a plurality-based electoral system governed through a presidential system, Donald Horowitz concluded that

> 'In all the racial categories, there are divisions along lines of ethnicity and ideology. Some intergroup cleavages have considerable conflict-producing potential. Eliminate White domination, and inter-African differences will be particularly important…to ignore them in planning for a future South Africa would be to repeat the same fallacy of assuming in the 1950s and 1960s that an inclusive 'nationalism' would be the universal solvent of differences in post-colonial Africa, a fallacy for which many people paid dearly' (Horowitz 1991: 85).

On the other side of the debate, to justify his proposal that South Africa would best be served by a power sharing proportional system, Arend Lijphart argued that

> 'In South Africa is it therefore highly probable – nay, virtually certain – that the ethnic factor will reassert itself under conditions of free association and open electoral competition. It is highly unlikely that blacks and whites will confront each other as monolithic entities…' (Lijphart 1985: 122).

Almost a decade later, on the eve of the transition, Lijphart still felt that ethnic differences would emerge in a democratic South Africa: "we should expect a resurgence of ethnic differences when democracy has replaced apartheid" (1993: 96). According to Lijphart, South African society was divided by multiple "segments" (ethnic groups), none of which constituted a majority of the population capable of dominating the minority groups. In both of these analyses, Lijphart assumed that the relevant post-apartheid political groups would be ethnic, not racial, in nature.

The electoral system under which South Africa finally achieved democratic rule could have made these expectations a reality. South Africans ran the 1994 and 1999 elections under an electoral system that employed closed-list proportional representation without an absolute threshold. As a result, in both elections several parties gained entrance into the National Assembly (NA) with less than one-percent of the national vote. The ability to win representation in the NA with such small numbers could very well have encouraged parties to seek out small, ethnically-based constituencies spread throughout the country.

Despite permissive electoral rules, however, the number and influence of ethnic political parties have decreased in the post-apartheid scenario. Most of the small Coloured, Afrikaner and African parties that existed in 1994 had disappeared by 1999. Even large ethnic parties like the New National Party, (NNP – the party that created apartheid and the once the staunch advocate of the Afrikaner *volk*), and the Inkatha Freedom Party, (IFP, the political vehicle for Zulus), shifted their appeals away from their narrow ethnic focus, such that in the campaigns for the 1999 elections, both of these parties rarely appealed explicitly to ethnic interests. Instead of ethnic mobilisation, class and race-based mobilisation seemed to become the principal dividing lines in the 1999 elections. Parties like the NNP and Democratic Party (DP), rather than competing with the ANC for the support of African voters, fought amongst themselves for the disaffected and the minority votes, located primarily among White, Coloured and Indian South Africans.

The IFP, which throughout its existence had earned political influence through its ability to mobilise Zulus and control the area that is now the KwaZulu-Natal province, moved away from a purely ethnic-based platform. In place of its longstanding emphasis on the status of the Zulu monarchy, respect for traditionalism and the rights of *amakhosi* (traditional leaders), the IFP's 1999 election campaign focused on a broad conservative platform (family values, anti-crime, anti-corruption, and a revolution of goodwill), targeting potential supporters in virtually all population groups. In fact, in marked contrast to the party's historical roots and political positioning through mid-1998, the IFP rarely raised traditional issues outside of the deep rural areas of the KwaZulu-Natal province.

The trend continued among the smaller and new parties. In its 1999 campaign, the Pan Africanist Congress attempted to shift its "Africanist" stance from its historically pro-Black position, to define as "African" anyone whose primary allegiance was to the continent of Africa. The newcomer in the race, the United Democratic Movement (UDM), attempted to build an explicitly non-racial coalition, and thus avoided explicitly ethnic appeals in all provinces (though cloaked appeals surfaced in the Eastern Cape). In the Western Cape, the Africa Muslim Party changed its name to the Africa Moral Party. Finally, by early 1999, most of the extremist Afrikaner parties had either disappeared or been forced to register for the elections under the banner of the Freedom Front, which in turn performed very poorly in the 1999 elections. There simply has been no explosion of ethnic and other small parties, often assumed endemic to PR systems and widely expected in post-apartheid South Africa.

Determinants of Party Systems: Institutional and Social Factors

Electoral Rules and the Structure of Government

The collective wisdom of literature on ethnic divisions, electoral systems and party systems argues that in countries with multiple and divisive social cleavages, proportional representation (PR) electoral systems often create fragmented political party systems based on ethnic and other ascriptive identities. Because electoral rules can raise or lower barriers to entry in the political system, they determine the nature of electoral coalitions needed to win seats in legislatures, which in turn influences both the number of parties and the type of support base needed to win seats. Whether or not votes need to be concentrated in geographical districts, the central difference between

proportional representation and majoritarian constituency models, affects the nature of mobilisation necessary to gain representation (Horowitz 1991; Lijphart 1994; Mozaffar 1995; Reynolds 1999; Reynolds and Reilly 1997, Sartori 1976, 1994).

For the purposes of this study, we are concerned with the ways in which electoral rules shape strategies of partisan mobilisation.[3] The debate on the relationship between party systems and ethnic mobilisation focuses most often on the choice between a permissive PR system and a centralising plurality-based system. Permissive electoral systems, by lowering the number of votes needed to gain entrance into legislatures, supposedly facilitate the representation of small parties, and thus are considered to provide incentives for political entrepreneurs to cultivate electoral coalitions based on identity groups, even if they are small and marginal. In contrast, systems with more strict standards for representation, such as those requiring majorities concentrated in geographic constituencies, tend to weed out smaller parties, forcing parties to appeal to larger, more encompassing constituencies.[4]

Electoral institutions thus directly affect strategies of mobilisation. First-past-the-post plurality (FPTP) electoral systems most often will induce parties to campaign on issues that will be of concern to a broad audience, since the party needs to win over either a plurality or majority of the citizens in a geographic district. In contrast, under PR systems, if the district magnitude is not too small, parties can seek to mobilize particular constituencies that may be geographically dispersed, seeking to gain seats in the legislature based purely on the number of votes that this group can deliver. In this way, PR can provide incentives for exclusive appeals and mobilisation of distinct groups.[5]

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[3] To date, most analyses of the non-mechanical effects of electoral systems have focused on coalition building, proportionality, and the representation of women. See Farrell (1997), chapter 7. Regarding proportionality, general consensus is that district magnitude is the most important determinant of proportionality (Rein and Shugart 1989), and that electoral formulas most heavily influence the number of parties. Early works found that ballot structure had virtually no impact on proportionality (Rae 1967), but Lijphart (1994) later found some influence of ballot structure on proportionality.

[4] Duverger's (1954) paper is the seminal work in this subset of the field. Duverger's "law" sparked off a debate over whether proportional representation created multipartyism, or whether countries that already had multi-party systems tended to choose proportional representation electoral formulas. See Riker, "Duverger's Law Revisited," and Sartori, "The Influence of Electoral Laws: Faulty Laws or Faulty Method?"in Grofman and Lijphart (1986) for the both sides of the debate; consult Farrell (1997) for the synthesis.

[5] Though it occurs less often, parties can develop mobilisation strategies that attempt to activate sub-regional groups under plurality/ FPTP electoral rules as well. It all depends on the relative strength and concentration of various populations within a constituency.

In this literature, the structure of government figures centrally as a solution to mitigate ethnic conflict, once it has already surfaced. Federal systems have received the most attention for their potential to devolve power and reduce conflict in countries with conflictual, geographically-based divisions, such as regional rivalries, ethno-territorial groups, or concentrated religious minorities. Federal systems are advanced as solutions in these situations because creating more tiers of government increases opportunities for groups to obtain representation in government while defusing the intensity of competition for power at the centre (Coakely 1993).

Yet the structure of government and the form of the executive also influence strategies of political mobilisation, especially ethnic mobilisation, a dynamic that receives comparably little attention in the academic literature.[6] This oversight represents a fundamental neglect, for federal systems can shape party systems in very direct ways. A federal system that genuinely devolves power will cause parties to compete for power at lower levels in the political sphere, fostering the development of regional or local political parties. This dynamic creates incentives for parties to mobilise smaller or larger constituencies, sized appropriately to the level of power for which the party contests.

