ELECTION UPDATE 2006

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LIMPOPO

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Polling Stations

All 2175 voting districts in Limpopo were operational on the day of the local government elections, 1 March 2006. Thanks to the favourable weather, most polling stations opened on time. However, in the far-flung rural areas of the province, a week of heavy rains put the election process under pressure. In the Penge area along the Lepelle River, electoral staff together with their electoral equipment had to cross the river using a traditional form of cable car called *segwaigwai*. In the Giyani area, only 100 people in one community cast their votes because the voters had to cross a running river to get to the voting stations. Furthermore, in other areas of Giyani voters had to be transported in trucks to get them across waterlogged areas to the voting stations.

According to Mrs N C Neswiswsi, deputy EDDE manager in Limpopo, the biggest problem in the province was getting the senior IEC officials to the polling stations for monitoring purposes, but the voting stations were not affected as the electoral officers and electorate mainly lived in the areas where the polling stations were located. An additional was experienced in obtaining confirmation from the presiding officers at the stations. It had been arranged that at 07h00 when the stations opened, all voting stations would alert the nerve

centre by SMS that they had opened. The SMS traffic at that point was so great that there was a near jam of the airwaves. This resulted in some of these confirmations being received much later in the day, but all indicated they had been sent at the agreed time.

All stations closed on time at 19h00 but voters who were already in the voting stations had been allowed to continue casting their votes. This resulted in voting stations closing business for the day at 21h00. This also affected the release of results as those stations that closed business later, provided the results to their municipalities later. This had resulted in the municipalities releasing their results at a much later time.

Secrecy of the Ballot

Although the mechanism for a secret ballot in terms of human resources and physical provision/arrangement of polling booths, were provided for by the IEC, voter illiteracy and the general illiteracy of the population are likely to have compromised the secrecy of the ballot. Many voters, especially in the rural areas are barely literate and for them issues raised by parties in their campaigns have largely been academic and it was either personalities or symbolism that held sway on how they would vote. On the other hand the IEC said that

it had no way of determining whether or not the secrecy of the ballot could have been compromised by illiteracy. Mr. Thivhilaeli Nedohe, communications manager of the IEC in Limpopo said that their report on the elections may or may not throw more light on this factor.

However Mrs Neswiswi said that the debriefing sessions held with Presiding Officers and municipalities after the elections had not indicated that this posed a problem. This was substantiated by the lack of recorded complaints from any of the party agents suggesting that they believed the illiteracy of voters could have compromised the secrecy of the ballot.

A case study focusing on a voting district in the Fetakgomo local municipality, in the Greater Sekhukhune District provides some interesting insights. The Presiding Officer at Maebe Primary School voting district said that illiterate voters especially the elderly, proved problematic in ensuring a completely secret ballot. Elderly voters would come in and say they had come to vote for Mandela. When told that Mandela was no longer involved in active politics, they became upset. The officials and party agent were then forced to show the voter the ballot paper and ask the voter to identify the party that closely resembled what they were looking for.

Others would say they wanted to vote for the person who provides their pension, the school buildings and the feeding programme at schools. When told that it was not any of the contestants but the government that provided these services, they would similarly become upset. Still others described parties by their symbols, often confusing symbols that were used by particular parties with those not officially registered by any party. This also had an effect of delaying the voting process.

The scenario in the previous paragraph, although not critical, should be worrying for those concerned with the elections being above board. In a way it echoes what was said by Limpopo PEO, the Reverend Zwo Nevhutalu at the launch of the operations centre. He had said that "democracy illiteracy" in the province was critical.

The Voting Process

In most areas voting stations opened on time. Generally voting started off slowly, mainly by the adult population, and senior citizens in particular. This tendency was also noted by the SABC radio stations in Limpopo, who ran a running commentary on the voting process in the province. According to spot interviews on radio the youth said they were showing deference to adults by not voting early.

Most of the youth flocked to voting stations in the late afternoons leading to congestion in many voting districts towards the close of voting. This was compounded by those who had worked a half day or full day who arrived at the stations only after work. Some voting stations in the province were forced to delay counting to allow crowds of people who had not yet voted, but were inside the stations at the designated closing time to cast their votes.

The IEC provided statistics that showed that elections kicked off to a brisk start and working up to a peak between 13h00 and 17h00 when stations closed. The following table indicates the cumulative number of voters on election day:

Time Period	Cumulative Number of Voters on Elections Day
07h00 - 09h00	348 598
09h01 - 11h00	549 930
11h01 - 13h00	1 549 450
13h01 - 15h00	1 686 032
15h01 - 17h00	1 760 060
17h01 - 19h00	2 976 775

The figures provided indicate that between 11h01 and 13h00 a million votes were cast, indicating that most voters waited until late in the morning before going to the polls. Another peak period was between 17h01 and 19h00, indicating that the youth had targeted this late period to vote. It would also suggest that there are many workers who did not receive a holiday and used

the period after work to cast their votes.

There were some incidents, however, that marred the voting. At Mankweng's Klaas Mothapo School voting district, members of the public reported loudhailer campaigning within earshot of the voting district. An IEC official said he had not heard this as he was probably inside the school buildings at the time the alleged breach of the electoral Code of Conduct took place.

At another Mankweng voting district, Ditlalemeso Secondary School, several verbal altercations took place intermittently between an independent candidate and alleged members of the ANC. One of theses took place just outside the designated voting area while others took place outside the entrance to the school. SABC radio also reported the incidents.

Citizen Participation

There were 2 145 186 voters registered to vote in Limpopo with a potential 6 435 558 votes to be cast. The potential rose because each voter was required to cast three votes: for ward, PR and district council.

All in all, 2 821 502 valid votes or 44.75% of potential votes were cast in the province and a further 58 147 votes were spoilt. This

would theoretically put a 'spoilt votes party' in overall third position in the province, underscoring the need for more intensive voter education. According to IEC officials at some voting stations, there are voters who used their ballot papers to register their protests against the system.

Voting Behaviour

The voters in Limpopo gave the ANC a massive vote of confidence with 2 369 900 votes, which translated into 83,99% of the voter support. The ANC won 933 of the available 1 240 seats. This translated into 75.24% of the vote. The DA won 154 461 or 5.47% of the votes and the rest of the contestants shared the remaining19.33% of the valid votes.

The figures provided by the IEC reveal an interesting 92 010 votes or 3.26% of the vote going to an unspecified 'other'. The rest of the parties did not reach a percentage vote higher than 3,26% each and this indicates a serious inability by the parties to attract disaffected voters. It could also be argued that the 55.25% of the potential voters who did not cast their votes failed to notice the appeal of the opposition parties. The ANC had a 100% sweep of all seats in 14 out of the 25 municipalities which were being contested and are the leading party in the other 11

municipalities. The following results show the performance of the different parties in the five districts of Limpopo shows how overwhelming the support for the ANC has been in the elections.

Vhembe

Party	Total Votes in District	Percentage
ACDP	5 809	2.39
ANC	208 763	86.22
ADP	508	0.20
AZAPO	1 844	0.76
DA	10 315	4.26
DBF	1 226	0.50
ID	3 788	1.56
PAC	3 927	1.62
UDM	2.154	0.88
VF	711	-
XP	3 061	1.26
TOTAL	242 106	

Mopani District

Party	Total Votes in District	Percentage
ACDP	5 133	2.49
ANC	173 830	84.49
ADP	3 865	1.87
DA	9 457	4.59
ID	970	0.47
PAC	4.738	2.30
UDM	3 002	1.45
XP	4 722	2.29
TOTAL	205 717	

Waterberg

Party	Total Votes in District	Percentage
ACDP	1 668	1.48
ANC	92 289	81.89
AZAPO	593	0.53
DA	10 079	8.94
PAC	2 290	2.03
UDM	1 205	1.06
VF	4.565	4.05
TOTAL	112 689	

Capricorn

Party	Total Votes in District	Percentage
ACDP	3 635	1.84
ANC	166 014	83.88
ADP	871	0.44
AZAPO	2.669	1.35
DA	13 164	6.65
PAC	2 292	1.16
UDM	4 696	2.37
VF	1 938	0.98
TOTAL	197 928	

Sekhukhune

Party	Total Votes in the District	Percentage
ANC	154 170	85.94
AZAPO	6 216	3.46
DA	7 419	4.14
PAC	5 212	2.96
UIF	5.073	2.83
VF	1.311	0.73
TOTAL	179 401	

The voting in all the municipal districts shows an overwhelming ANC electoral victory. This implies the electorate in Limpopo has confidence in the ruling party to deliver on its election promises, providing a heavy responsibility on the ANC to deliver on services. The performance of the other parties could also mean that they have not understood the dynamics of electoral politics. They could do well to study what the ANC has done from as far back as 1994 and study the campaigns of parties that have won elections all over the world in the past two decades.

NORTHERN CAPE

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Introduction

This contribution looks at the following aspects of the 2006 elections i.e., polling stations, ballots, voting behaviour and public participation mainly at the first hand information gathered by members of the

Department of Political Science at the University of the Free State as observers on election day. The observation programme centred on polling stations within the towns of Kimberley, Taung, Magagong, Jan Kempdorp, Harstwater, Warrenton, Winsorton and Barkley West.

In a number of provinces millions of South Africans ventured into the wet and flooded areas to cast their ballots. The Northern Cape was no exception. The weather was a great concern as it was predicted to be an aggravating factor in terms of lower voting turnout. The IEC made provision for this by arranging to have helicopters on standby to fly voting officials and materials to inaccessible areas due to flooding. Areas which were particularly vulnerable to flooding were the diamond mine areas along the Vaal River. The communities' activities were seriously affected when low level bridges were flooded. Areas which were affected were Warrenton, Riverton, Windsorton, Deportshoop, and Sydney-on-Vaal.

On the day of the election many eligible voters feared for their safety by crossing the low-water concrete bridge to the polling stations at Barkley West. At the time of the election the Vaaldam was 108,31% full; dams such as Bloemhof stood at

103,4% and the Warrenton dyke at 85,16% (Joubert, 2006:1).

Citizen Participation on Election Day

There were numerous factors which played a role in public participation on 1 March 2006 during the local government elections such as technical factors, the disabled, the Volkstaat in Orania, the media, the influence of political parties and the weather. A role was also played by the police and the armed forces. While travelling through the Northern Cape on election day, police vehicles, helicopters, and police men and women were visibly present. The police confirmed that they had no major issues to deal with at the polling stations.

Technical Factors

Just hours before the election was scheduled to take place, parts of the Northern Cape experienced power failures. A team from Eskom was dispatched to the affected areas in the province as the Koeberg Unit 2 was not generating electricity. The Chief Provincial Electoral Officer, Mr Bekebeke, responded by reassuring that the failures should not affect the voting procedures on Election Day (Modiba, 2006: 5).

Most presiding officers confirmed that the voting

process was hassle-free with no major problems in the Greater Sol Plaatje municipality (DFA 2006:6).. The IEC indicated that bad weather conditions and power failures in Keimoes and Orania did not influence the voting process. Bekebeke stated with regards to problem areas the IEC has "ensured that there are generators at counting stations. The mobile stations managed to travel on the road to Kuruman that was previously waterlogged by the rain" (Kwon Hoo, 2006:3).

The Disabled

The disabled community in the Northern Cape were not excluded from the voting process and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in the province made special provision to accommodate these voters. The IEC in partnership with political parties and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) drafted a plan to assist disabled persons in terms of logistical aspects such as transport to, from and at polling stations.

Mzimkhululu Twasa, a representative from the Office on the Status of People with disabilities (OSPD) indicated that "it was disappointing that the issue of special votes had not been covered by the law and that the drafted plan offered short term solutions. Twasa

also highlighted the fact that the OSPD would avail clearly marked vehicles (to avoid the corrupt use thereof) to assist the disabled in 27 municipal districts in the Northern Cape.

The NGOs, such as the Association for the Physically Disabled (APD), issued a moral plea to political parties to avoid using the disabled for the benefit of their party's agenda. The chairperson of the APD indicated that parties found doing this would be publicly identified and humiliated.

Political parties commended this initiative. The chairperson of the APD, Dorothy-Ann Howitson, thanked the OSPD for assisting with mobility impairments in order that this sector of the community could fulfil their democratic right to vote. (DFA, 2006:6).

Orania

The 'Volkstaat' (Afrikaner homeland) concept is unique to the Northern Cape Province. The residents of Orania do not participate in the formal electoral process but have chosen to hold their own election. The aim of this separate election is to elect a seven member council known as the Orania Representative Council. The function of this is to negotiate with the government to establish or obtain the formal

independent municipal status for the 'Volkstaat'. The voting procedure for this e-election is for voters to register on-line at **www.orania.co.za** and vote via internet. One of the representatives out of the seven Orania councillors must reside outside the town of Orania.

The candidates who have availed themselves for this position include Albert van Zyl, a lecturer from the North West University, Advocate Anton Alberts, a nuclear physician Dr. Jakes Moller, and a computer programmer Annatjie Joubert. Orania has been amalgamated into a single municipality which includes Hopetown and Strydenburg by the Demarcation Board. Eleanor Lombard, a representative from Orania, explains that a High Court ruling in Kimberley has given legal status to the Orania Representative Council. This ruling is on condition that the two parties reach a negotiated settlement. After five years an agreement has not been reached and the negotiating process continues.

Members of the Orania Representative Council have indicated that they are satisfied with the way the town has delivered services to its residents and has a favourable bank balance (DFA, 2006:3 and Internet, 2006…Orania se verkiesing).

The residents of Orania have high hopes for the 2006 election which includes having a representative of Orania serving on the local district municipality. According to Eleanor Lombard (DFA, 2006:3) "*it will be of great symbolic value to Orania's bid for self-determination if a resident of the town is voted onto the district council where he will serve on an equal footing with the representatives for other local municipalities*".