Federal systems could thus increase incentives to mobilise ethnic or other small groups, because at lower levels of political competition, these groups become rewarding support bases. Nigeria serves as prime example in this regard, where states were created to give ethnic groups increased control over their affairs. The creation of states then led to the political activation of even smaller ethnic groups that had not been relevant when the administrative unit was larger, which in turn fuelled demands for further state creation (Diamond 1988, Suberu 1991, Ayoade 1986).

Unitary systems, in contrast, by focusing competition for power on the national level where small ethnic groups do not present large electoral rewards, provide disincentives to mobilize small groups. Instead, nationally focused political competition under unitary systems more often seeks out the median voter, since parties have to construct larger winning coalitions. Presidential and parliamentary systems similarly affect the focus of political competition, with presidential systems, like unitary organisation, focusing party politics on the national arena (Milnor 1969).

The debate on party systems and ethnic mobilisation needs to bring these two aspects together. These two factors interact with each other in a dynamic way to

[6] One of the principal exceptions to this statement is the work on federalism in Nigeria, discussed below.

shape party system development in divided societies. Taken together, electoral rules and the structure of government create interacting incentive structures that party elites respond to when deciding where to focus scarce resources in the struggle to gain political representation. This joint incentive structure in turn interacts with the dimensions of social cleavages to shape mobilisation strategies as parties attempt to craft support coalitions capable of providing the votes necessary to win legislative representation at the designated level.

Social Divisions

The precise manner in which these two aspects of the institutional structure will interact to shape partisan mobilisation will depend on the structure of social cleavages particular to a country. Historically, political parties in most countries originated in societal conflicts, with the result that the cleavage structure of society often became reproduced in the party system (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The structure of social divisions, cross-cutting and cumulative, affects the malleability of political mobilisation. When most divisions reinforce each other, assumed to be the hallmark of the "plural society" (Furnivall 1939), parties do not have much room to manoeuvre as they seek to construct support bases. If, however, social divisions cross-cut each other, parties have more latitude as they attempt to construct winning support blocks. Additionally, once parties decide on target groups, the geographical concentration or dispersal of these communities will impact on the locus of political competition and party campaigns. Finally, the relative size of groups, in relation to the level of power for which parties compete, will affect whether parties seek to aggregate groups into larger political units, or to differentiate groups from each other.[7]

In ethnically divided societies, the expectation is that ethnic divisions will inevitably be reproduced in political party systems (Horowitz 1985). The logic for this approach combines the emotive aspect of the primordial understanding of ethnicity as an ascriptive identity with the more instrumentally-based acknowledgement that sociological variables like membership in an ethnic group create common group interests that shape party coalitions and define perceptions about which parties are attuned most to the needs of various social groups (Lazarsfield, *et al*. 1948; Berelson *et al.* 1954). When applied to the party system, these common group interests form the bases for political parties, and the emotive nature of ethnic affiliations causes the ethnic identity to trump all others to become the defining basis for political mobilisation.

[7] This is an insight adapted from my own work in South Africa, Ayoade (1986) and Suberu (1991, 1998) on Nigeria, and Posner (2003) on Zambia.

While the original model treated parties as passive receptacles that took social divisions as given, most now argue that political elites have some latitude pick and choose between social divisions. Their latitude is bounded by the fact that politicised divisions will endure only if they are based on 'fundamental' social cleavages:

> '[political] cleavages may arise though political leadership at a high level (national parties, national leaders) but [only] those cleavages for which there is a receptive social base take on a life of their own, as it were, and are prolonged by individual and local mechanisms beyond the strategic maneuvers in which they originated. Cleavages for which there is no such social base may be just as dramatic as 'socially based' ones, but they do not last any longer than the maneuvers of which they are an expression' (Claggett *et al*. 1982: 653-4).

In other words, elite strategies provide initial mobilisation along a particular line of conflict, but whether that dimension becomes an enduring political cleavage depends on whether it is rooted in a receptive social base. Ethnicity is considered to be the most receptive social base in a plural society.

Political Institutions and Social Demographics in South Africa

Political Institutions

In South Africa, the electoral system, federal structure and executive presidency work to concentrate power at the national level without requiring parties to obtain geographic or constituency-based support. Elections for provincial and national legislatures in South Africa are held concurrently in five-year intervals, and both are based on an almost pure version of closed-list proportional representation with a variable threshold and extremely large districts (the entire nation being the district for national elections, and each province the district for provincial elections). Thus, the electoral system created an extremely low threshold that in both 1994 and 1999 allowed some parties to win seats in the National Assembly with less than one percent of the national vote.

Once in parliament, an anti-defection clause, built into the constitution to protect the proportionality of the electoral system, prevents members of political parties from switching sides. If a member of a party wishes to switch to another party,

then the receiving party must remove one of its own parliamentarians and replace him or her with the defecting member, so that the overall balance of power between the parties remains the same. Between 1994 and 1999, this clause prevented members of small opposition parties from joining forces with the ANC, which helped small parties withstand co-optation by the ANC. Yet the clause also strongly discouraged oppositional realignment between election periods, because merging or disbanding would cause members to lose their seats. [8]

One of the major concessions that the ANC had made during constitutional negotiations in 1995 and 1996 regarded the character of the state. Initially insisting on a unitary state, the ANC eventually conceded to the NP's insistence on a federal state, and eventually the parties agreed on a structure that distributed power along national, provincial, and local levels. South Africa's brand of federalism, however, reflecting the ANC's initial opposition to it, created provinces with extremely limited autonomy. The vast majority of major social and economic policies, decisions over taxation, and disbursement of most patronage resources are made at the national, rather than provincial levels. For example, provinces have extremely limited taxation power and over 95 percent of their funds are disbursed to them through the national government (Wehner 2000).

Thus the most important policies are generated at the national level, while provinces are primarily administrative units. Provinces could have developed some autonomy through implementation, through issue prioritisation and budgetary allocation. The national government usurped their administrative independence, however, by establishing performance targets that provinces had to meet in such areas as housing, education and policing. National government also specifies where and how the provincial budgets should be spent. Therefore, the national government sets many of the policy and spending priorities for the provinces.

Other institutions nationalise power as well. Holding provincial and national elections concurrently means that national issues dominate even in provincial contests. The closed party-list system generates vertical accountability to party leaders and works against the cultivation of local power bases. Finally, the executive presidency decides policy on the most important issues. The cumulative effect of these political institutions is to generate powerful incentives

[8] In late 2002 and early 2003, the anti-defection clause was modified to allow for a two-week window in which members of local, provincial and national legislatures could switch parties without losing their seats. The full effects of this constitutional amendment have yet to be felt, but the early indications are that the window periods advantaged the ANC more than the opposition.

to organise nationally, and little reward to mobilise on local or provincial bases.[9] As a result, parties seeking to build nationwide support bases from which to challenge the position of the ANC regard control over provincial administrations as less important than influence in the National Assembly.

Social Divisions

South African society is complex and multilayered, with multiple divisions along the lines of race, ethnicity, class, religion, and region. In the South African context, race and ethnicity refer to separate concepts. Race (or "population") groups refer to the four population categories created in the 1950 *Population and Registration Act*: Black (African), Coloured, Indian and White. While these terms and categories are both sociologically and politically contested, they nevertheless remain prominent in both popular, political and academic discourse on South Africa.[10] The terms African and Black refer to people belonging to tribes indigenous to the area, Coloureds are those of mixed ancestry, Indian refers to people of South Asian descent, and Whites are Europeans who are 'obviously' white. The racial categories are based primarily on visual criteria, while ethnic distinctions encompass communities grouped by cultural and linguistic differences. In South African discourses, the use of terms from either the left or the right hand side of table 1 is deliberate and meant to convey very specific groups.

These divisions, however, are simply that: groups within society that have diverse and potentially overlapping memberships. There are also a number of other social divisions within South African society, based on class, region, clan, religion, and occupation, according to which South Africans group themselves. As noted in the passage from Claggett *et al*. (1982) above, it is not the mere existence of a social group that makes it manipulable by political mobilisation, but its social receptivity. If the mobilised cleavage lacks a receptive social base, then the movement will not become self-sustaining and will not last past the point where political elites actively attempt to generate political identification with that cleavage.[11]

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[9] It should be noted that certain provincial administrations have experienced success in pushing national government policy in certain areas, notably in the case of government policy on HIV/Aids and the dissemination of AZT, but for the most part these successes are few and far between, and where they do occur, they rarely offer tangible resources.

[10] In accordance with common usage, these terms are used throughout this paper to denote the population groups identified here.

[11] Interestingly, Claggett *et. al*. (1982), do not define "social receptivity" in their article. Based on their work, it would seem that one can only ascertain "receptiveness" after the fact: if a politicised cleavage maintained its saliency, then it must have been socially receptive.

Table 1: Racial and Ethnic Groups in South Africa

Race Groups			*Ethnic Groups*		
Black	76.7%	31,127,631	Zulu	22.9%	9,200,144
White	10.9%	4,434,697	Xhosa	17.9%	7,196,118
Coloured	8.9%	3,600,446	Afrikaner	14.4%	5,811,547
Indian	2.6%	1,045,596	Pedi	9.2%	3,695,846
Total	100%	40,583,573	English	8.6%	3,457,467
			Tswana	8.2%	3,301,774
			Sotho	7.7%	3,104,197
			Tsonga	4.4%	1,756,105
			Swazi	2.5%	1,013,193
			Venda	2.2%	876,409
			Ndebele	1.5%	586,961
			Other	0.6%	228,275
			Total	100%	40,583,573

Source: Statistics South Africa, Census in Brief, 1996.

This distinction is important when discussing the relative non-politicisation of ethnicity in South Africa. Using opinion poll data on how South Africans self-identify themselves as a measure of salience and social receptivity; it is remarkable that more South Africans self-identify themselves in terms of ethnicity than race. In July/August 2000, when asked an open-ended question about the primary groups with which they identified, only 21.5 percent of South Africans reported racial categories. More respondents answered with ethnic groups (29.2 percent) and almost as many cited religious affiliations (19.3 percent) as racial categories. [12] Within each race group, the primacy of ethnic and religious identification renders their relative non-politicisation even more surprising (tables 2 through 5), since these identities should have been just as 'socially receptive' to politicisation as race.

This, of course, becomes a tautology that renders the entire concept of social receptiveness useless. On the other hand, one could define a social base "receptive" if large segments of the population identify with it as a source of personal identity, which is the approach taken in this paper.

[12] Idasa asked, 'Besides Being South African, Which Group Do you Feel You Belong To?' Answers mentioning language or ethnic groups were coded as ethnic category; mentions of 'race' or a specific racial group as the racial categories, and so on. The author thanks Idasa for sharing their data files with her, and notes that the analysis presented here is her own. The sample Ns reported in tables 2 through 5 are weighted Ns.

Table 2: Black South Africans

Ethnic Category	37.2%
Race	18.4 %
Religion	18.2 %
Class	4.0 %
Occupation	3.6 %

N=1665

Table 3: Coloured South Africans

Ethnic Category	0.5 %
Race	46.7 %
Religion	28.8 %
Class	17.0 %
Occupation	1.7 %

N=179

Table 4: White South Africans

Ethnic Category	9.2 %
Race	15.1 %
Religion	11.2 %
Class	48.6 %
Occupation	4.6 %

N=301

Table 5: Indian South Africans

Ethnic Category	65.5 %
Race	0.9 %
Religion	16.2 %
Class	6.0 %

N=55

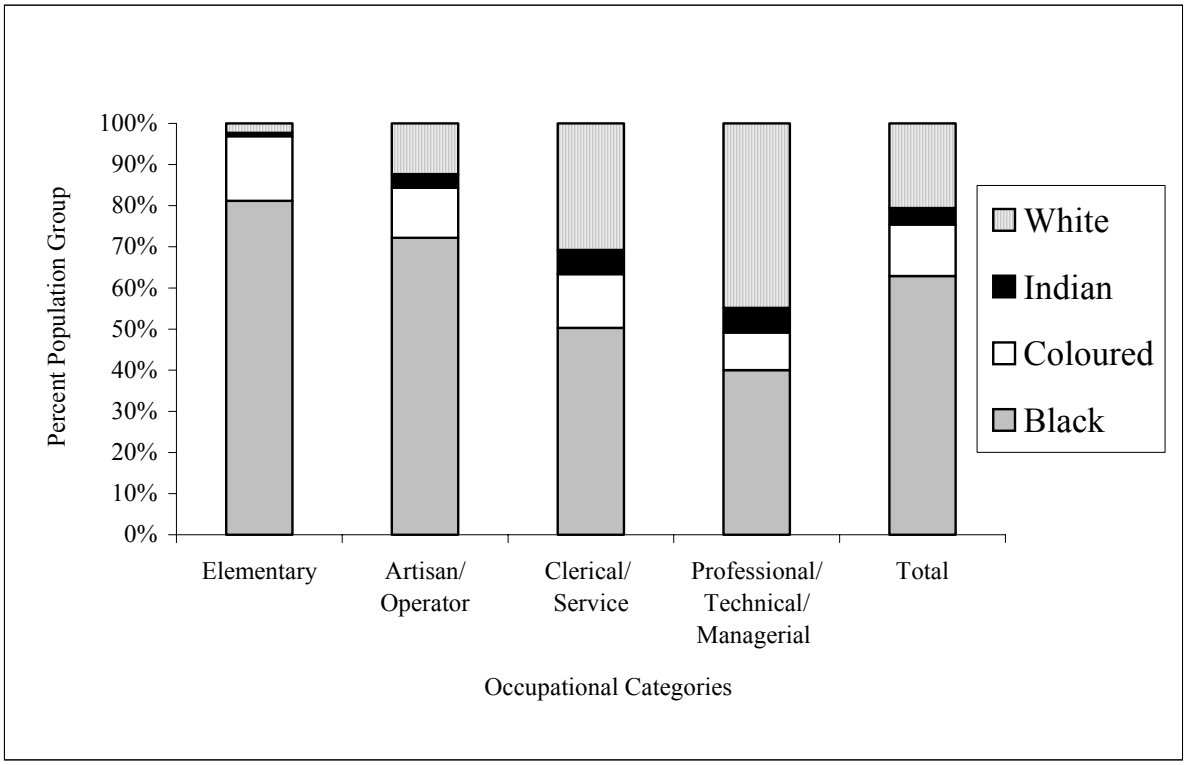
These findings regarding the social salience of racial versus ethnic identities are reproduced in a other studies (Kotzé 1997), and the relative non-salience of racial problems in people's daily lives was reported by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) in 2001.[13] Given that much of South African political discourse takes place along a White/Black, previously advantaged/ disadvantaged dichotomy, this primacy of ethnic over racial identification, is notable.

In part, this political latency arises from the overlap of racial and class groups. Taken together, they create racially bounded groups that provide easily targets for parties seeking to build support on the national level. For example, consider the relationship between race and occupation. Figure 1 groups South Africans according to occupational categories roughly corresponding to class groups. Each tier has then been divided into its racial composition, after which it

[13] The SAIRR press release can be found at http://www.sairr.org.za/wsc/pstory.htx?storyID=228 (accessed on August 27, 2001).

becomes obvious how Africans cluster in the lower rank, while the professional class is over 50 percent White. These trends, demonstrating a sharp racial basis to class position, are reproduced in education, income and other socioeconomic measures.

Figure 1: Racial Composition of Class measured by Occupation Category



Source: Statistics South Africa, Census in Brief, 1996.

Thus each of the four race groups occupies a distinct position in the country's socioeconomic structure. This positioning generates similar material interests to each group, making them easily mobilised, large blocks of potential supporters. The least educated, those employed in the least skilled occupations, and those earning the lowest wages are all disproportionately African. Class composition becomes more diverse the higher the class rank, yet even so the highest tier, the most educated, most highly skilled and highest paid, is disproportionately composed of White South Africans. While this data is from the 1996 census, the trends have only become more extreme since then. Despite the emergence of a small black middle- and upper-class since the early 1990s, most Africans have actually become even more impoverished.[14]

[14] See, for example, "The Cape of Poverty," Mail and Guardian Online, accessed at http://www.mg.co.za/Content/13.asp?ap=14231, on May 16, 2003.