Lombard told the DFA (2006:3) that she regards this as a positive indication of a will to participate and cooperate with local authorities, however residence still require the acknowledgement of their right to self-determination.

Political Parties

As political parties anxiously anticipated the voting process to take its course and campaigned to sway votes in their favour, Neville Mompati, provincial secretary of the ANC said that the ANC wished to win at least 68% of the electorate and to convincingly claim all municipalities in the province. The ANC contested all wards except in Renosterberg where the parties' candidate failed to register in time. Mompati said that the ANC's strength does not lie with individuals but with the party's 'mass character'. Just prior to the

election, Mompati once again took the opportunity to rally for an ANC's victory by stating that "*the ANC will be victorious once again and will immediately accelerate its service delivery programme. The target set in our manifesto will be realised without failure*" (Ramoroka, 2006:4).

President Mbeki has pledged to encourage and promote gender equality by launching a 50:50 campaign for the 2006 election. The ANC Women's League supports these efforts and regards the 2006 election as a victory for overcoming patriarchy and achieving gender transformation. As the ANC Women's League also celebrates the Leagues 50th anniversary of the Women's march of 1956; the League also regards the 2006 election as an epoch-making landmark in the emancipation of women in this country (DFA, 2006:4). The ANC in the Northern Cape took proactive steps as voter apathy became apparent at polling stations on Election Day by sending out 27 teams to encourage voters to cast their ballots (Kwon Hoo 2006:3). The question is how did the smaller parties view the election process and voting behaviour in general?

On the whole, the voting process went smoothly without major incidents or threats to open competition and free choice. However,

some opposition parties raised concerns around the process. Herholdt Robertson, DA provincial leader, indicated that he had received complaints from DA party agents that they had been refused permission to gain entry into some of the voting stations. DA party agents also complained that voting officers were encouraging voters to vote for certain parties (DFA, 2006:7).

The ACDP, according to provincial leader Francious van Wyk, was worried about the lack of any visibly marked vehicles meant for transporting disabled voters to and from voting stations (DFA, 2006:7)..

The Independent Democrats' (ID) representative, Lawrence Thete complained that party agents of various parties were not allowed in some voting stations. Some candidates wearing party T-shirts were seen within the boundaries of certain voting stations (DFA, 2006:7).

According to Mr Carel Boshoff the Freedom Front Plus is a "niche-party not for whites but for Afrikaners" and does not aim to be a big party but would rather participate strategically in the governance of South Africa. The Freedom Front Plus therefore only has candidates in a quarter of the 174 wards in the Northern Cape. According to Boshoff the party's campaign is to target votes for proportional representation; that is with the second ballot paper (Coetzee, 2006:1).

Media

As the SABC awaited the arrival of the Northern Cape Premier, Dipuo Peters, to cast her vote at Kimberley Junior School, two members of the crew were confronted by an unidentified party agent for only giving coverage to the African National Congress (ANC) and for not giving all parties the same opportunity (DFA, 2006:5).
The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) also indicated that the party wished to lodge a complaint against the SABC radio and television broadcasting channels for excluding the party from the broadcasters' coverage of the Northern Cape Province.

The ACDP's provincial leader, Francoius van Wyk, voiced his objection by stating that the exclusion of the party from the SABC's coverage of the Northern Cape was "…an action against the Christian vote in South Africa and is totally unacceptable" (DFA, 2006:5).

On the other hand, certain media groups were out to discredit the ruling party. With or without intention the Naspers-owned *Noordkaap* weekly newspaper ran a front page article about the financial problems of the Sol Plaatje Municipality. Besides citing the 410 million rand debt, the ruling ANC allegedly reconnected certain services that was previously disconnected due to non-payment. The ANC responded by saying that the normal procedures are being followed to disconnect the services (Van der Merwe, 2006:1).

Voting Behaviour

The one concern of the IEC is that technical and weather conditions can be managed but an aspect which cannot be managed is the voting behaviour and voting apathy of voters. Dipuo Peters, Premier of the Northern Cape, and her daughter Boitumelo Peters cast their vote at Kimberley Junior School on 1 March 2006. Boitumelo Peters (18) flew to Kimberley from Cape Town where she is studying to cast her vote for the very first time. When interviewed at the school by the media she wanted to send a passionate message to the youth stating that by "…voting it means that I make a difference as part of the youth in this country. It is really important to be able to vote" (Modiba, 2006:6).
In various parts of the Greater Sol Plaatjie (Kimberley) Municipality, voter-turnout was not satisfactory. A resident from Roodepan commented that residents from this area had indicated that they were not

going to vote and that the low voter-turnout showed that they were serious (DFA, 2006:6).

In Lerato Park, Phutanang and Galeshewe, the voter turnout was also low considering the fact that thousands of people regisered to vote during the previous IEC registration drives of 1 September 2005 and 19-20 November 2005. At closing time, i.e. 7pm, an estimated 55,5% of voters had voted. This compared favourably to Gauteng which registered the lowest percentage of voters which stood at 42,3%.

Voter turnout was particularly low in Perservance, Floors and Platfontein in the Northern Cape. Justice Bekebeke, provincial IEC commissioner said that voters were expected to rush to voting stations between 5pm and 7pm. He went on to explain that several political parties lodged complaints on voter intimidation and that voters were instructed to abstain from voting (DFA, 2006: 6 and Kwon Hoo, 2006:3). It was reported in the media that just prior to the elections many residents in Kimberley did not know the identity of the candidates for their particular ward. In general, canvassing from political parties was practically non existent. Many residents said that not a single party had approached them in their canvassing for support for

the party. Residents said that a poster on a pole reveals neither who the candidate actually is nor what he could do for the community. Residents expected at least a flyer or a phone call of introduction and information. One resident took the initiative to personally inquire and seek information but this only ended in frustration because no party could be successfully contacted.

Besides the ANC, no other party was listed in the telephone directory. In contrast to these findings, Carel Boshoff from the Freedom Front Plus stated that aside from the posters, flyers had been dropped off and candidates were introduced to residents through letters placed in letter boxes and door-to-door canvassing. Neville Mompati said that the ANC focused their canvassing on areas in which they did not win. The party used brochures, door-to-door canvassing and media campaigns. George Mogorosi from AZAPO also arranged house-to-house campaigning. Flyers were distributed among voters and included information regarding ward councillors.

Farmers in the Northern Cape, when interviewed by the media, indicated that their commitment to vote during the local government election (DFA, 2006: 8). One farmer reportedly said "if you don't vote it's as good as

voting for the ruling party" (DFA, 2006: 8). Another farmer indicated that he would vote for the Democratic Alliance, but only half-heartedly, because it would take the vote away from the ANC. These sentiments revealed that the farmers support a stronger opposition in South Africa. It is also important to mention that the DFA only interviewed a few farmers in the area and these sentiments should not be generalised without further investigation. The above mentioned farmers clearly do not support the ruling party, but at the same time the opposition party cannot rest on its laurels.

The behaviour of these voters raises questions about their motivation and perceptions. A positive aspect to emerge is that the farming community in general in the Northern Cape are strongly in favour of all voters casting their votes. As far as these motivations are concerned, an interesting development seems to be unfolding. These motivations and perceptions appear to have a dual dimension and are centred around questions about the so-called 'sentimental' or 'ideological vote' on the one hand and the issue-based vote on the other. The issue-based vote is considered to be a more developed or sophisticated voting pattern. The 'sentimental' vote is emotional and linked to party

allegiance. This type of vote played a major role in the 1994 elections and has been an important factor ever since. This has been an issue for both the ruling party and also for the official opposition; the Democratic Alliance and the now disbanded New National Party. The sophisticated issue-based vote is more objective and is based on informed analysis and evaluation of the performance of a party. This means that voters become critical and can shift their allegiance easily or consciously decide not to vote. It was clearly indicated by a voter turnout of 46%.This happened on a relatively alarming scale during the 2006 elections and highlighted the voter's sensitivity to issues concerning service delivery on a local government level (iol:2006:1).

The issue-based vote, which concerns informed choices, is becoming prominent in poor communities. According to Brown and Mole (2006:5) *"...every passing local government election confirms that the politics of class is increasingly replacing race as the major determining factor in how communities understand their place in South Africa and how they vote"*.

As South Africa moves towards a more non-racial society, race as a key ideological factor in South African politics is slowly moving towards a focus on class inequality. While it can be argued that class is also ideological in nature, it can be deduced that class in this context is indicative of a stronger issue-based consciousness among voters of all sections of the population.

Within the contemporary political environment, the class-consciousness in poor communities is, for the most part a vote for the ANC, but this is not based on a residual historical loyalty, but on the record of delivery over the past 12 years (Brown and Mole, 2006:5).

At Noupoort voting station, a group of approximately 70 people carrying posters protested in response to poor service delivery. The IEC responded by alerting the police as it is illegal to influence people not to vote. The IEC pointed out another legal issue, namely that the protests had taken place outside the voting station's boundaries (Kwon Hoo, 2006:3).

The Voting Process

Justice Bekebeke, provincial head of the IEC, indicated that the Northern Cape's electoral officers, voting stations and ballot papers were ready in time for 1 March, the Election Day. Committed voting officers left at midnight on the day of the election to reach the furthest districts in the Northern Cape, such as Mata Mata and other voting districts in the Kalahari's Siyanada municipality to ensure that voting stations open on time (Coetzee, 2006:1).

Polling Stations

There are 528657 registered voters in the Northern Cape with 621 voting stations, 12 independent candidates, 13 parties and 736 ward candidates. Most of the independent candidates were previously members of other political parties (DFA, 2006:4).

A typical polling station was manned by the following IEC staff members, with the size of the staff component dependent on the size of the ward and the number of registered voters:

- A presiding officer and his/her deputy presiding officer who ensured the smooth management of a polling station;
- A queue walker was responsible for directing the traffic in the various queues leading to the polling station;
- A door controller controlled access to the polling station;
- A voters roll checker ensured that voters' names appear on the voters roll;
- An inker was responsible for inking the thumbs of those who have voted;

- A paper issuer issued ballots to the prospective voters;
- A voting-booth controller controlled access to voting booths;
- A ballot box controller ensured that ballots actually landed in the ballot boxes; and
- A statistical officer was responsible for the forwarding of all statistical information to the relevant MEO and the PEO.

All of the polling stations monitored by the authors had the above component of IEC staff or some combination of it.

Many eligible voters across age, gender, and race identities braced the inclement weather to cast their ballot. In Greenpoint, one of the oldest suburbs in Kimberley, the elderly gathered at the polling stations from the early hours some at 4:30, waiting for the polling stations to open at 7:00 so that they could cast their votes. The community in Greenpoint was determined to vote and the day was marked by long rows of people waiting to cast their ballots. Chairs were placed in front of the row for the elderly and the disabled who enjoyed the social gathering, chatting away with fellow voters about life. The disabled were forced to sit on cold cement while waiting to vote due to a lack of chairs. The

community verbalised its dissatisfaction that there were not enough chairs available to address the needs of the elderly, a clearly treasured section of this community. After waiting some time in the queue a voice announced from the row of voters that "the old gentleman needs a chair. His legs are sore" (Van der Merwe, 2006:2). In Platfontein, just outside Kimberley, most of the voters waiting in the queue were elderly. Cheeky, chirpy chickens joined the security service by patrolling the voting stations and observing the voting process.

Illiteracy was an enormous problem at some voting stations. A presiding officer at the !Xunkhesa Combined School, Jomo Jonker, in Platfontein expressed his frustrations by stating "…a lot of people did not know for which party to vote. We had to explain to each voter about all the parties that are on the ballot paper before they were able to vote" (Modiba, 2006:4). A unique service was rendered in this area by the use of a translating service for the !Xun and the Khwe communities. Mr Leonard Dixon and Oscar Cambinda patiently explained the voting process to voter's in their home language. The presiding officer spent a lot of time on voter education and Election Day due to illiteracy (Van der Merwe, 2006:2). This had all

occurred in a relaxed peaceful atmosphere with everyone joining in make the day a success.

The former Premier of the Northern Cape, Manne Dipico, patriotically voted in his hometown, Kimberley, at Vooruitsig Junior School. He was in a jovial mood and socialised with friends such as ANC candidate Rita Levin outside the voting station (Van der Merwe, 2006:1).

In Warrenton a voting station served as a gathering point as it was situated in view of the flooded bridge which serves as an entry point into the town for Hartswater. Residents were forced to take alternative routes to reach the polling station. This was a huge disruption for voters especially for those coming from the surrounding rural areas by means of donkey carts.

In Ritchie the oldest resident of the Northern Cape, Nompitizelo Makgwadibane, at age 108 was eager to exercise the right to vote and this time around the voting station will be coming to her house at 1850 Dikkop Street (Coetzee, 2006:2).

Accredited party agents and independent observers were allowed to keep an eye on proceedings and requested to make suggestions to improve on the current operation of polling stations. In most cases, IEC staff and party agents worked well together, but there was, a few reported

incidences. A number of parties laid complaints claiming that party posters were either removed, vandalised or destroyed. There were also claims that followers were threatened and their grants and subsidies taken away. Bekebeke from the IEC indicated that the only official complaint received concerned intimidation from various supporters. The IEC held talks with the political parties to make sure that voters cast their ballot without intimidating voters. Political parties were also asked to inform the police if rallies were to be held (DFA, 2006:4)

Local observers reported that on the whole, the IEC staff managed voting stations effectively and efficiently. There were, however, some reports of people casting their votes and not leaving the polling stations immediately resulting in cases where there was more than one person behind a polling-booth at a given time.

A suggestion was also made by observers to position polling booths in such a way as to ensure secrecy of the ballot. On the whole, in most parts of the Northern Cape, observers, party agents and voters were satisfied with the availability and handling of election materials.

Counting and Results

In the Northern Cape, the ANC scored a large victory as the party gained 40 seats (74,7%) in the Sol Plaatje Municipal elections in Kimberley. The DA was second with two seats which reflected an 18.53% gain for them. The ID received two seats which translated into 3,7%. AZAPO gained 1 seat at 1,35% and the ACDP 1,85%. The Freedom Front Plus scored 0,83%, the Inkatha Freedom Party 0.29%, the Federation of Democrats 3.25% and the UIF 0.25% of the vote (Kwon Hoo, 2006:2).

The following table depicts the leading parties that won seats during the 2006 local government election (DFA, 2006:3):

PARTY	SEATS WON	PARTY	SEATS WON
ANC	225	AZAPO	2
DA	52	ACDP	2
ID	38	TASK TEAM	2
UCDP	3	INDEPE-NDENTS	1

The result of the 2006 election in the Northern Cape will be discussed at greater lengths in the third issue of the *Election Update*.

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WESTERN CAPE

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Methodology

This second issue of the *Election Update* covering the Western Cape is based on the interviews conducted with, Mr Courtney Sampson, Electoral Officer of the Province [EOP] of the Western Cape, as well as various Municipal Electoral Officers (MEOs) and electoral project co-ordinators (EPCs) in the 6 electoral regions of the Western Cape. While a personal interview of about 60 minutes was conducted with the EOP, the rest of the interviewees had to respond to telephonic questions based on issues that related to: polling stations, secrecy of the ballot, the voting process, citizen participation, voting behaviour and vote counting.

A sample size of 50% was drawn from the 6 electoral regions of the Western Cape. Though every effort was made to conduct interviewees with both the Municipal Electoral Officers (MEOs) and Electoral project co-ordinators (EPCs) in the Boland Wine District and the Eden Electoral Region this was not possible. Even so, in both instances two EPCs were selected for interviewees to ensure a reasonably broad spectrum of views and opinions.

Voting patterns in the Electoral Regions

Cape Town Metropolitan Region
Of the 1,4 million registered voters, approximately 50% cast their vote. In cases where people experienced transport problems, they depended on parties for assistance to get to voting stations. This was the case in rural Durbanville, Cape Town. According to the MEO "there were no long queues in Cape Town and people thus were generally happy with the voting process ".

West Coast District
Here the MEO indicated that he "did no think that the people understood the three ballot papers. It was quite confusing. This perhaps explains why there were so many spoilt ballots, even though less than 1% of the ballots were spoilt ones. 58% of the registered voters cast

their votes. According to the MEO, "voting in local government serves a purpose", but in his view "many people do not appreciate the significance of their vote".

Boland Wine District
In the Stellenbosch area, the voters were rather indifferent to voting as only 48% of the electorate cast their vote. This is of particular concern as Stellenbosch is primarily a university town, where the youth, as elsewhere in the province appear to be rather nonchalant towards voting. Comments the EPC, "*It would appear that people can't actually see the fact that they are moving forward. The youth appear to be totally caught up in their own daily priorities. They simply can't see the bigger picture and why voting is so important for the country and its future*"

Overberg District
Here the MEO for Theewaterskloof made it quite clear that the three ballots "were quite confusing to voters. In his words: "*Voters did not understand them. Most voters were under the impression that once they have voted for one candidate it was sufficient. They simply did not see the need to cast additional two votes. I think this voting process must be simplified*".

A distinguishing feature of the voting trends in this region, according to the

MEO was that "adults were eager to vote, whereas the youth were rather indifferent". In his view, this is perhaps due to the fact that *"youth believe that their concerns, like recreational facilities and employment are not taken seriously [once Councils resume their work]"*.

In the case of Bredasdorp, according to the EPC the farm-workers were assertive about their right to vote. In his words "*this boldness to express an opinion on political rights contrasts sharply with a situation in the 1990s when farmworkers did not have the courage to express their views publicly and often were subject to the wishes of their employers. This means that in the past farmers often decided for whom their workers had to vote. This is clearly no longer the case!"*In the case of Bredasdorp, 64% of the citizens voted, amongst the highest voting polls in the Western Cape.

Eden District
People were not happy to travel up to 5km to reach he voting station. This is a problem of voting district demarcation. In comparison with voting trends elsewhere in the Western Cape, in Knysna, a young election candidate attracted of up to 60% to the total votes. In George more than 54% of the registered voters cast their vote. Comments the EPC "*In George we had*

paraffin lamps to ensure that there were no hiccups with the electricity outages and after a 29-hour working day under these circumstances, I was quite exhausted!". In the view of this EPC "citizen apathy towards voting is because of the floor-crossing. Why bother to vote when your chosen candidate can switch to another party by the mere drop of a hat!" The EPC also added that the apathy could perhaps be attributed to a lack of voter education. In her words "Eden District is simply too big for one NGO to cover. The IEC only contracted one NGO to do voter education within a very limited period!"

In the case of Bitou, the EPC comments "Here the youth were very excited to vote as a youth stood as a candidate. This excitement caused some tension. We were called to defuse the situation. Even so, what this tells me is: let the youth stand for election, and you get them involved! Here in Bitou the youth were clearly not apathetic!"

The MEO of Oudtshoorn expressed concern over the secrecy of the ballot especially in relation to the blind and illiterate. In his words *"How secret can you ballot be when the names must be read out in public and others can hear your choice? Surely this comprises the principle of secrecy of the ballot! And then there are three ballots!*

This is quite confusing to the elderly, illiterate and blind!"

According to EPC for Mossel Bay, the citizens were "*quite happy to vote as borne out by the number of people who voted; 56% of the people voted !* "

Central Karoo Region
According to the EPC of Prince Albert, people were very excited about voting. In his view, citizens were quite well informed about their choices and the voting process as a whole, thanks to the educative work of the South African Council of Churches who conducted voter education on behalf of the IEC.

The EPC indicated that their consciousness-raising motto was *"To be part of your country, you must vote! To vote, you must first register!"* In his view, this message was understood, translating into a voting poll of 72% for Prince Albert in 2006 in comparison with a voting rate of 67% in 2000!

The EPC of Beaufort West pointed out that farming communities are fairly dispersed and citizens had to travel long distances to vote. Some farms are 92 kilometres from Beaufort West. In the case of ward 6 more than 500 people had to be accommodated after 19:00 as they were within the boundary of the ballot station. In his view "*despite these problems people were*

clearly excited to vote. 57% of the citizens of Beaufort West voted!"

Political Tensions

In the Western Cape, there was an apparent shift in the voting patterns since 2000. In 2006, the ANC obtained 37,9% of the vote, the DA 41,85%, the ID 10,75% and other parties received 9,49% of the vote. In 2000, these parties obtained the following proportions: the ANC 37,7%, the DA 52,3%, the ID 1,4% and other parties obtained 8,52%.

In 2006, in Cape Town the DA won 90 seats in the 210-member council, the ANC 81 and the ID 2. Since the elections of March 2006, there has been a precarious coalition government under the executive leadership of Mayor Helen Zille. The position of the former CEO of Cape Town, Wallace Mgoqi will be decided in the Cape High Court on 09 May 2006. In the meanwhile, the tension between the ID and DA continues with MEC for Local Government and Housing of the Province of the Western Cape, apparently threatening to dissolve the current City Council in terms of Section 139 of the Constitution and to appoint an Administrator to run the City till the next elections (cf *Mail & Guardian*, 21 April to 27 April 2006, p 2).

According to the interviews conducted with the PEO, MEOs and EPCs the following conclusions are drawn with regard to polling stations, secrecy of the ballot, voting process citizen participation, voting behaviour and vote counting:

Polling Stations

It has generally been agreed that the location of polling stations plays an important role in ensuring easy access to the process. The selection of polling stations was usually based on a number of factors such as the number of voters per station, the proximity of the station to voters, adequacy of lighting and communications, transport and other logistical considerations. The election materials were accessible to disadvantaged voters such as the blind and the deaf. Polling stations were situated in venues that were accessible to most voters, especially the elderly and the people with disabilities. An adequate number of polling stations were available ensuring easier access, minimum waiting time and efficiency of the voting process.

Secrecy of the Ballot

Throughout the Western Cape, the ballot was secret This means that there were little reason for suspicion, mistrust, political violence, intimidation and fear of political retribution and victimisation voters. The voting stations were laid out in such a way that no one was able to see how voters were marking their ballot papers. There were clear procedures for the provision of necessary assistance to disabled, illiterate and elderly voters that protect, as far as possible, their right to vote secretly.

The Voting Process

Election material was procured in a transparent manner. Ballot papers were designed so they could be easily understood by voters. Ballot boxes and ballot papers were stored and delivered under strict security in order to prevent electoral fraud. According to Courtney Sampson, Provincial Electoral Officer of the Western Cape [PEO], the elections in the Province of the Western Cape went very well, even though it was only the second set of elections at local government level in terms of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, and the third since 1994.

Voting Behaviour

In some areas such as the Koue Bokkeveld, voters were totally dependent on farmers at least for two reasons.

- First, farmers have to grant politicians the right to visit their farms to campaign for the votes of farm-workers (and farmers);
- Second, being harvesting time, they

have to give their workers time to cast their vote. In the words of the PEO, "*Unfortunately there are instances where farmers do not co-operate in this regard. In these instances, since we have a good working relationship with Agri-Weskaap [the farmers' Union] we often depend on them to resolve such tension*".

The PEO indicated through the past few years a healthy relationship of trust has developed between Agri-Weskaap, the SAPS and the Independent Electoral Commission [IEC].. In the view of the PEO, MEOs and EPCs there were various factors that impact on voting behaviour of citizens, including:

- Voter education
- The co-operative and strategic role of the SAPS
- Population density in urban areas density and small geographical space
- Tension-ridden nature of political campaigning
- Lack of public debate in media
- The role of municipal field co-ordinators (MFCs)

In view of the prevailing, adverse and difficult economic circumstances of unemployment and poverty in which many citizens find themselves, very few people

volunteered their services for free to the IEC; on the contrary, they wanted to be paid for their services.

Counting

Procedures for counting were known to election officials, party agents, observers and any other authorised persons who were permitted to be present during the count.

The counting process took place in the polling stations immediately after the close of voting. To ensure that voting stations could function effectively, they had adequate lighting, communication systems and security. Counting staff had been given effective training.

When the counting process was completed the results were immediately announced and posted at the counting station. Most MEOs and EPCs worked more than 24 hours to ensure the adequate provision of ballot stations, ensuring the secrecy of the ballots, facilitating the voting process and verifying or reconciling number of votes cast.

NORTH-WEST

Professor Melville Mbao and Professor Bornwell Chikulo
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Polling Stations

It is a universally accepted fact that the geographical location of polling stations plays a critical role in facilitating easy access to the electoral process. The number of polling stations established depended on the number of registered voters in each voting district. Urban voting districts contain some 3,000 voters located within a radius of some 7.5 km of the voting station. Rural voting districts, on the other hand, accommodate some 1200 voters located within a radius of some 10km of the voting station. Each voting district is served by one station only.

To this end voters are required to register to vote at the polling station that services their voting district Voting districts have been delimited in such a way so as to minimise voter inconvenience – i.e., voters having to stand in long queues at voting stations – and to assist the IEC in electoral planning.

In the 2000 municipal elections polling stations totalled 1,026 in the province. This was increased to 1,488 polling stations in 2005. This represents an

additional 462 polling stations. Of these, 121 were temporary tent stations and 6 were mobile stations. The increase in polling stations substantially improved voter access to polling stations, and reduced the time voters needed to wait in the queues before casting their ballots.

Owing to their accessibility, most of the polling stations were situated at schools, community halls and other municipal buildings. The increase in polling stations did have some noticeable impact on queuing times. Furthermore, these elections being the third since the introduction of the new democratic dispensation, the reduction in queuing time could also be attributed to the familiarity of the electoral officials and the electorate with the voting procedure.

In the 2006 local government elections, there was no provision made for the special votes which has become a special feature of the national and provincial elections.

Secrecy of the Ballot

The credibility and legitimacy of any election rests on the secrecy of the ballot. Universally, in order to avoid mistrust, suspicion, political intimidation and fear of political retribution and victimisation, the electorate needs to be

assured that their vote will be secret.

Under the Schedule 2 of the Municipal Electoral Act, 2000, the IEC prescribes the Electoral Code of Conduct, as well as prohibited conduct that applies to municipal elections.

With specific regard to **Infringement of Secrecy,** it is stated that:
70. (1) No person may interfere with a voter's right to secrecy when casting a vote.
(2) Except as permitted in terms of this Act, no person may-
(a) disclose any information about voting or the counting of votes; or (b) open any ballot box or container sealed in terms of this Act, or break its seal. The voting stations were laid out in such a manner that no one could see how voters were marking their ballot papers. The IEC specifications were followed to the letter in all the polling stations. In general, most if not all party agents and party supporters seemed to be confident that the lay out of the polling stations ensured the secrecy of the ballot. Consequently, the IEC did not receive reports of attempts to undermine the secrecy of the ballot at any of the polling stations in the province.

Furthermore, arrangements were made for the provision of the necessary assistance to the elderly, disabled and

illiterate voters. The Municipal Electoral Act of 2000, the municipal Electoral Regulations of 2000 and the Amendment to the Municipal Electoral regulations of 2005 stipulates that:

A Voter with a physical disability (e.g. a blind voter) may request assistance from a companion in marking the ballot papers. The presiding officer can only allow this if the voter specifically requests assistance from that person and if the presiding officer is satisfied that the person giving assistance is at least 18 years old and not a party agent or candidate.

The presiding officer must remind the companion not to compromise the secrecy of the vote cast by the voter.

A voter who is unable to read
In the case of a voter who is illiterate and is unable to read and requests for assistance in voting, the presiding officer must assist the voter in the presence of the following witnesses, if available: two Party agents appointed by different parties or Candidates; and one person appointed by an accredited observer.