Here, context and groups size became critically important. A number of contextual factors operated as disincentives for ethnic or other small-group mobilisation. For parties seeking representation primarily in the National Assembly, rather than in provincial or local tiers of government, the overlap of class and race created large communities that shared many common characteristics and were easy to mobilise. Courting small ethnic groups was not as electorally rewarding, and mobilising alternative identities in the political arena required more work than manipulating the race/class overlap. Second, other apartheid policies, such as the *Group Areas Act*, guaranteed that many South Africans lived in segregated communities. This not only reinforced the perception of shared interests, but also created racially bounded information networks (Ferree 2002, Mattes 1995), that were easily taken advantage of by political parties to spread the partisan line with a minimal effort.

As these factors further contributed to the political importance of race as a tool for political manipulation, the alignment of race and class made it possible to issue cloaked appeals to race groups through carefully constructed messages that raise specific interests. This was especially important in a society where blatant appeals to race have been de-legitimised. Thus, race combined with other factors to render it one of the most easily mobilised, electorally rewarding and most encompassing social divisions, one that easily overwhelms ethnic and religious affiliations.

Finally, the geographic distribution of South Africans also played a role in how parties picked and chose from the menu of mobilisation strategies. While Black/African South Africans are spread relatively evenly throughout the provinces, members of racial minority groups tend to cluster in specific provinces. Figure 2 below presents this graphically, showing how over three-quarters of Indians reside in one province, Coloureds live almost entirely in three provinces, and that White South Africans live primarily in four provinces.

Parties seeking to court the racial minority vote would thus be more likely to concentrate their campaigns on particular provinces, rather than spreading the message evenly, as would a party focused on the African vote. These provincial concentrations slightly mitigate the nationalising effect of the virtually unitary system. Yet, since only two provinces have populations where racial minority groups are in the majority (Northern and Western Cape), targeting the minority vote in most provinces was not a strategy capable of winning outright control over provincial governments.