Where such witnesses are not available, the assistance can be rendered in their absence. The presiding officer must remind the witnesses not to compromise the secrecy of the vote cast

by the voter. The secrecy of the ballot was not questioned in the province.

The Voting Process

The effective functioning of the voting station depends on a number of key issues, most importantly that electoral material is delivered is delivered on time and the stations are opened on time at 07.00. On election day almost all stations opened promptly between 07:00 and 19:00 The IEC was generally satisfied with the voting process but acknowledged some minor logistical problems in Taung which resulted in some polling stations opening late but still managed to close on time at 19:00 - the official closing time. The explanation for this was that a main bridge connecting some polling stations from the town centre had been washed away by heavy rains. In consequence, staff and voting material had to be flown in by a SANDF helicopter.

The Voting Procedure

The voting officers have been given a critical role in ensuring that voters cast their vote in secret, freely and fairly. A simple routine was followed: voters presented their identity documents for checking against the voter's roll; the left thumb was marked with indelible ink and voters were issued ballot papers. Voters mark the ballot papers in a booth and then place the ballots in the ballot box which was placed in an open space.

All polling stations were manned by the following IEC staff members, with the staff complement depending on the size of the ward and the number of registered voters:

- A presiding officer and deputy presiding officer ensured smooth operations of a polling station.
- A queue walker was responsible for directing traffic in the various queues leading to the polling station.
- A door controller controlled access to the polling station.
- A voter's roll checker ensured that voters' names appear on the voter's roll.
- An inker was responsible for inking the thumbs of those who had voted.
- A paper issuer issued ballots to prospective voters.
- A voting booth controller controlled access to voting booths.
- A ballot box controller ensured that ballots actually landed in the ballot boxes.
- A statistical officer was responsible for forwarding of all statistical information to the relevant municipal electoral officer (MEO) and provincial electoral officer (PEO).

After voting was completed, the boxes had to be sealed in the presence of party agents and independent observers. In most polling stations party agents, observers and IEC staff worked very well together.

Vote counting Procedure

The counting of votes ("result capturing process") was decentralised to the polling stations. The presiding officer of a voting station also served as the counting officer at the start of the counting process. Once the voting was declared over, the ballot boxes were sealed ahead of counting and the venue re-arranged. All ballots were verified: the numbers of ballots issued were compared with the number of ballots counted.

Thereafter, all the ballot papers were scrutinised to ascertain whether any of them had to be rejected as spoilt ballot papers. The spoilt ballots were filed separately. The remaining papers were sorted out according to the candidate/party voted for. After the final counting, the votes were tallied and entered onto a results form and the results determined. The party agents added their signatures to the results form. After the counting, the results were announced and posted at each polling station. Thereafter, the ballot boxes and other voting materials

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were packed and sealed for transportation to the municipal electoral officer (MEO) who double captured the results on the electronic system. If the results matched, the auditor entered the auditor's code and submitted the results. The auditors' report was signed and faxed to the provincial IEC operations centre at the SABC Exhibition Hall in Mmabatho. The counting process was witnessed by party agents, observers and other authorised individuals.

Although the electoral staff was well trained, a number of mistakes and problems cropped up during the voting process, which indicated a pressing need to improve the training process. For example, at some polling stations there was a mix-up of ballot papers; some electoral officers prevented voters from casting their votes because they wore party colours; slow processing of documentation; and late starting times. This indicates that more training is required for presiding officers and voting officers on how to manage voting stations and handle voting material. Needless to point out that this incidence did not impact on the legitimacy of the elections in the province.

At all the polling stations, the voters displayed a high level of tolerance, patience and peace. To sum up, the election process went smoothly and the general atmosphere at polling stations was excellent.

Citizen Participation

Despite the anger against slow service delivery, the voter turnout for the 20006 poll was a resounding endorsement for the ANC government. From a total of 1, 554,864 registered voters in the province, 45.63 percent turned out to cast their vote. This means that more voters turned to cast their vote than during the previous municipal poll in 2000 – a 0.86 percent in voter turnout compared to the 2000 local government poll. It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the low voter turnout. One of the reasons, although figures are not yet available from the IEC, could be that youth participation was extremely low through out the education strategy seemingly concentrated on getting residents to register and turn out to vote, but neglected the aspect of imparting knowledge to the voters around the correct marking on the three ballot papers. Many people still require education on how to mark and cast their ballot papers.

Voting Behaviour

The 2006 municipal elections saw voters not only returning the ANC to power in the majority of local authorities in the province, but it also increased its popular mandate from 71.35 percent in the 2000 polls to 76.57 percent this year. Thus the ANC received the highest number of votes in the province, followed by the DA with 8.60 percent, the United Christian Democratic Party with 6.77 percent, and the Vryheidsfront Plus with1.22 percent. The independent candidates only managed to garner only1.06 percent. All the other remaining parties scored less than 1 percent of the total votes cast.

Thus, despite the widespread dissatisfaction with the rate of service delivery, and disaffection over cross-border boundaries, the ANC saw a 5.22 percent increase in voter support in the 2006 poll The electorate overwhelmingly voted for the ANC. Consequently, the ANC not only won the popular vote but also the majority of municipalities in the province. In Khutsong, the voters who did not turn up at the polling stations to cast their ballots did so consciously in order to register their anger. Consequently, the community boycotted the poll en mass in protest against being incorporated into the North West Province. The almost total boycott of the elections demonstrates that the communities have learnt to appreciate the power of the vote and used it to mobilise against unpopular government decisions. The

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boycott signals that the community, which in the previous local elections in 2000 gave the ruling party 76% of the vote, is not prepared to give the ANC a blank cheque to do as it wishes. Yet interestingly, even in the face of unprecedented anger in this traditionally ANC-dominated and voting community, the few voters who made it to the polling stations overwhelmingly voted for the ANC - due to strong party identification with ANC.

This is one instance of the demonstration of "identity politics". As *Business Day* Leader aptly observed: "*For these people, even anger against the ruling party is not enough to persuade them to cast a ballot for another organization. They would rather stay at home than switch allegiance, which points to a failure by opposition parties to make any real inroads*"("sobering victory", 6 March, 2006:10).

As noted in the first issue of the *Election Update*, all the parties including the ruling party had the same campaign theme of service delivery, corruption and turning around the performance of municipalities.The opposition parties sought to exploit the anger at the slow pace of delivery, corruption and the general mismanagement of local authorities in traditionally ANC–voting communities.

The ANC's campaign strategy of focusing on poor service delivery, the corruption of councillors and administrators and lack of capacity, occupied the space that was supposed to be the preserve of the opposition parties.

Conclusion

This report deals with the actual election phase. Every stage of this phase went fairly smoothly. The IEC, therefore, achieved its overall goal of effectively implementing a successful election. However, there are areas that still need attention. As the PEO readily acknowledged, there are many challenges that came to light during the electoral process that need urgent attention in order to ensure flawless elections in future. Amongst the many challenges is the need to improve on the training and skills levels of electoral staff manning polling station, as well as training voters on the actual voting procedures.

MPUMALANGA

Priscilla Shongwe
South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)

Polling Stations

Mpumalanga Province managed elections in 1355 voting stations. All voting stations opened on time at 07H00 in the morning. In some areas people were

already on the queue at the gates of voting stations especially in towns. Elections materials to be used on the day of the election were delivered to all voting stations by ward managers long before opening of the voting stations. Some materials were given to presiding officers a day before the elections. All polling stations had SAPS personnel to declare the voting station safe before opening of the voting station and also to assist the presiding officer when requested to do so.

Young people were not very visible during the early stages of voting. Voting stations that were in towns had tables for ANC and DA political organisations. There were party agents who assisted all people who were coming to cast their votes. The party agents came from different political organisations.

The party agents in one of the school visited by the author indicated that VF was also participating but they left shortly thereafter. The voting station comprised mainly white adults. The voting station opened on time. The number of voting stations has increased compared to 1994 elections due to new settlements in the province. In one of the wards in Kanyamazane location, there were eight officials from the IEC. The area was well marked with directional

arrows which were placed in order to indicate the direction to the entrance of the voting station. A number of people participated. Many people complained of tiredness due to standing for long hours. The voting process in this area was very slow. The election staff assisted those who could not see properly to mark their crosses. The ballot papers were not coloured. Only one police official was visible in the polling station. The situation was not conducive for elderly people. The voting station district number is 54790241.

Ward 18

Approximately eight election staff helped those voting in the area. It was easy and quick to vote since there were not many people voting. The officials gave good service and were easy to talk to. There were about three ballot booths and the voting process was conducted in secrecy. Everyone was treated with dignity, even the old people. The voting process went very well. Only one police official was visible in the area. There were 18 IEC officials assisting with the election processes and procedures. They placed arrows indicating the direction to the voting entrance. When the author visited the voting station she was informed that the other police official had gone to assist at another voting station. There were six ballot booths to ensure that a secret

ballot. The IEC staff were very polite and assisted the voters in all possible ways.

Ward 19

There were eight officials. Arrows indicating the sequence of the voting process were highly visible. Not many people came to participate in the voting process

The voting process was smooth. The IEC officials had structured the voting booths in a manner that guaranteed secrecy of the ballot. There were two police officials at this polling station.

Mpumalanga News Date 2 March 2006 reported that, section 40 of the Municipal electoral Act 27 of 2000 states, "*No party agent or candidate may within the boundary of a voting station display or distribute any billboard, poster, placard or pamphlet; wear, carry or display any clothing, headgear, footwear or other apparel in such a manner that any writing, picture or sign thereon relating to any party or candidate, other than the prescribed identification tag, is visible.*" Voters at both Laerskool Laeveld, as well as the local Fet College voting stations, voiced their concern when they saw a member of DA wearing a party T- shirt. The DA member was violating the Act, the member explained that she was a candidate and she was on the PR list. "*I am permitted to be*

here. When I walked into the hall, I covered it".

Members of the public are permitted to vote wearing anything that may or may not affiliate them with a party. However no public demonstrations are permitted within the IEC boundaries.

There was confusion over boundaries at Fet College where a member of the DA laid a formal complaint after both the DA and ANC tables were moved to the far end of the parking lot. Mr Tom Sikonela, assistant municipal electoral officer at the IEC had diffuse the situation by redrawing the boundaries, allowing both parties to move closer to the hall entrance.

Mr Sikonela described the situation as a logistical problem and reiterated the Commission's stern rule that access to voting stations should not be disturbed.

Secrecy of the Ballot

Voting booths were arranged in all of the voting stations to ensure secrecy of the ballot.. Presiding officers assisted those who took too long; if the voter asked for assistance in marking the ballot paper; or if a person claimed that he or she has spoilt the ballot paper by accident.

The Voting Process

The voting process was the same throughout. It was smooth in most areas. All

voting stations had queue walkers who were responsible for checking validity of identity documents and ensured that an individual s coming to cast his/her vote had not voted before. A voter would then proceed to the zip-zap machines, which would print out a docket as a proof that the voter had been duly registered. Efficient usage of machines assisted in the smooth running of queue Voters who required assistance were the elderly and those who could not see properly.

At St John's polling station at Msogwaba, IEC officials refused journalists entrance despite producing their media cards. The officials allegedly told them they did not allow strangers to enter the voting station. They also informed them that no photographs could be taken without their permission but a journalist defied them and took pictures.

At Msogwaba Primary school, the queue was very long but party agents indicated everything was going smoothly. At Mbokodo Primary School elderly people were furious that they were forced to wait in the long queue, while on previous occasions there were two separate lines.

An old lady said that she wanted to vote for Mr Nelson Mandela and she was prepared to vote but she did not want to vote for a councillor because they do not respect them and they are not doing anything for them.

At Msogwaba, one of the areas with a highest rate of crime in Mpumalanga, its voting stations each had one SAPS official. Captain Sikonde indicated the he was monitoring all the stations at Kanyamazane and Msogwaba, He promised that some officers would be shifted from Kanyamazane to Msogwaba to assist at the stations where there was only one police officer on duty.

Citizen Participation

People voted even though they have been described as being complacent. Concerns were raised by voters about people seen working at filling stations as well as security guards on duty at various work stations.

A certain lady who was voting for the first time was very excited about doing so, even though she had to go to another voting station. She indicated that she was voting because it is worth it and she could see the changes that her political party had been promising in its manifesto.

A domestic worker was very disappointed when she was told that she could not vote at Fet College. She was originally from Hammanskraal and she did not have a bar code that showed if she had voted before. She was very sad. Steve Ngwenya, provincial electoral officer said, "We as the IEC can only urge people to come and vote." He added that it would pose serious problems if voters seen wearing party affiliated T-shirts were transported in IEC marked vehicles.

Voting Behaviour

A happy voter at the Fet voting station described how it felt asking his mark. "*It went smoothly the people inside are friendly and it helped a lot. I do however; feel that the older people should have some seats available for them to sit, and some water. It gets humid. Its fine now, but for when it gets busy. In terms of the way things are here in Nelspruit, I give them 10/10. I'm happy. Where service delivery is concerned, everyone will battle it out with the municipality,"* he said".

A cross-section of comments follow: one person said that he hoped a lot of people would come and vote so that their councilors will be able to assist them with all challenges. Another gentleman hoped his party would win a certain ward so that development could continue as it has been. He felt that things were well organised in his voting station.

The MEC for safety and security, Ms Dina Pule was

among many who woke up early to visit voting stations around the area. She was concerned about the weather since rain was promising to come on the voting day. She indicated that she was positive about the turnout, but the rain was going to pose a challenge because some people don't have transport and have to walk to voting stations.

At LEHAWU party agents were not happy about a group of ANC members who came to the voting station wearing ANC T-shirts, whilst people were casting their votes at the local high school. The ANC members were standing outside and police officers approached them and instructed them to move away from the premises, which they did. The process went well and the party agents said no other incidents were reported.