Figure 2: The Population of South Africa by Province

Figure 2a) Black South Africans by Province

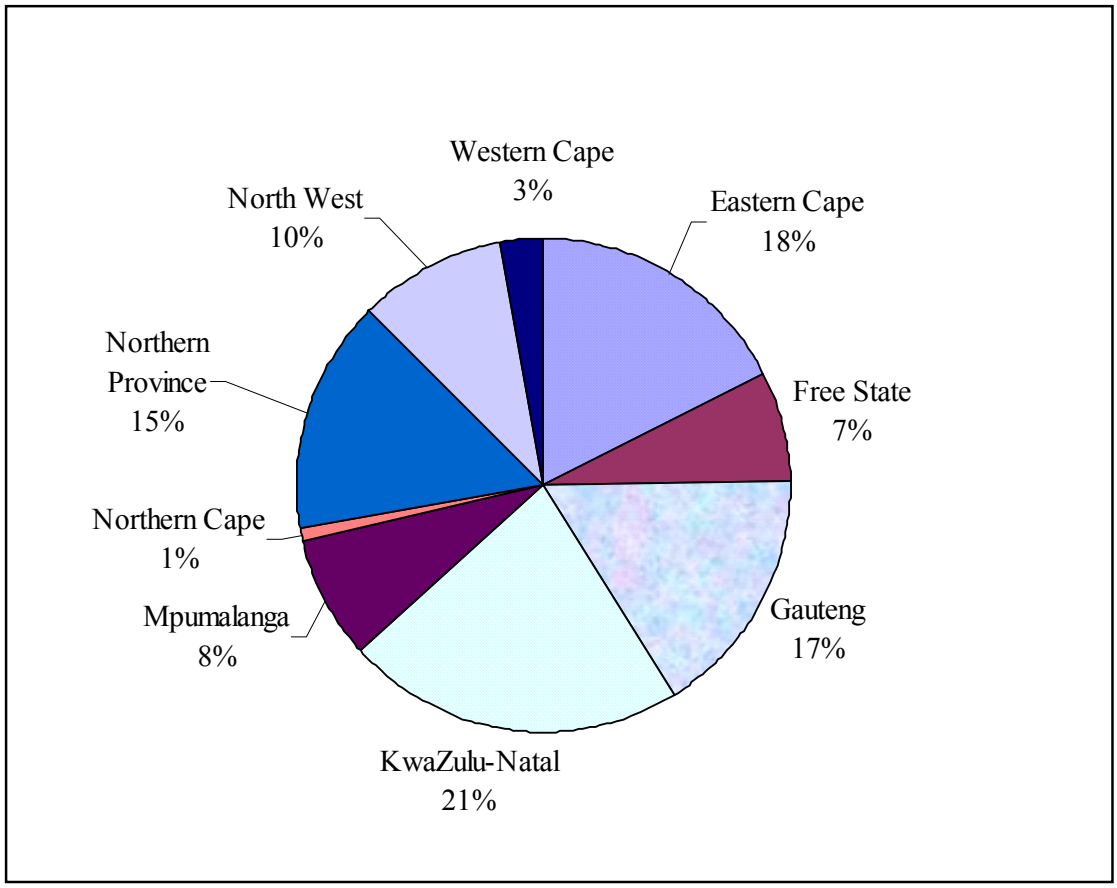


Figure 2b) Coloured South Africans by Province

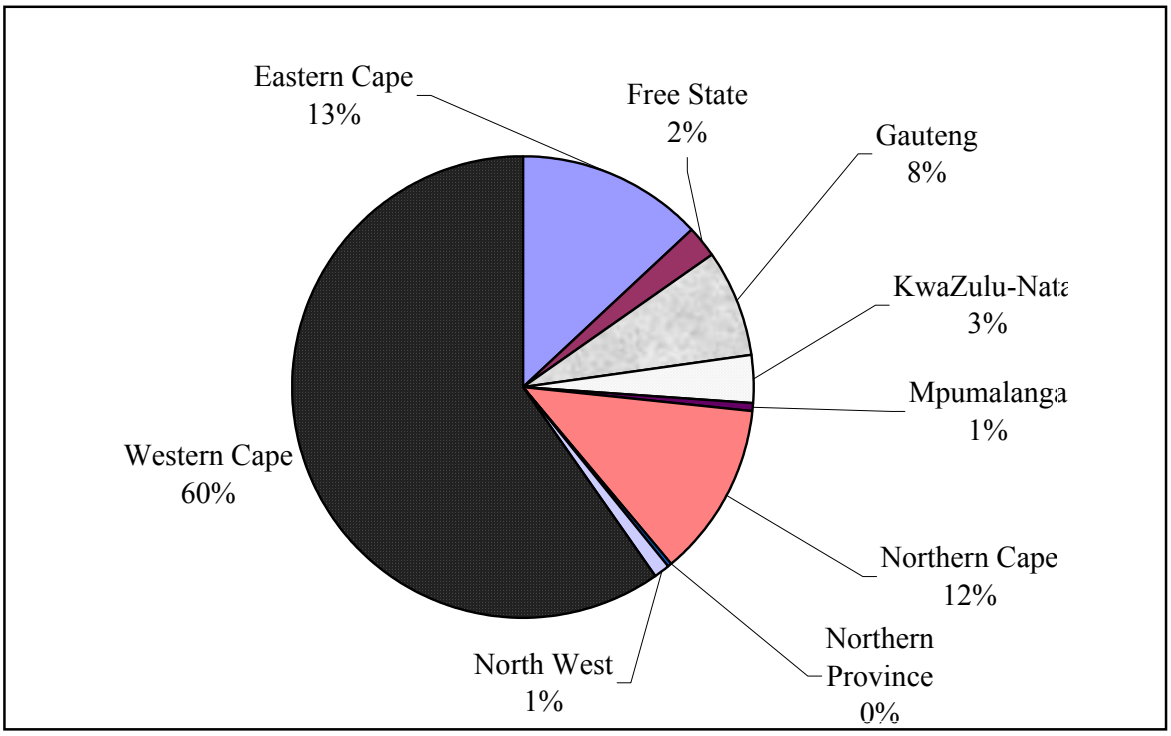


Figure 2c) White South Africans by Province

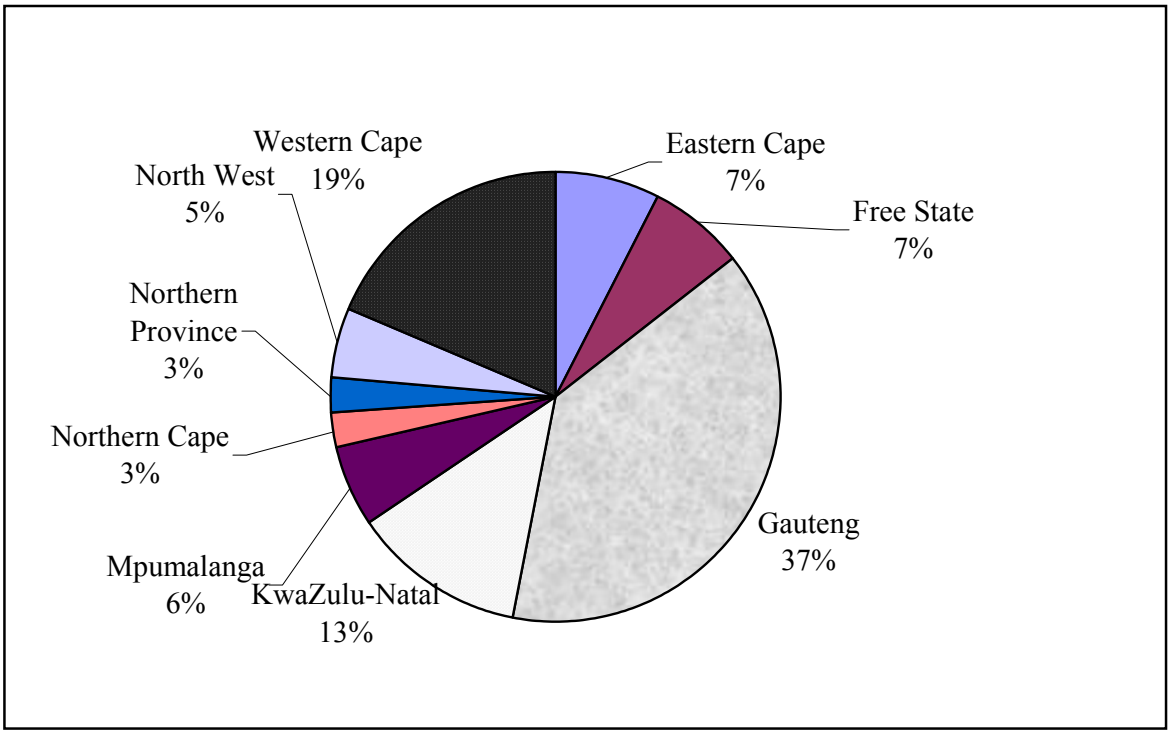
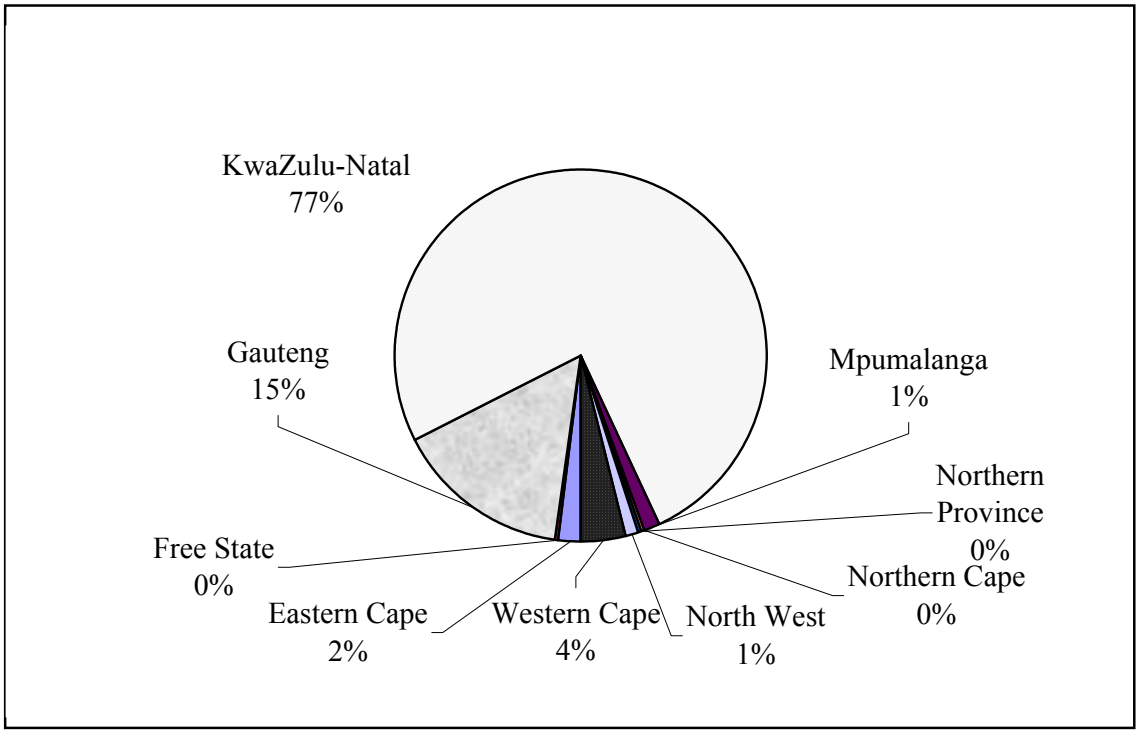


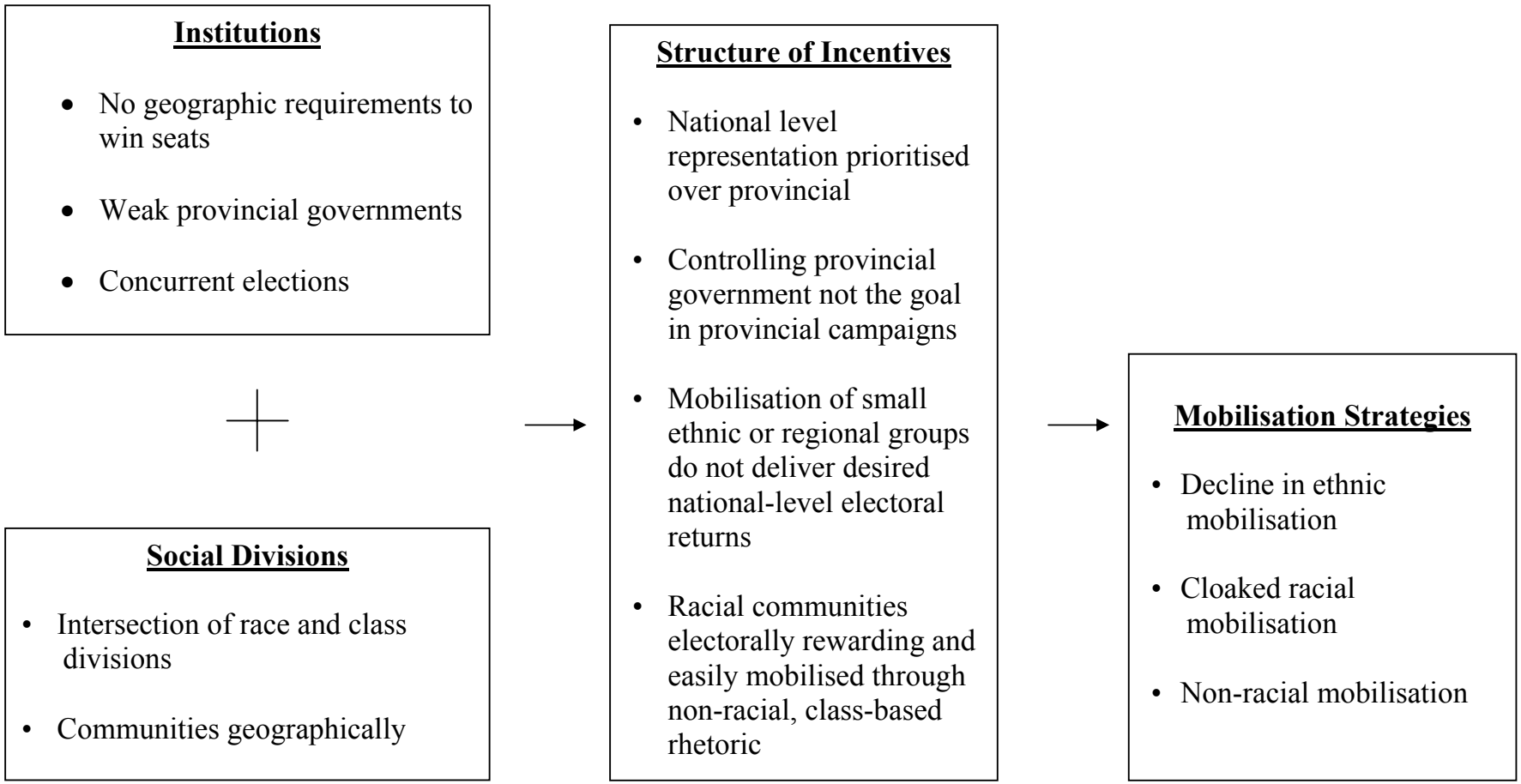
Figure 2d) Indian South Africans by Province