KWAZULU-NATAL

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Election Results

The 2006 local government elections results sealed the dominance of the African National Congress (ANC) in the province. Following the ANC's ascendance to power in KwaZulu-Natal in the 2004 provincial elections it took 46.60% of the vote and 742 seats in the local government elections in the province. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), following its descent in the provincial elections, took 38.48% of the vote and 713 seats in the local government elections. The results are depicted in the table below.

Party	Ward		PR		DMA		DC		Total	
	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%
ACDP	18389	0.951	19464	1.007	-	-	8035	0.603	45888	0.882
ANC	**906349**	**46.857**	**933057**	**48.286**	**379**	**46.560**	**583566**	**43.768**	**2423351**	**46.596**
AZAPO	1978	0.102	2205	0.114	-	-	673	0.050	4856	0.093
DA	**176504**	**9.125**	**180940**	**9.364**	**-**	**-**	**80360**	**6.027**	**437804**	**8.418**
ECO	729	0.038	1156	0.060	-	-	-	-	1885	0.036
ID	5873	0.304	6862	0.355	-	-	1874	0.141	14609	0.281
IHSP	13	0.001	165	0.009	-	-	-	-	178	0.003
IFP	**687965**	**35.576**	**689300**	**35.671**	**435**	**53.440**	**623484**	**46.762**	**2001184**	**38.479**
ILP	168	0.009	-	-	-	-	-	-	168	0.003
MF	**42255**	**2.185**	**42530**	**2.201**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**84785**	**1.630**
NADECO	**28541**	**1.476**	**30477**	**1.577**	**-**	**-**	**23217**	**1.741**	**82235**	**1.581**
NUPO	1007	0.052	722	0.037	-	-	-	-	1729	0.033
PACA	2467	0.128	3196	0.165	-	-	-	-	8878	0.171
PDP	3	0.000	119	0.006	-	-	-	-	122	0.002
RLP	1544	0.080	1730	0.090	-	-	-	-	3274	0.063
SCP	1948	0.101	2047	0.106	-	-	-	-	3995	0.077
SPA	361	0.019	1127	0.058	-	-	-	-	1488	0.029
TA	4239	0.219	4193	0.217	-	-	-	-	8432	0.162
ULIRA	875	0.045	1226	0.063	-	-	-	-	2101	0.040
UCDP	264	0.014	1339	0.069	-	-	-	-	1603	0.031
UDM	4601	0.238	4838	0.250	-	-	4523	0.339	13962	0.268
UIF	440	0.023	2361	0.122	-	-	-	-	2801	0.054
VP	2669	0.138	3318	0.172	-	-	4373	0.328	10360	0.199

Of the 61 local municipalities, the ANC won 32 and the IFP 28. This was in dire contrast with the 2000 local government elections where the IFP won 51 municipalities leaving the ANC with just 10. Four local municipalities, uMhlathuze, Newcastle, Utrecht and Ndwedwe did not have a clear majority and the Amajuba district municipality was hung. The IFP also failed to gain back any of the municipalities it lost to the ANC during the 2004 floor crossing period. The ANC secured the Ugu district municipality (south coast) with 9 seats to the

IFP's 4, the Endumeni municipality (Dundee) with 6 seats to the IFP's 4, the Ubuhlebezwe municipality (Ixopo) with 16 seats to the IFP's 5 and the KwaSani municipality (Underberg) with 3 seats to the IFP's 1.The ANC also secured ward 40 comprising Kwamashu hostels a former IFP stronghold. The IFP is still however dominant in the Ezinqoloni municipality which is in the Ugu district. t is also dominant in the Uthukela district (northern Berg) and the Umzinyathi, (Greytown) Zululand, Umkhanyakude (St Lucia) and Uthungulu (Greater Richards Bay) districts. Although the IFP seems to have remained fairly dominant in its rural strongholds, having won all 24 wards in Ulundi and all 19 in Nongoma, it is clear that the ANC has consolidated the inroads it made into KwaZulu-Natal rural areas in the provincial elections.

Independent Candidates

Ward		Total	
Votes	**%**	**Votes**	**%**
45088	**2.331**	**45088**	**0.867**

Results for KwaZulu-Natal 2006 Local Government Elections Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) www.elections.org.za

The ANC also strengthened its hold on KwaZulu-Natal's Durban metropolitan eThekweni. In the 2000 local government elections, the ANC won 95 of the 200 seats in the council to the IFP's 35. In the 2006

elections, it won 117 seats to the IFP's 23.

eThekweni Seat Allocation

ACDP	3
ANC	**117**
AZAPO	1
DA	**34**
ID	2
IFP	**23**
MF	**13**
NADECO	**2**
SCP	1
TA	1
UDM	1
Independent Candidates	1

Seat Allocation for KZN

ANC	742
IFP	713
DA	124
NADECO	24
MF	19
ACDP	11
VF	3
UDM	3
ID	3
TA	2
Independent Candidates	2
Total Seats	**1835**

The IFP has attributed its poor showing in the 2006 elections to a number of factors. IFP leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi complained that the political playing field was not level. He contended that the elections were not free and fair because outsiders were bussed into Ulundi to vote, ANC officials had been found entering polling stations with filled ballot papers and IEC stamps in Zululand municipalities and IFP candidates were absent from ballot papers in Durban, Pietermartizburg and Masinga. Buthelezi added that the IEC had been unresponsive to IFP complaints. Another factor

impacting on the IFP's performance in the elections, according to Buthelezi, was the lack of funds. He claimed that the business community, formerly an ally, had deserted the IFP "I can tell you that not one business has given us money in this election." As a result the party had to "go to banks to get money for campaigning."[1] The IFP has also been faced with an internal crisis. Younger, more progressive members of the party have argued that the IFP is antiquated in its focus on the Zulu heartland and traditional ways of life. Bolder objectors have argued that the party is undemocratic in its ways and that Buthelezi is dictatorial. The IFP's poor showing in the 2006 elections prompted its critics to blame party leadership and Buthelezi in particular, for the demise of the IFP. In response to this, Buthelezi scheduled a one day national party conference in Durban on 8 April. The conference will give IFP members an opportunity to express their views on current party leadership and the election results.[2]

The IFP has also been weakened by the challenges posed to it by splinter party the National Democratic Convention (NADECO). Although NADECO secured only less than 2% of the vote, in KwaZulu-Natal it

[1] *Sunday Times*, 5 March 2006
[2] *Mercury,* 7 March 2006

won 24 seats in the province, 2 of which were in the eThekweni council and made inroads into traditional IFP strongholds such as Newcastle and Richards Bay. This resulted in NADECO being positioned to align with the ANC in five municipalities where the ANC did not gain a clear majority. NADECO leader, Ziba Jiyane articulated his party's preference to align with the ANC when he said, "*The core vision set out by NADECO coincides with the values of the ANC. The IFP is rapidly dying, we don't want to be like a Zulu maiden who takes a long time to say yes.*"[3]

Other opposition within the province included the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Minority Front (MF). The DA won 8.42% of the vote and 124 seats in KwaZulu-Natal as well as 34 seats in the eThekweni council. It effectively lost 5 wards to the ANC but blamed the council's redemarcation for this claiming that ward demarcations were made in ways that suited the ANC. Ward 24 for example originally consisted only of Pinetown and Westville areas but the council redemarcations saw the inclusion of areas with strong ANC support such as Chesterville. Likewise Cato Crest, an ANC stronghold was included into the former

DA area of Berea.[4] The DA emerged quite strongly in the Msunduzi municipality (Pietermaritzburg) winning 12 seats to the ANC's 48, the IFP's 11 and the MF's 1.

The MF won 1.63% of the vote and 19 seats in the province. It also won 13 seats in the eThekweni council. The MF won all 4 of the mainly Indian occupied wards in Phoenix and 4 of the 5 wards in Chatsworth.

The MF's main opposition in Phoenix was the DA who came in second. Its main opposition in Chatsworth however, was the ANC whose support in the area is said to have increased by 20% securing its first ward in a historically Indian area of the province.[5]

Election-Related Violence and Intimidation

Last minute campaigning by political parties in KwaZulu-Natal gave way to an eruption of violence. On the Monday preceding the elections, the ANC, represented by President Thabo Mbeki campaigned in Wembezi, Estcourt. Shortly after Mbeki had left the area a group of ANC toyi toying supporters were disrupted by a group of IFP supporters. ANC supporters, among them mayoral candidate Phiwokwakhe Sokhela, stated that 'well known' IFP

people drove up to the group she was in and nearly ran them over. An ANC ward councillor, Mbabazane Ndlovu was physically assaulted by IFP supporters but managed to escape with some neck injuries. Initial reports were that police had to use rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the crowd but this was later officially denied by the SAPS in the area.[6] The eruption of violence led to a drive by the national Minister of Safety and Security and the Kwazulu-Natal Minister of Safety and Security to ensure safe, incident free elections. The two ministers met with police chiefs and political leaders in Wembezi, the Estcourt area and Ulundi and extra contingents of police were deployed to Wembezi, Ulundi, Msinga and Nongoma.[7]

The IFP concentrated its final campaigning in Vryheid with a political rally lashing out at local government MEC, Mike Mabuyakhulu who disbanded the Abaqulusi municipality for maladministration some months ago. IFP representatives addressing the rally stated that the disbanding of the municipality was merely a political move by the ANC to prepare the municipality for an ANC takeover. IFP mayor of the Zululand district municipality, Zanele

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[3] *Sunday Tribune, 5 March 2006*

[4] *Sunday Tribune*, 5 March 2006
[5] *Sunday Tribune (Community First)*, 5 March 2006

[6] *Witness*, 27 February 2006
[7] *Mercury*, 1 March 2006

Magwaza urged the crowd to demonstrate their anger against Mabuyakhulu "through the ballot box". She added, "*The decision to disband the municipality is going to backfire because people are going to vote overwhelmingly for the IFP to show who rules here.*"[8]

The Voting Process

KwaZulu-Natal had 3,964,817 registered voters for the 2006 elections and recorded a 50.57% turnout on voting day. This was an increase from the 2000 elections where there were 3,507,849 registered voters and a 46.67% turnout.[9]

Registered Voters	Potential Votes	Votes Cast	% Turnout
3,964,817	10,498,327	5,308,650	50.57

Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)
www.elections.org.za

The KwaZulu-Natal IEC had delivered 12 million ballot papers to its 4069 polling stations well before polling opened. Its 38000 staff had also begun their polling station duties by 6am on the morning of voting day. The IEC made use of its 54 4X4's as well as SAPS vehicles to transport voting materials to voting stations inaccessible because of the rain. SAPS and SANDF

vehicles were also on standby to transport voters to voting stations should there be heavy rains and washed out bridges and roads in rural areas.

All of the voting stations were set to operate between 7am and 7pm on 1 March and were equipped with zip zip scanners to check voters' names and speed up the voting process. Voters were also advised that the offices of Home Affairs would be open should they still need to pick up their identity documents.

The province made no allowance for special voting and as a result thousands of policemen and emergency service workers as well as electoral officers were not able to vote. This sparked contention in police circles. Police spokesman Denis Adriao said that the subject was a 'touchy one' for many police officers. He added that there was an effort to deploy, as far as possible, officers to the areas in which they were registered so that they might be able to vote.[10]

Voting day in KwaZulu-Natal, for the most part, went quite smoothly. There were however some logistical problems and some political disruptions in unexpected areas. In the Bergville area voting stations opened late because electoral personnel had to wait for voting

material to be flown into areas affected by heavy rain and floods. At Mngeni (Howick) ballot papers had been delivered to the wrong stations and this effectively delayed voting. The strong police and security presence in political hotspots seemed to have successfully contained the outbreak of political violence. In Wembezi, for example, voting was carried out peacefully. A voter standing in line said, "*I am very happy that I will finally be able to vote for the government that I want without being intimidated. Violence is high in this area – if we go to another section we get beaten up, if people come to our section we beat them up – that's just how it is. Intimidation has been high here before today but because of the high police presence things have been really calm.*"[11] While other political hotspots also remained fairly calm during voting, political disruptions broke out at Mkhambathini (Camperdown). The KwaNonyavu voting station in ward 1 of Camperdown had to be closed for a few hours after it opened at 7am. The area had not been marked as a political hotspot. Disruptions broke out when a group of youths blockaded the gate and informed the queue of voters that only the IFP could vote at the polling station, they then proceeded to chase away voters whom they did not think would

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[8] *Mercury,* 1 March 2006
[9] Pottie, D, Ford, H, (eds) "*Local Government in South Africa: Elections 2000*" – e-book, Johannesburg: Electoral Institute of South Africa (EISA), 2000

[10] *Sunday Tribune*, 26 February 2006

[11] *Mercury*, 2 March 2006

vote for the IFP. The ANC who was forced to remove two of its party agents from the voting stations out of concern for their safety, has objected to the election results in Camperdown.[12] The ANC has also objected to results from some of the voting stations in Wembezi, where despite a lack of violence, they claim certain IEC officials were biased towards the IFP and 'commanded' voters to vote IFP.[13]

Voting Behaviour

Voting patterns in the province indicated that voting began slowly with only 573000 people having cast their votes by 11:30 am.[14] Slow voting fuelled concerns that voter apathy was prevalent in the province. Indeed, testimony from squatter camp and township dwellers in the province indicate that large urban constituencies do not believe that their vote counts for much. On the Monday preceding the election hundreds of squatter camp residents took the streets of Durban protesting that they would not cast their ballots as long as they had no houses, "No land, no houses, no vote". Squatters interviewed expressed anger at political campaigning within their communities, "*The ANC came on Sunday and handed out T Shirts. On*

Saturday an IFP councillor came here and gave us sweets – we only see them because of the elections."[15] Likewise interviews with residents of the township Chatsworth reveal that residents believe that beyond elections their concerns go unheard by government. This is illustrated by views that the housing department's announcement to allocate R37 million towards the upgrading of council flats in the township was merely designed to elicit election support.[16]

According to political analyst Laurence Piper, voter turnout in local government elections is generally lower than in national/provincial elections. Also, as democracy and voting become more 'normalised' voter turnout will decrease – the decline in turnout between the 1996 local elections and the 2000 local elections was about 10%, 60% in 1996 and 48% in 2000. Although there was actually an increase in voter turnout in KwaZulu-Natal between the 2000 and the 2006 elections Piper argued that voter turnout was affected in areas where there had been protests around service delivery.[17] Indeed polling stations in Durban's protest-torn ward 25 recorded low levels of voter turn out. Ward 25 includes Sydenham, Springfield and

Asherville. A polling station set up at the Hindu School to service the Jadhu Place informal settlement was empty with no queues – members of the settlement claimed that none of their 4000 members had voted and out of the 2380 registered voters at the station only 841 had voted. Likewise the eThekweni College polling station only recorded 342 people as having cast their ballots out of the 1300 voters registered.[18]

Likewise, Chatsworth recorded its lowest polling turnout ever with only 4800 voters participating in the elections out of the 17000 registered voters.[19] Areas where there was a surprisingly high voter turnout such as Richmond, a former political hotspot, where turnout was 75% may be attributable to the lower levels of violence and political intimidation.[20]

Political Appointments

Following its victory in KwaZulu-Natal, the ANC continued its drive toward gender parity within local government. Four women were appointed as mayors in the province, Zanele Hlatshwayo (Msunduzi), Bongi Sithole (uMgungundlovu), Sizakele Makhaye (Impendle) and Thobekile Maphumulo (Mkhambathini). While it

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[12] *Mercury,* 2 March 2006
[13] *Witness,* 2 March 2006
[14] *Mercury*, 2 March 2006

[15] *Witness,* 1 March 2006
[16] *Mercury,* 28 February 2006
[17] *Witness,* 1 March 2006

[18] *Mercury*, 2 March 2006
[19] *Daily News*, 2 March 2006
[20] *Daily News*, 2 March 2006

fell short of its objective of ensuring that at least half the mayors in its municipalities were women, the ANC contends that no municipality under its control lacks female senior members.

According to ANC representatives, potential violence hot spots in KwaZulu-Natal affected the fielding of female candidates. In Nongoma, women who had been approached to stand for election had declined leading to more men being appointed. In the Ntambanana municipality the ANC had only fielded male candidates – *"The situation is so bad that in the Mahlabathini area a woman who contested a ward is still being vilified and threatened with death."*[21]

The ANC has also been plagued by public protest in Umlazi (Section E) over the re-election of ANC councillor Bhekissa Elliot Xulu. About 500 angry residents marched in objection to Xulu's re-election on the grounds that he (Xulu) had the rigged the vote by distributing ballot papers in his favour. The protesters claimed that Xulu had been in office for ten years but had failed to deliver on his election promises. The protesters claimed that the ANC had imposed him as an election candidate "behind their

backs". After failing to force the ANC to start the nomination process afresh, members then chose Zamani Mthethwa to represent them as an independent candidate. Mthethewa, however, lost the elections.[22] The protest became disruptive when some protesters began burning tyres. The police were forced to intervene and opened fire shooting dead an innocent passerby. The ANC has condemned the protest calling it a "riotous demonstration".[23]

The IFP has been making waves of its own in the wake of the elections results. The Abaqulusi municipality which was taken over by the provincial administration after being dissolved for maladministration was once again secured by the IFP who won 13 out of the 20 wards in the area (as opposed to its 16 out of 20 wards in 2000). The victory was welcomed by the IFP who said, "It shows that the IFP has backbone, we have come out of turmoil". The IFP plans to restore councillors and officials who were removed after the municipality had been dissolved.[24] Likewise, Lymon Shelembe former IFP mayor of Umtshezi, who was removed from office in 2004 after 2 IFP councillors, a DA councillor and an independent candidate defected to the ANC, has

been re-installed in his former position following the IFP's victory in Estcourt. Shelembe has also been arrested on charges of attempted murder and arson and has been accused of having run the municipality like a "spaza shop". The 2004 floor crossers claimed that "the municipality was a disgrace" and that *"the IFP members crossed the floor because of the excesses of the IFP – it (the defections) was a very positive step for the town".*[25] In Ezinqoleni, three IFP councillors have been arrested and charged with the murders of newly elected ANC Ezinqoleni councillor, Zakhele Cele who was gunned down at his home along with two other ANC members soon after the elections. KwaZulu-Natal premier S'bu Ndebele called for a redeployment of all police officers at the Ezinqoleni police station for failing to protect Cele who had made an official report of death threats against him for standing as an ANC candidate in Ezinqoleni. According to Community Safety MEC, Bheki Cele the police station is in need of a 'clean up'. *"We have been told that police demand that people show party membership cards before attending to their needs"*. The IEC is in the process of scheduling a by-election in the area in order to replace

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[21] *Mercury,* 16 March 2006

[22] *Daily News***,** 6 March 2006

[23] *Daily News*, 3 March 2006

[24] *Sunday Tribune*, 5 March 2006

[25] *Sunday Tribune*, 5 March 2006

Cele who was the only ANC councillor in the region.[26]

EASTERN CAPE

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Introduction

By all accounts, the third democratic local government elections went well in terms of both its administration by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the lack of serious problems such as political violence and intimidation on polling day. Political parties that participated in the process also expressed general satisfaction.

Polling Stations

According to the provincial IEC office, all the 4 368 polling stations around the Eastern Cape were operating by 7:30 a.m. on polling day, 30 minutes after the designated time.[27] This is despite some reservations and concerns that up to 114 stations would experience slow progress due to delay in the delivery of election materials on time.[28]

Some of the problems that were experienced by the IEC included the floods that affected the Transkei area on election day. This led to the washing away of some bridges rendering some rural areas difficult to access as they had to be reached by helicopters to deliver voting materials. However, the IEC indicated that although the floods were an inconvenience, the turnout in these areas was good.[29]

Viewed against the earlier concerns by the IEC regarding the quality of services at some stations, which were considered as serious threats to conducting a seamless election, these developments bode well for the province. These fears had been expressed at a conference to address these issues, by the Provincial Electoral Office (PEO) Reverend Bongani Finca who warned that,"*Provinces like the Eastern Cape which has a lot of infrastructure and logistical problems must begin to prepare itself timeously, if the high standard required by the IEC are to be met*.[30]

One notable feature of the election was that there were 13 uncontested wards in the

province leading to the nominated candidates as automatic winners. Thus the number of ballot papers-three- that the IEC had to issue to each voter in ward election had to be reduced to two. Thankfully this did not lead to confusion as voters had been notified that they would use three ballots. Indeed, no cases were reported province wide in relation to actual issues pertaining to procedural aspects of the elections at polling booths.

The relatively peaceful, fair and free nature of the election was asserted in a statement by Reverend Finca that, " It has not happened before that 24 hours before close of the campaigning period, my party has had no inter-party conflict to deal with".[31] Thus even from the perspectives of political party conflicts, the election was regarded to have proceeded smoothly.

Other problems that were experienced during polling day occurred at Matatiele, the contested cross boundary municipality with rival candidates- both from the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal- claiming to represent the ANC and voters turning up at Willowdale only to find that they had been declared dead and could not

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[26] *Daily News*, 8 March 2006, *Mercury* 13 March 2006, *Witness* 13 March 2006
[27] Francois Rank and Dineo Matomela, ' Uneventful Bay elections good news for ANC as counting begins', *The Herald*, 3 March 2006, p.1.
[28] Ibid.

[29] Sue Blaine, 'IEC hopes to declare municipal election results within three days', http://www.bussinessday.co.za/articles/special reprots.aspx?ID=BD4A162687
[30] Daily Dispatch, ' Facilities at EC voting stations a worry –IEC', 13 November 2004, p.4.

[31] Mayibongwe Maqhina, " IEC optimistic glitches will be minimal', *Daily Dispatch*, 28 February 2006, p.2.

vote.[32] The other reported case of problems occurred at Butterworth and its surrounding villages where the IEC experienced malfunctioning scanners, incorrect voters rolling being sent to voting stations and some voters turning up at stations where they had not registered and thus being ineligible to vote.

Voting Behaviour and Citizen Participation.

Media reports indicated that voting day experienced a slow trickle of voters as polling booths opened, but this increased as the day wore on and reached a maximum in the early evening when the cut off time of 7:00 pm. approached.

Some incidents of misbehaviour by voters were the result of this practice of large numbers only turning up to vote towards closing time- although polling day had been declared a national holiday- leading to serious congestion. For example, in the Amathole District irate voters who arrived late stormed a voting station bringing the voting process to a halt. The matter was only resolved after the police intervened and negotiators of various political parties agreed that all those who were present around the

precincts of the station be allowed to vote.[33]

The Eastern Cape Province registered the highest turnout of voters- 56 percent; 8 percent over the national average of 48 percent[34]. This was despite the background of service delivery protests that had rocked the province especially in the coastal areas of Port Elizabeth and East London in 2005. Indeed, the Nelson Mandela Metro in Port Elizabeth registered a high turnout of 65 percent.[35] This had been predicted in pre-elections surveys that noted that although Eastern Cape voters were dissatisfied with service delivery and were prepared to engage in protests they were equally determined to turning up to vote on election day.[36]

However, although the process was largely peaceful indicating a free and fair election there were still pockets of concerning behaviour from voters. There were, for example, reported cases of friction between supporters of independent candidates that had broken from the ANC and the

latter's supporters at Fort Beaufort, although this incident did not degenerate into physical violence. In terms of formal complaints, the IEC reported having just received only two such cases of intimidation lodged by the ANC and DA against each other.

In King Williams Town, the situation was reportedly marred by an incident in which the Deputy Minister of Defence and ANC Chairperson of the Amathole Region apparently refused to identify themselves to IEC officials at a voting station, although the incident was eventually amicably resolved.[37]

A security scare was also experienced in Grahamstown when, several police officials assigned to voting polls suffered from food poisoning allegedly contracted from eating the food packs that had been distributed by the provincial office in King Williams Town.[38] This was coupled with complaints from Port Elizabeth police officers who were deployed to the Transkei area, over amongst others, transport arrangements and low subsistence allowances, factors that were compounded by the fact that they were not allowed to

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[32] Daily Dispatch Reporters, http://www. co.za. Dispatch.co.za/2006/03/01/ Eastern Cape

[33] http: www.dispatch.co.za/2006/03/03/E astern Cape.
[34] Grocotts Mail Reporter, ' Looking back on election day', *Groccots Mail*, 7 March 2006, p.2.
[35] http://www.theherald.co.za/herald/ 2006/03/03/news.
[36] Susan Booysen, ' East Cape voters use both ballot and brick', *Weekend Post,* 26 February 2006, p.9.

[37] http://www.dispacth.co.za/2006/03 /02/Eastern Cape.
[38] Mzimazi Gcukana, 'Election police poisoned', *Grocotts Mail*, 7 March 2006, p.1.

vote as they would not be in their localities as stipulated under the Municipal Electoral Act.[39] This came after the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POCRU) had failed in its court application that special arrangements should be made for such officers.

There was also a demonstration by about 500 voters in Matatiele on the eve of the election involving a march to the local municipal office to demand that the council intervene in the dispute between them and the national government over incorporation into the Eastern Cape. This peace protest march had been triggered by the Constitutional Court's rejection of an appeal brought by the community to post-pone the election in the area.[40]

The other problem that had an impact on voter participation in the province was related to the unavailability of ID documents, a stipulation that is mandatory before voters can cast their vote. Accurate figures are not available of how many voters were affected by this development, but the most worrying aspect of this issue was that poor voters who had

taken loans from moneylenders were unable to vote because as a form of security these agents withhold ID's.

For example, this illegal practice was highlighted as quite significant in the Grahamstown area, to the extent that the Rhodes University Law clinic offered to assist voters in such situations.

Conclusion

The electoral process in the Eastern Cape proceeded fairly well, despite some of the problems that were experienced on polling day. These were relatively insignificant considering the problems which occurred in other areas of the country. This is particularly so with respect to the relatively high turnout of voters, especially in those areas that experienced protests in the run up to the election.

GAUTENG

Sydney Letsholo and Themba Nkwinika
EISA

Polling Stations

Polling stations play a crucial role in facilitating a smooth electoral process. The decision on the number and location of polling stations is usually based on a number of factors such as the number of voters per station, the proximity of the station

to voters, adequacy of lighting and communications, transport and other logistical considerations (PEMMO).

The Gauteng province was divided into 2172 voting districts with the three metropolitan councils i.e. City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Tshwane sharing 1 730 voting districts amongst them. This arrangement was informed primarily by the size and population density in these metropolitan councils. The IEC used mainly public infrastructure such as schools and community halls as polling stations. In areas where such infrastructure did not exist, temporary structures were created in the form of tents as polling stations.

According to IEC officials, who were interviewed, all polling stations in Khutsong were temporary structures because the schools that had agreed to serve as polling stations reneged on their commitment fearing possibilities of being burnt down by angry protesters. Moreover, some IEC officials in the area withdrew at the eleventh hour citing safety reasons.

Consequently, the IEC had to recruit and train new people at short notice. The Table that follows provides an outline of the voting districts in Gauteng during the 2006 municipal elections.

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http://www.therald.co.za/herald/2006/03/01/new.
40

http://www.dispatch.co.za/2006/01/01/Easterncape/bmatatiele.html

Available information suggests that almost all polling stations were opened at 07h00 and closed 19h00 and had all the necessary logistical requirements (such as voters roll, correct ballot papers, ink) etc to enable voting in conformity with the legal requirements.