Source: Adapted from Statistics South Africa,
http://www.statssa.gov.za/census96/HTML/CIB/Population/25.htm

Taking all these factors together, parties responded to these institutional and social incentives by turning away from ethnic mobilisation in national and provincial elections. Ethnic groups were too small to present lucrative political support bases to parties concerned with winning influence at the national level. As a result, virtually no party sought to activate any of the divisions that either cross-cut the race groups or had the potential to reach into the support base of the ANC. The dynamics of these interactions can be summarised in figure 3, below.

Figure 3: Interactive Explanation for Racialised Politics in South Africa



Political Mobilisation in South Africa, 1994 – 1999

The major political parties, the ANC, NNP, DP and IFP, reacted to this interactive incentive structure in different ways. The ANC worked to ensure that the political identification spawned during the anti-apartheid struggle became cemented as the dominant partisan cleavage in the post-apartheid era. Throughout the 1994 to 1999 period, the ANC alternated its rhetoric between a black-White, formerly disadvantaged versus formerly advantaged dichotomy, in a conscious effort to insulate itself against inevitable disappointments with performance and to reinforce popular perceptions of the ANC as the sole legitimate representative of the interests of the masses (usually defined as black). Its leaders knew, from the past experiences of liberation movements throughout the continent that the integrity of the party's support base would not be immune from encroachments by ethnic, regional or religious entrepreneurs as the unity of the anti-apartheid struggle wore off. Therefore, much of the party's rhetoric aimed to remind people of the struggle and to reinforce the political black-White dichotomy, intentionally to prevent the activation of sub-racial ethnic identities.

By advancing this rhetoric and by manipulating other elements of the political system, the ANC helped to prevent the fractionalisation of its diverse support base. Race, ethnic and class group memberships overlapped enough to render a dichotomous characterisation of South African society plausible on a broad scale. The ANC also used its relationship with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), to neutralise threats stemming from the left, narrowing the ideological spectrum for partisan politics. In these ways, the ANC worked diligently to narrow the organisational and mobilisation strategies that opposition parties could feasibly pursue.[15]

More importantly for the purposes of this paper, however, is the fact that the major opposition parties barely even attempted to mount a challenge to the ANC on any of these competing platforms. Parties could have confronted the cumulative nature of race and class by mobilising people at either extreme: the increasingly multi-racial elite, or the increasingly mono-ethnic, rural poor.

[15] For a full discussion of the ANC's activities to protect its support base during this time period, see Piombo (2002).

Likewise, courting ethnic, religious and regional support bases had the potential to gradually encroach into ANC territory at the local level. Parties like the NNP, DP and IFP, which could have advanced either ethnic or regional platforms, chose instead to challenge the ANC in the national arena, on national issues.[16]

Election Campaigns of the NNP, DP and IFP[17]

Evidence for this thesis can be found when looking at the electoral campaigns of the NNP, DP and IFP. Before the 1999 general elections, the NP had been the major opposition party in the country, and the DP a small party with seven representatives in the NA. After the June 1999 elections their positions had reversed, and the DP became the second largest party in South Africa. The IFP waged its campaign from a position as the ruling party in KwaZulu-Natal province, with an electoral base of rural Zulus in KwaZulu-Natal and migrant hostel workers in Gauteng. In their campaigns for the June 1999 national and provincial elections, all three parties prioritised maintaining or attaining influence at the national level, rather than remaining or becoming regional forces.[18] All three eschewed ethnic appeals to their traditional constituencies (Afrikaners, liberal English, and Zulus), instead embracing other tactics.

The "New" National Party

Wracked by internal divisions, organisational problems, a leadership vacuum, and losing support in its traditional safe strongholds, the New NP faced an uphill battle as the campaign season for the 1999 elections approached. The party had engaged in an intense debate in 1996 and 1997 about its future. Moderates had argued that the National Party, (as it was then called) should fundamentally change its nature, with proposals varying from a reorientation of the party's

[16] A few small parties did actually organise along regional lines, such as the United Christian Democratic Party. A few others, such as the African Christian Democratic Party, advanced religious platforms. These parties, however, were extremely small and of only limited influence.

[17] Unless otherwise noted, the information in the following analyses of the parties is based on detailed analyses in the author's dissertation, "Entrenching One Party Dominant Democracy in South Africa".

[18] For the purposes of this study, a regional party is one that specifically advances regionally focused issues, rather than a party that locates most of its support from a particular region or province.

support base to the complete dissolution and recreation of the organisation. Yet the anti-defection clause had worked against those attempting to fundamentally change the nature of the party, because many party leaders feared that any significant change would cause the party to lose its seats in the country's legislatures.[19] By late 1997, after all the intense debate, the only visible changes were adding 'New' to 'National Party' and adopting a vaguely-Christian Democratic ideology. Therefore, at a time when the party was discredited with a high proportion of the population, institutional incentives played a determinant role in the party's rejection of a radical change.

In advance of the 1999 election, the New NP sought to create a nation-wide, multi-racial support base that would enable it to remain the leading national opposition party.[20] Instead of appealing to Afrikaner interests, in a parliamentary debate in February 1999 the NNP attempted to expand the definition of 'Afrikaner' to include *bruin Afrikaaners* (Coloureds), and in the election it campaigned on a broadly conservative platform. It also decided not to reorient the organisation around regional issues specific to the Western Cape and Gauteng, despite indications that the NNP's remaining supporters resided primarily in those provinces. Instead, the party waged a national campaign to maintain its place as national party that promoted national interests. Accordingly, the NNP set two national goals in for the 1999 elections: to end ANC dominance by preventing the ANC from attaining a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly (NA) and to maintain veto power in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

In order to achieve these goals, the party targeted minority voters in all provinces. The unique socioeconomic positioning of each group made it possible to emphasise issues that each would find particularly salient, such as crime, affirmative action, education, and language policy, without making explicit reference to race.

Creating a broad church of racial minority voters, in addition to advancing the strategic focus the party had adopted in 1997, had the potential to deliver short-term electoral results and national level representation. Members of minority race groups had constituted the bulk of the very large undecided vote – potential swing voters, and thus were the most de-aligned from partisan politics on the

[19] Author's interview with Lawrence Solomon (NNP), 10 June 1997.
[20] Author's interviews with Johan Kilian (NNP), 2 March 1999; Julie Kilian (NNP) 20 March 1999; and Tommy Immelman (NNP) 5 May 1999.

eve of the 1999 election (Idasa 1998, 1999). These groups, spread throughout the country, also concentrated in four provinces: the Western Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, which led to the party organising its campaign with most resources devoted to those provinces.