In very few instances where polling stations did not open on time, it was either due to communication problems or delays in the delivery of some of the election material. By 9h00 all stations were operational and it was all systems go. In instances where the stations operated beyond 19h00, it was mainly due to delayed voting by some voters (mostly young) who had waited for the last minute in order to avoid long queues. Thus, officials extended voting time to allow them to vote.

With the support of security personnel, the IEC managed to keep polling stations at a level conducive for voters to cast their votes freely throughout the Gauteng province. This includes areas such as Khutsong and Mabopane where there were threats of violence on the Election Day.

Secrecy of the Ballot

The secrecy of the ballot is one of the great pillars on which free and fair, credible and legitimate elections rest[41]. The positioning of

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[41] PEMMO

ballot booths is one way of ensuring this secrecy. There There were no reports of situations where the secrecy of the ballot was compromised in the province.

Municipality	Wards	Voting Districts	Registered Voters
EKU- Ekurhuleni (East Rand)	88	525	1240348
JHB- City of Johannesburg	109	727	1739292
TSH- Tshwane Metro (Pretoria)	76	478	1064759
DC46- Metsweding	-	-	-
GT02b2- Kungwini (Bronkhorstspruit)	14	57	50854
GT02b1- Nokeng tsa Taemane (Cullinan)	6	25	26723
DC48- West Rand	-	-	-
GT481- Mogale City (Krugersdorp)	32	82	148503
GT482- Randfontein	19	35	66415
GT483- Westonaria	15	26	48255
GTDMA48- West Rand (Sterkfontein DMA)	-	3	3110
DC42- Sedibeng	-	-	-
GT421- Emfuleni (Vereeniging)	43	152	319623
GT422- Midvaal (Meyerton)	10	29	38552
GT423- Lesedi (Heidelberg)	11	33	39521
Total	**423**	**2172**	**4785955**

Even in instances where electoral officials had to assist illiterate voters, there were no substantial reports made on the secrecy of the ballot being compromised when such assistance was provided. This is mainly because voters went to the polling stations knowing well who their candidates were and all that was necessary for the officials was to assist them in finding their candidates on the ballot paper and in making their

choice. This process would involve only the voter and one electoral official assisting that particular voter.

Party agents were present to ensure that voting took place in conditions conducive to the secrecy of the ballot.

The Voting Process

For one to participate in the 2006 local government elections, a green bar-coded identity document or a temporary identity certificate (TIC) was required. As is the norm with previous elections, physically disabled voters were given preferential treatment on Election Day. For this to happen, Presiding Officers were at hand to assist the disabled and voters who could not read. Party agents were also present to vigilantly monitor the voting process to ensure that voters were given the necessary support when they arrived at polling stations.

According to the IEC official interviewed, there were isolated instances where voter's names did not appear in the voters' roll. This phenomenon was highly prevalent in areas which were affected by the delimitation process and voters did not make an effort to verify their names on the voters' roll during the registration phase.

In some instances voters went to wrong polling

stations due to their simple assumption that because they have voted before, their names would be in the voters' roll. Such a manifestation signals lack of awareness amongst certain sections of the voting community around municipal electoral processes.

As in other provinces throughout South Africa, voters in Gauteng followed the following procedure:

- ID book/TIC was checked and name marked off on the voters' roll.
- Thumb nail was marked with visible indelible ink.
- Voters were issued with either two or three ballot papers of various colours – the number of ballot papers depended on what type of municipality voters lived in. voters in the three metropolitan councils were issued with two ballot papers whilst their counterparts in the other voting stations were issued with three ballot papers.
- Voters marked these ballot papers in secret; and
- Voters put the marked and folded ballot papers in the ballot box[42].

Voters in Gauteng largely followed the above processes diligently, where voters had difficulties, IEC officials

were always at hand to provide assistance. According to the IEC reports Gauteng had the second lowest record of spoilt ballots recorded at 1.9 % following the Western Cape province that had only 1.5 %.

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation in an election is mainly measured through the actual number of eligible voters who cast their vote on Election Day. In the case of local government elections, voters are expected to vote for an individual as a ward representative and a political party for proportional representation purposes. Proportional Representation (PR) seats are allocated so as to correct over or under representation of parties into the votes they have received. Thus, the percentage of seats won in total is roughly equal to the proportion of votes won.

Statistics produced by the IEC in preparation for the 2006 local government elections suggest that Gauteng had a total number of 10,310,356 potential voters. The province went into the elections with a total number of 4,785,955 registered voters and only 4,379,383 leaving voter turnout at 42.48 %. The voter turnout was consistent with the previous local government elections which averaged 43%. The IEC could not meet their target of

a 2% increase in voter turnout.

Worth noting is citizen participation in Khotsong. Residents in this area were fresh from a failed court interdict to have elections postponed in their area until the demarcation dispute was resolved. It was anticipated that an election would not take place in Khotsong given the boiling tempers amongst residents andshould it paticipate, it would be engulfed in violence, intimidation and high levels of security force intervention.

On the contrary, a large percentage of residents decided to participate in the election by not casting their votes and rather engage in sporting activities next to the polling stations; an act viewed by some commentators as a way of expressing anger, monitoring residents who defied the call not to vote by protesters etc. At the end, Khutsong went into the IEC records as an area with the lowest voter turnout reported at only 300 votes cast. Such a turnout raises questions around the legitimacy of the elected councillors.

The total number of votes attained by parties contesting elections throughout Gauteng follows in the table below.

On Sat, 04 Mar 2006, iafrica.com posted an article titled: GAUTENG ANC

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[42] http://www.elections.org.za

takes all but one council. The African National Congress had a resounding overall win in Gauteng in the local government elections, conceding only one council to another party. Midvaal (Meyerton) was won by the Democratic Alliance. Voter turnout in the province was 42.48 percent with the highest in Midvaal, where 56.53 percent of voters cast their ballots. In the Sedibeng District Council the ANC won a 72.11 percent majority, claiming 12 of the seats. The Pan Africanist Congress won one seat and the DA four.

The ANC also claimed an easy victory in the Metsweding District Council with four seats and 69.26 percent of the vote. The Freedom Front Plus (FF+) and the DA got one seat each. In the West Rand District Council the ANC won ten seats with 65.34 percent of the vote. The DA won four seats and the Independent Democrats (ID) one.

The ANC won 108 seats in the Ekurhuleni Metro, the last of the Gauteng voting districts to finish counting and auditing their ballots. The party won 61.34 percent of the votes. The DA won 45 seats, the IFP five. Three seats went to the Displacees Ratepayers Association. Three also went to the PAC, with the ACDP and FF+ getting two seats each. The UDM, Independent Ratepayers of SA, Daveyton Community Peace Committee, Azapo and Simunye in Christ Party captured each one seat.

In Nokeng tsa Taemane (Cullinan) the ANC won seven of the seats with 61.61 percent of the votes. The DA captured three seats, while the FF+ and ACDP won one seat each. Nineteen seats went to the ANC in the Kungwini Municipality (Bronkhorstspruit) where the party captured 71.91 percent of the votes. Five seats went to the DA and one each to the FF+, ACDP and PAC.

Party Name	Ward Valid Votes	PR Valid Votes	DMA DC 60% Valid Votes	DC40% Valid Votes	Valid Votes	Total %
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE-AFRIKANER CHRISTEN ALLIANSIE	1057	1951			3008	0.07
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY	22928	24545		4071	51544	1.20
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	1223375	1232979	992	233652	2690998	62.47
AFRICAN RENAISSANCE CIVIC MOVEMENT	995	1200			2195	0.05
ASCORA	625	1017			1642	0.04
AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION	8510	8270		1762	18542	0.43
BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS FORUM	182	451			633	0.01
BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION	441	477		522	1440	0.03
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY	4712	4121			8833	0.21
CHRISTIAN FRONT	1621	1296			2917	0.07
DAVEYTON COMMUNITY PEACE COMMITTEE	1759	1976			3735	0.09
DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE/DEMOKRATIESE ALLIANSIE	531502	529878	174	75205	1136759	26.39
DISPLACEES RATE-PAYERS ASSOCIATION	8814	7472			16286	0.38
ECONOMIC FREEDOM MOVEMENT	113	437			550	0.01
FEDERAL ALLIANCE	1295	1497			2792	0.06
GEMINI	538	625			1163	0.03
INDEPENDENT	31150				31150	0.72
INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS	26292	27054	7	4686	58039	1.35
INDEPENDENT RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION OF SA	2973	1831			4804	0.11
INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY	41088	42555		1857	85500	1.98
KHAYALAMI RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION	828	894			1722	0.04
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION	2444	3956			6400	0.15
OPERATION KHANYISA MOVEMENT	1173	3132			4305	0.10
PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA	24570	23259		5986	53815	1.25
PEOPLE'S FORUM	299	287			586	0.01
REGTE PARTY/RIGHT PARTY	45	689			734	0.02
SIMUNYE IN CHRIST ORGANISATION	934	1873			2807	0.07
SMALL-FARM RESIDENT ASSOCIATION	98				98	0.00
SOSHANGUVE CIVIC ASSOCIATION	975	1068			2043	0.05
SUNRISE PARK, PROTEA CITY AND GREENSIDE RES ASSOC	469				469	0.01
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF AZANIA	270	784		463	1517	0.04
THEMBISA CONCERNED RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION	475	1102			1577	0.04
TSHWARANANG CIVIC ORGANISATION	863	861			1724	0.04
UMHLABA UHLANGENE PEOPLE'S UNITED NATIONS	213	364			577	0.01
UNITED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY	2812	3294			6106	0.14
UNITED COMMUNITY INDEPENDENT PARTY	681				681	0.02
UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	5924	9842		492	16258	0.38
UNITED INDEPENDENT FRONT	1730	3161			4891	0.11
VRYHEIDSFRONT PLUS	35259	36155	22	7700	79136	1.84
Total Votes	**1990032**	**1980353**	**1195**	**336396**	**4307976**	**100.00**

Emfuleni (Vereeniging) saw the ANC winning 76.37 percent of the vote, claiming 65 seats. Fifteen went to the DA, three to the PAC and one each to the FF+ and the ID. Midvaal (Meyerton) was won by the DA with 55.7 percent of the votes, capturing 11 seats. The ANC had to be satisfied with only eight seats. In Lesedi (Heidelberg), the ANC had a resounding victory, capturing 70.38 percent of the votes and winning 15 seats. The DA won four seats, with the FF+ and ID winning one seat each. The ruling party won 42 seats in Mogale City (Krugersdorp) capturing 64.91 percent of the vote. The DA won 16 seats and the FF+ two. The ID, IFP, ACDP and Azapo won one seat each.

In Randfontein the ANC won 61.33 percent of the vote, claiming 23 seats. The DA came in second with 11 seats. The ID, FF+ and PAC got one seat each. Twenty-two seats went to the ruling party in Westonaria where 72.68 percent votes went their way. The DA captured three seats. Azapo, the IFP, Black People's Convention and the ID received one seat each. In the City of Johannesburg the ANC won 136 of the seats with 62.29 percent of the vote. The DA got 59 seats, the IFP seven, the ID four and the ACDP and PAC two each. One seat went to an independent candidate. The FF+, UDM, AZAPO, Operation

Khanyisa and the Christian Democratic Party also captured one seat each in Johannesburg.

The ANC also captured the Tshwane Metro (Pretoria) with 56.27 percent votes, getting 87 seats. The DA captured 47 seats, the FF+ seven and the ACDP three. The PAC received two seats. The ID, United Christian Democratic Party, African Christian Alliance, IFP, AZAPO and National Democratic Convention all captured one seat each in Pretoria. The ANC's overall support in Gauteng was 62.45 percent with the DA's on 26.39 percent.

The table above depicts the number of votes that different political parties received at ward and PR level. As depicted in the table above, the ANC received 60% of the overall provincial votes, tightening its grip over local governance in Gauteng. Worth of note is the sharp difference between the number of votes that each party received at ward and proportional representation. It would appear that most parties, the ANC included, did well and secured more votes at a PR than ward level. On the other hand, the DA and few other grass roots formations garnered more votes at a ward than PR level. Such a trend suggested an interesting, maybe dialectical, pattern in behaviour of voters. Parties

such as the ANC and the DA would forward ward and PR candidates in all voting district. Such an outcome suggests that some parties approached the elections with strong ward candidates but with weak local and regional political structures. In an event that a candidate in a particular ward is from a given political party, it can be reasonably expected that people who vote for that ward candidate will also vote for the party that s/he comes from at a PR level. For example, people who vote for the ANC (PR) in **ward 1** would also vote for its ward candidate in **ward 1**. The above table suggests a different trend whereby voters may have voted for a one party ward level and another at PR level. Another unlikely view could be that voters could have only voted for PR and not ward representative and vise versa.

Another trend worth observing when considering the 2006 local government elections are independent candidates. The 2006 elections was marked by a sharp increase in the number of independent candidates standing out of disgruntlement with the constituencies that they represented, with the previous councillors or political parties that they belonged to as well as individual political ambition.

Gauteng was one of the provinces that had a high

number of independent candidates. Whilst the table above suggests that quite a number of votes went to independent candidates, it does not translate into an increase in the number of wards won by independent candidates. The table below presents the performance of ward candidates with the highest number of voting population i.e. City of Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and the City of Johannesburg,

Metropolitan Council	Valid votes	% Votes	Ward Seats	PR Seats	Total Seats	% Seats
Tshwane	7 260	0.84	0	1	1	0.66
Ekurhuleni	10 235	0.98	0	2	2	1.14
Jo'burg	13 883	1.00	1	0	1	0.46

FREE STATE

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The Preparedness of the Electoral Management Body

Despite the 50 million ballot papers needed for the 21 million South Africans who registered to cast their ballots in 4000 wards requiring different ballots for each area and the 180 000 people needed to manage the 18 873 voting stations, the IEC needs to ensure that voter education is conducted, candidates are registered, security and conflict management systems are in place, and that parties have signed the Code of Conduct as well as the planning and implementation of all logistical arrangements (Naidu, 2006:5). In the words of Mr Mepha, Chief Electoral Officer for the Free State, "*once more, we commit ourselves to delivering credible and unquestionable free and fair elections*" (As quoted in Mepha 2006:30).