Even in the context of provincial campaigns, however, the focus was on national level returns. Two points support this argument. For one, the NNP explicitly elevated national over local appeals, and chose not to pursue an identity as a regional organisation. Virtually all of its campaign rhetoric focused on national-level issues. The Western Cape was the only province where localised slogans ('Keep the Cape in Shape') occasionally surfaced.[21] Where provincial campaigns became fiercely competitive, it was because the parties were fighting over the concentrations of minority voters who lived in those provinces.

Second, the goal of controlling a province outright versus preventing the ANC from controlling a province had important implications for the type of support base a party had to construct on the provincial level. The fact that African voters comprised well over fifty percent of voters in seven of the nine provinces meant that minority-based mobilisation could not enable a party to win control over most provincial administrations. However, capturing the racial minority vote could have forced the ANC into coalition government in Gauteng, or kept it out of power in the Northern and Western Capes – enough to keep the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) beyond ANC domination. Winning outright control over most provincial governments would have required that the Nats build a more multi-racial support base that earned significant support from African voters. Thus the different goals, conditioned by the overall incentive structure of the national political institutions, affected the types of groups that the NNP sought to mobilise, even within the context of provincial campaigns.

The Democratic Party

As with the NNP, The Democratic Party's primary goal was to prevent the ANC from winning a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly and sufficient support in the provinces to change the Constitution unilaterally. Second, the party aimed to become the leader of the opposition. Once the DP set its primary election target at becoming the leader of the opposition, it had to rapidly increase its support base, since it had won only 1.7 percent of the national vote

[21] Based on the author's observation in South Africa from February to June, 1999.

in 1994 (Reynolds 1994). Given limited resources, the party could not target potential voters indiscriminately.
The DP, to an even greater extent than the NNP, attempted to move away from its narrow ethnic base of liberal, White English speakers by explicitly targeting Afrikaners and Indians. DP campaign strategists accorded highest priority to stealing the NNP's Afrikaner base, which it considered capable of delivering enough votes to enable the DP to become the 'leader of the opposition.' It did this with messages that the DP was the only party capable of advancing their interests as a broad minority front.[22]

The DP aggressively targeted these and other minority communities dissatisfied with ANC governance, regardless of where they lived, especially focusing on the uncertain and independent voters within minority racial groups, such as Indians in KawZulu-Natal.[23] An obvious strategy, if the electoral system had required geographic concentration in vote distribution and the provinces had sufficient power to offer the spoils of office, would have been for the party to wage an all-out war to win control of the Gauteng and the Western Cape provincial governments, and not expend much effort in other provinces where the party could not hope to win enough votes to influence provincial level administrations.

DP organisers openly admitted that they were not targeting Black South Africans, planning instead to court these voters in the next national elections, scheduled for 2004.[24] Strategists self-consciously targeted members of the minority racial communities because they were easily mobilised, shared material interests, and had the potential to deliver large electoral returns capable of guaranteeing national level influence. The Democrats knew that they would not waste resources by targeting these groups wherever they were located in the country.

Nevertheless, to win the support of these communities within a campaign that operated in every province, the party campaigned most heavily where its target groups lived: the urban and suburban areas within Gauteng, the Western Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal. The emergence of a regionally-focused campaign followed logic similar to that of the NNP: the DP had to focus on some provinces because

[22] Author's interview with Danie Erasmus, 1 April 1999.
[23] Interviews by author with Danie Erasmus (DP) and Lynn Ploos van Amstel (DP), 22 April 1999. Similar information can also be found in EISA, Election Update '99 no 10 (April 16, 1999).
[24] Author's interview with Manny de Freitas (DP), 9 March 1999

its target audiences concentrated there, while also aiming to create a veto on ANC power in the NCOP.
As with the NNP, where fierce competitions emerged over particular provinces, the fight was more for national power than control over provincial governments *per se*. For example, strategists considered the Western Cape administration an easier target to win than Gauteng, since the ANC was not already dominant in the Western Cape, while the ANC controlled the legislature in Gauteng. Nevertheless, the party focused more resources on the Gauteng campaign. According to DP leader Tony Leon, this was because the DP was "already strong," in Gauteng and could obtain more votes for the national election (Ray 1999). Contributing to this decision, the DP felt that the NNP would be able to keep the ANC from controlling the Western Cape government, so to advance the overall goal of reducing ANC national hegemony, the DP did not need to use its scarce resources on a campaign geared to win control over the Western Cape. Instead, the party could concentrate on winning pockets of wealthy minority voters in that province, and not waste resources fighting the NNP and ANC for the Coloured and African vote.

The Inkatha Freedom Party

Of all the major players in South African politics between 1994 and 1999, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) had been the most ethnically and regionally based, locating virtually all of its support within the confines of one province, KwaZulu-Natal, and over 90 percent of its support from one ethnic group, the Zulu (Reynolds 1994). The NNP and the DP responded to the incentive structure in ways that moved them from ethnic to racial or multi-racial patterns of mobilisation. Similarly, the IFP reacted to the same pressures by attempting to shed the party's exclusive Zulu appeal and to build a national following based on social and economic conservatism. Unfortunately for the IFP, the party's decision to follow these tactics came too late to make a significant positive impact on the party's levels of support, and after the 1999 elections, the IFP found that its shift in tactics had cost it Zulu votes and further weakened the party relative to the ANC.

Like the other major opposition parties, the IFP responded to the national concentration of power by attempting to increase its influence on the national level, rather than purely seeking to consolidate the party's position in its core province, KwaZulu-Natal. As the leader of the KwaZulu-Natal administration the party had learned that controlling a province was not sufficient to remain an

influential player in South African politics, nor did it necessarily enable a party to govern effectively or distribute patronage resources. The IFP complained at many points between 1994 and 1999 that the lack of genuine power in the provincial administration tied its hands when attempting to govern KwaZulu-Natal, making it public knowledge that the party considered the provincial government to be powerless in many substantive areas.[25]

Over the previous five years, the party had also discovered the uncertainty of relying on an ethnically defined vote based on Zulu South Africans. The ANC had been encroaching on the party's support base in KwaZulu-Natal, not just in urban but also in rural areas.[26] Therefore, when the national elections team set the party's strategy for the 1999 elections, the IFP put unprecedented effort into the national campaign, aiming to establish a national following by generating pockets of support in a number of provinces outside of KwaZulu-Natal.[27] Estimates are that the party put more resources into the national level campaign than the provincial, leading one analyst to conclude that "perhaps the most striking feature of the IFP's campaign was not just that it had national and provincial components, but that the national component was so well developed" (Piper 1999: 149). The proportional representation system meant that such a strategy could have worked for the party, for all it needed to do was to establish pockets of support throughout several provinces, which could have contributed to the national portion of the party's vote and hence an increased number of seats in the National Assembly.

When selecting target audiences, the IFP followed in the footsteps of the other parties by focusing on undecided voters, primarily from minority groups in Durban and in provinces outside of KwaZulu-Natal.[28] The IFP targeted these groups more through the focus of its mobilisation efforts rather than by issuing race-specific appeals, taking the gamble of pursuing non-Zulu based support through a campaign platform based on conservative economic policies and devolution of power (absent the usual reference to the Zulu nation). Like the DP

[25] Buthelezi in particular criticised the national government for excessively controlling provincial governments and claimed that the lack of real federal powers in KwaZulu-Natal had left the province in a hopeless situation. See "Buthelezi a Hit in Shabalala Territory," The Mercury (Durban/KwaZulu-Natal), April 21, 1997.

[26] In the 1996 local elections, the ANC earned significant pockets of support in rural areas, a first ever challenge to the IFP's control in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

[27] Author's interview with Peter Smith (IFP), 19 April 1999.

[28] Author's interviews with Dr. Rubnai (IFP), 15 April 1999; Peter Smith (IFP), and Basil Douglas (IFP), 10 March 1999.

and the NNP, the range of issues that the party advocated in its national campaign resonated most with conservatives, Whites and Indians, whose socioeconomic status rendered them the most receptive to messages about free-markets and fighting crime. Aside from the party's last-ditch attempt to portray itself as the only "majority based" party that defended minority interests, the IFP rarely issued appeals that mentioned any form of identity outside of rural KwaZulu-Natal.[29]

Unlike the previous two parties, the IFP did try to encroach on the ANC's support base by campaigning among rural voters in provinces outside KwaZulu-Natal. Yet it did this by targeting them with distinctly non-ethnic messages about 'tradition' and 'family values,' and by contrasting the IFP's conservative platform against the ANC's liberal stance on social issues. Though the IFP's efforts met with little success in areas outside KwaZulu-Natal, it is important that the party tried to expand its base into a non-ethnic, traditionalist rural vote. The party most likely would not have attempted this feat in a constituency based system, where the geographic spread of rural voters, and the ANC's dominance in most rural areas of South Africa, renders this a risky campaign strategy.

Thus in South Africa, the interaction of different political institutions and social demographics conditioned party strategies to downplay ethnic mobilisation. There are many competing social identities in South Africa, yet most of these have remained politically latent in the post-apartheid era. Ethnic appeals simply could not deliver large enough electoral rewards, especially when juxtaposed against the overlap of racial and class group divisions that generated large, easily mobilised constituencies.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge the magnitude of the miracle that South Africa has produced insofar as being able to prevent the emergence of divisive ethnic conflict and an ethnic party system. Prior to 1994, South Africa was considered to hold great potential for ethnic and racial conflict as it initiated a system of democratic rule. The peacefulness of the consolidation process and the absence of ethnic violence is, undeniably, an optimal outcome for a country that had been riddled by deeply divisive communal divisions for decades. The

[29] The party published an advertisement in one of the Sunday newspapers right before the election with this message. See Lodge (1999: 128).

fact that one can discuss "normal" politics in South Africa, where parties compete in free, fair, and relatively peaceful elections, owes a great deal to the conflict-reducing effects of the country's political institutions and spirit of national reconciliation. This relative normalcy and lack of ethnic politics are exactly what make South Africa a crucial case for studying the conditions under which ethnic conflict may be avoided, and for how various institutional structures interact with other factors to shape the mode of partisan mobilisation in democratising countries.

Yet there is a price to pay for this stability, in terms of the vibrancy of political debate and future evolution of the party system. The party-list PR electoral system, originally designed to prevent the permanent exclusion of racial and ethnic minority groups, has in fact interacted with the federal system to guarantee that if parties do not change their strategies, members of minority racial groups will be permanently marginalised in South African politics. The current alignment of institutions, however, provides no incentives for parties to change their tactics in the short run.

The current path of party politics involving the major political parties, the NNP, DP, IFP and ANC, is following a line of increasing racial polarisation that helps to suppress the emergence of intra-black ethnic politicisation. The ANC's relationship with COSATU and the SACP plays no small part in this trend. The break-up of that alliance is a factor that needs to be addressed in any discussion of future developments, yet which unfortunately demands treatment beyond what can be accomplished in this paper.

The short-lived Democratic Alliance (a political organisation that merged the DP and NNP between June 2000 and October 2001 at the local level), only exacerbated these tendencies and reinforced popular perceptions of the parties as outdated vehicles of elitist, minority interests. The IFP attempted the transformation away from an ethnic appeal too late in the 1994 to 1999 period to render its non-ethnic appeals convincing, with the result that the party failed to break out of its ethic base and lost much-needed Zulu votes, so that the party is even less influential now than ever.

A different mix of political institutions could have exerted the conflict-reducing tendencies of South Africa's current institutions while leading the country into more fluid partisan politics. A different electoral system, perhaps combining elements of constituency and proportionality principles, could have forced

political parties to seek support from among the country's Black voters.[30] This not only would have avoided ethnic mobilisation, but would also have discouraged the racial mobilisation that has become the signature of opposition politics in South Africa, and that condemns them to permanent minority status. Ceding more powers to the provinces, making them more attractive spheres for representation, could make them more attractive to opposition parties. If this were to happen, an eventuality that seems unlikely given the ANC government's empowering of local governments at the further expense of provincial in late 2000, could spur the development of more regional parties that advocate specifically regional interests. If parties turned to this avenue, they would have to seek support from a broader spectrum of voters. De-linking provincial and national elections, a more costly option than the current system, would raise the importance of province-specific issues in provincial contests. This could help to break the deadlock of South African partisan politics.

The theoretical implications travel beyond the borders of South Africa. First, in ethnically divided societies, it is often assumed that ethnic identities dominate the formation of political parties, and that parties simply represent the political wings of ethnic groups. The South African case shows that even in societies considered to be "deeply divided,"[31] personal identities are multi-layered, and that political institutions play a large role in determining which social identities parties will attempt to activate into partisan cleavages.

Second, PR electoral systems may not automatically create communal politics and party system fragmentation. Political parties, in consideration of the electoral system and tier of power for which they want to contest, have latitude in deciding whether or not to pursue identity-based mobilisation, and if they pursue such tactics, they then can select the particular identity from a variety of options. This study stresses the fact that even in societies where one identity seems to dominate all others in the political arena, the translation of social identities into partisan divides is not automatic, contra the predictions of Horowitz and many others.

Finally, the electoral system is not the only important structural factor in the process of politicising ethnicity, and its effects cannot be studied in isolation from broader institutional and social variables. In turn, these structural factors

[30] Such changes are currently under review by an electoral task team.
[31] Whether or not the categorisation as "deeply divided" is warranted for South Africa, most analysts currently consider it to belong to this type of society.

all interact to influence the choices that political elites make. The end result is a dynamic process that affects the formation of and mobilisation strategies adopted by political parties. Certain political institutions can work against the fragmentary pressures of a PR system, so that even if parties can appeal to small ethnic communities, they may not necessarily do so. In South Africa, the result has been to keep ethnic identities latent and to reify racial divisions that could have subsided in the post-apartheid period.

Overall, the study argues that more consideration needs to be given to the ways in which various political institutions interact within a political system to shape the lines of political competition. These interactions may produce unanticipated and counter-intuitive results. In many societies, whether or not deeply divided, there actually may be far more room for constitutional and institutional engineering to structure the lines along which political competition will develop than has been anticipated. The issue is not merely proportional versus constituency based electoral systems, but the broad interaction of electoral rules, organisation of the state, the structure of social divisions, and the resultant nexus of incentives that shape partisan mobilisation.

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Appendix: Selected Interviews Conducted by the Author:

New National Party

Johan Kilian, National Campaign Manager and Chairman of the Gauteng NNP, on March 2, 1999 at the NNP National Head Offices, Hornkloof, Pretoria

Julie Kilian, National Media Director, on March 20, 1999 at the NNP Federal Congress at the Technikon SA Conference Center, Johannesburg.

Tommy Immelman, CEO and Secretary in Chief of the NNP in the Western Cape, on May 5, 1999 at the NNP provincial headquarters building on Berg Street, Cape Town.

Lawrence Solomon, Regional Organizer in the Western Cape, on June 10, 1997 at the NNP headquarters building on Berg Street, Cape Town.

Inkatha Freedom Party:

Douglas, Basil. Gauteng IFP Campaign Manager, IFP Gauteng Regional Offices, Central Johannesburg, March 10, 1999.

Dr. Rubnai, IFP Researcher. Thursday, April 15, 1999. IFP Regional Office in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

Smith, Peter. IFP Communications Directorate, Assistant Campaign Manager and Deputy National Spokesperson, Durban Club Offices, National HQ, April 19, 1999.

Democratic Party:

de Freitas, Manny. DP regional office in Mountainvew, Johannesburg, March 9, 1999.

Erasmus, Danie. DP Pretoria Campaign Coordinator, North Gauteng, April 1, 1999.

van Amstel, Lynn Ploos. DP Regional Chair for KwaZulu-Natal Coastal Region. Westville, KwaZulu-Natal: April 22, 1999.

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Subotzky, A. 2004 *Mapping Bodies: Corporeal Erasure and Re-presentation in AIDS-related stigma*. Cape Town. CSSR, Working Paper No. 62.

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