On promulgation of the election dated in the *Government Gazette*, the election timetable is published by the IEC which provides the legislative framework within which certain electoral processes must take place (Bulletin 2006:1). After the national elections of 14 April 2004, the IEC went into the election mode which includes the following:

- Re-evaluation of all voting districts and facilities which resulted in the creation of 1186 Voting Districts (VDs) which represented a 10% increase in relation to the 2004 elections (Mepha 2006:29).
- The increase in VDs was necessitated in order to reduce long queues and distances especially in informal settlements, townships and rural areas. The threshold for a VD is 3000 (Interview with Mr Mepha, 19 April 2006).
- More than 4 200 different ballot papers had to be printed (Versluis 2006:11).

Voter Education

The IEC launched a huge voter education campaign in November 2005. This multi-levelled communications campaign using leaflets, posters, print advertising, billboards and electronic media was aimed at the registration process and attempted to address voter apathy. It is important for voters to vote as it is only through exercising their vote that they are able to make a difference and bring about change (Sauer 2006:1).

The mass voter education campaign by the IEC included aspects which focused on the following aspects, *viz.* the requirements and importance of registering; the requirements and importance of voting; when to register and when to vote as well as balloting education which educated people on where to vote and how to vote. The target population was the youth and the rural communities. The IEC in the Free State made use of 20 municipal field co-ordinators and 155 field

workers (Mepha 2006:22-23).

Voter Registration

The municipal section of the National Common Voters Roll consists of the segments of the VDs of the municipality and the segment of the Voters Roll published on the day of the calling of elections, must be the one that will be used for that election. It is the task of the Chief Electoral Officer to certify the segment of the voters roll as well as making such segment available for inspection (Mepha 2006:19-20).

The IEC in the Free State made use of 15 597 voting staff and 3 558 registration staff for the 2006 elections. Furthermore, the IEC made use of 25 trainers to train the 3 558 registration staff (Mepha 2006: 15-17). The election officials were deployed to 1 186 polling stations in 300 voting districts (Sauer 2006:1). In the 2000 elections, 1 225 620 voters had voted at 1 061 voting stations. With the closure of the voters' roll on 6 January 2006, there were 1 318 408 registered voters (Sauer 2006:1).

Registration of Candidates

There are 3 015 candidates, that is 1 426 ward candidates and 1 589 proportional representation candidates.

MUNICIPALITY	VOTERS ROLL ELECTION 2004	VOTERS ROLL ELECTION 2005	DECREASE/INCREASE
Letsemeng	16,341	16,595	+254
Kopanong	23,399	23,898	+499
Mohokare	15,959	16,530	+571
Naledi	12,492	12,736	+244
Mangaung	345,371	345,103	-268
Mantsopa	26,121	25,905	-216
Masilonyana	32,417	32,102	-315
Tokologo	13,345	12,302	-43
Tswelopele	22,232	22,430	+198
Matjhabeng	203,583	201,715	-1868
Nala	39,722	40,251	+529
Setsoto	54,986	55,789	+803
Dihlabeng	61,386	61,923	+537
Nketoana	29,321	29,289	-32
Maluti a phofung	168,592	169,141	+549
Phumelela	23,524	23,414	-110
Mpqhaka	83,616	82,609	-1,007
Ngwathe	62,702	63,112	+140
Metsimaholo	59,977	62,293	+2,316
Mafube	29,956	27,064	+108
Golden Gate DMA	153	149	-4
TOTALS	**1,321,195**	**1,324,351**	**+3,156**

(Mepha 2006:11-13)

These have qualified to contest the 2006 local government elections in the Free State (FS IEC 2006a:1).

After the 2000 Local Government elections in the Free State, the overall Council Composition was as follows:

Party Name	No. of Municipalities won	Total No. of seats won	Total No. of valid votes for a party	% Support
ANC	20	417	1272440	72,11
Other			492261	27,89
TOTAL			**1764701**	**100**

IEC Local Government Elections 2000:1

Electoral statistics for the Free State Cape supplied by the IEC indicate the following:

Total number of candidates	3015
Total number of Independents	16
Total number of ward candidates	1426
Total number of PR list candidates	1589
Number of registered parties	18

(FS-IEC 2006a:1)

There are 18 organisations contesting the 2006 Elections in the Free State namely: *ACDP, ANC, AZAPO, BELASTINBETALINGSVERENIGING VAN PARYS, BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS FORUM, DA, INDEPENDENT CIVIC ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA, ID, IFP, NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION, PAC, PHUMELELA RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION, THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF AZANIA, UCDP, UDM, UIF, FF-Plus,* (FS-IEC 2006b:1).

As political parties geared-up for a place in the race for control over local government the political environment was filled with anticipation, excitement, and confidence as election campaigning drew to a close.

Campaigning

In both the Northern Cape and the Free State the ANC decree of support remained at the discretion of the voters. The results of the previous election in 2000 indicated a 72% support base in the Free State and a 65% support in the Northern Cape. Further, this support will be maintained or increased during the 2006 local government elections, a

decision to be taken by the electorate. Another question is if the opposition, especially parties such as the DA, would be able to profit from disgruntled voters protesting against poor service delivery and corruption. The competition over the same slice of the election cake among opposition parties is also a point of interest. In the Free State the opposition parties already have seats in the legislature and as such the ACDP, DA and FF Plus are of special interest to voters and analysts alike. (Coetzee, 2006:1).

Mr Casper Nordier, provincial leader of the ACDP, is carefully optimistic about the results. Nordier was especially optimistic about electoral success in Bethlehem, Ladybrand, Kroonstad, Koffiefontein and Oppermansgronde. Nordier stated that voters will not change and that electoral illiteracy is an aspect of concern (Coetzee, 2006:1).

Mr Mahlamela Ralebesa, who heads the mayoral candidate's proportional list said that the ANC was positive of a successful outcome for the party during this upcoming local government election. Mr Andries Botha, provincial leader of the DA is of the opinion that the DA can gain up to 25% of the ANC support during this election. Botha also regards voter's supporting the opposition as

concerned about the FF Plus and the ACDP dividing the opposition. The provincial leader of the DA said the Freedom Front could gain some support in Bloemfontein but could be in for a difficult fight in the rural areas. Botha stated that the ACDP is challenged by the fact some that voters would like to separate religion (the church) and politics, a union which forms the foundation of the party. The Democratic Alliance (DA) welcomed Inus Aucamp, the former New National Party (NNP) to the DA during a local government campaign (Internet, 2006…Former NNP leader and Coetzee, 2006:1).

Mr Abrie Oosthuizen, provincial leader of the Freedom Front was positive about electoral results in favour of the party in areas such as Bloemfontein, Bethlehem, Kroonstat, Bothaville, the Goldfields and Sasolburg which would also be dependent on voter turnout. Oosthuizen challenged

Andies Botha's views regarding the division of the opposition and that in his view supporters of the opposition would not be taken in by the DA's election slogan, advising voters not to divide the opposition. The tension between the Freedom Front Plus and the DA became apparent when Mr Oosthuizen commented to the media that if the DA is

concerned about dividing the opposition the "party (DA) would stay away from the wards which the FF Plus took from the DA because participation in these wards would, by implication, divide the opposition" (Coetzee, 2006:1).

The Dikwankwetla Party of South Africa (DPSA) is a smaller party with some influence in the Eastern Free State. The DPSA was formed in 1974 and was the ruling party in the then Qwa Qwa homeland. The party is lead by Moetapele Lebesa. The party has ten councillors in Maluti-a-Phofung and three in Thabo Mofutsanyana. The DPSA is also the official opposition in two district municipalities. The party has altogether 153 candidates in the above mentioned district municipalities and also in all the 45 wards of Mangaung. The DPSA's campaign slogan has been structured around corruption and efficient local government. The aim of the party is to someday obtain a position in the Free State Legislature (Coetzee, 2006:4).

Twelve years after the introduction of South Africa's new dispensation, each election provides a glimpse into the past and the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) still puts up posters to advise people not to go and vote. This was the case just prior to the 2006 local government elections in the Free State. One of these placards or posters reads as follows:
BLACK GOVERNMENT = FAILED. CHOOSE RIGHT. STAY AWAY!

Mr Jan van der Merwe, an ANC candidate and member of the ANC's provincial management stated that posters of this nature are "clearly racist and borders on hate speech" (Fourie, 2006:1). Mr Andries Botha, leader of the DA in the Free State also condemned the poster and said that he felt that the HNP's actions were irresponsible. Mr Abrie Oosthuizen, leader of the Freedom Front Plus in the Free State, stated that posters of this nature will have no effect on the 2006 election.

Mr Herman Toerien, from the ACDP, stated that the absolute racist approach or tone of the poster was a cause for concern. Mr Piet Oosthuizen, one of the three deputy chairpersons of the HNP responded that the party regards the present government as "illegal because F.W. de Klerk never held a referendum as promised to allow the people to express their views about the changes to the constitution". This viewpoint has received opposition from the ANC and other opposition parties alike in the Free State (Fourie, 2006:1).

Elections are often thought of as the heart of the democratic process and can be regarded as being nothing less than democracy in practice – the process through which ordinary citizens can exercise an influence on how they are governed.

Voting Process

The voting process for the 2006 local government elections went ahead quite smoothly as the Independent Electoral Commission had guidelines on what to do and what not to do at the polling stations. According to the IEC, "the voting process has proceeded smoothly throughout the country" (IOL 2006a:1).

The only major problem experienced in the Free State took place at the Mohokare Municipality (Zastron, Rouxville & Smithfield) where ballot papers had been swapped from one town to the other (IOL 2006b: 2). ANC party agent Mxolisi Dukwane was of the opinion that the elections had taken place in a good spirit and "the turn out was not necessarily positive in many areas. People waited until the last minute to vote" (IOL 2006b:1). Voting took place between 7h00 and 19h00 at the voting station where one had registered as a voter with ones name appearing on the voters roll (*The Star*, 28 February 2006:6). Some stations in Bloemfontein had remained open after the deadline but everyone who

joined the queue before the 19h00 deadline would be allowed to vote, as the IEC could allow people to vote until midnight (IOL 2006a:1).

The number of ballot papers that a voter received, depends on the type of municipality in which the voter resided (*The Star*, 28 February 2006:6). According to the Free State Electoral Officer Mr Chris Mepha, the figures for the voter registration was much higher than the voter turnout and could be ascribed to the following two main reasons: First, people are not interested in local government and secondly, people are unhappy about the lack of service delivery (Interview with Mr Mepha 19 April 2006). According to the ANC's Mr Dukwane, there was still a need for voter education emphasising the importance of voting; "*They need to understand that voting is a right and gives them power and that if they stay away it is not good for democracy*" (IOL 2006c:1). ACDP leader Mr Casper Nortier was unhappy about the low turnout saying that "*it is as if people are disillusioned and all parties should be worried*" (IOL 2006c:1).

Polling Stations

The freeness and fairness of elections are further guaranteed by the presence of observers at the polling

stations. These observers can take the form of party agents and each party may be represented by two political party agents who have been accredited by the IEC and are expected to observe the election and the counting procedure. At the end of the counting procedure, they sign the results slip before the results of the election in their polling station are announced. Observers observe the elections impartially and independently of any registered party or candidate contesting the poll (*The Star*, 28 February 2006:6).Polling stations in Mangaung, Malulti-a-Phofung, Matjhabeng, Nala and Phumelela stayed open after 19h00 as a result of long queues (IOL 2006c:1). There were 1186 polling stations in the Free State Province (Interview with Mr Mepha 19 April 2006).

Secrecy of the Ballot

The secrecy of the ballot is guaranteed through the signing of a MEC2 Form in this regard by all the voting staff working at the voting station during the elections. A person who has not completed this form will not be allowed to work at a voting and/or counting station. After the close of voting, the presiding officer must complete the MEC11 Form before the counting process can begin. In terms of the first section of this form, the presiding officer

must indicate the total ballot boxes received; total ballot boxes used; and total unused ballot boxes. The second part of the form is used to indicate the total ballot papers received; the total ballot papers issued; the total ballot papers not issued; and the total ballot papers cancelled (IEC Municipal Elections Forms, 2000:4-8).

No problem was experienced at any polling station in the Free State regarding the secrecy of the ballot. However, when it came to the voting by blind voters, one had to rely on the trust of the person bringing the blind person to the polling station as not all blind people were able to read Braille. When accompanied by a minor, the blind person was assisted by the Presiding Officer and Party Agent in the polling booth in order to ensure that the correct ballot box was crossed (Interview with Mr Mepha 19 April 2006).

Security at the Voting Station

Police and the army were on standby during the elections. Police were ready for any eventuality regarding the local government elections. The Free State liason officer, senior superintendent Sam Sesing said that all 1186 voting locations were closely monitored and any information regarding the election was carefully examined. In this manner the

safety of the electorate was assured. Because the police wanted to secure a free and fair election in the Free State, members of the police were present, not only at pre-election gatherings but also at voting locations during the elections. Before the polling stations opened on the day of the elections, polling stations were searched for explosives. Members of the police force were available to escort all relevant voting material so that irregularities could be avoided. Sesing advised the public to report any suspicious incident or behaviour to the police. The police and army played an important role which contributed positively to making the local municipal elections free and fair as well as safe (Viljoen, 2006:1). A senior superintendent of the police in the Eastern Free State said that there had been no reported violent incidents related to the elections in this area. He said that there were two police officers as well as army personnel deployed at each voting station.

He was also pleased to report that areas which had been subjected to violent outbreaks such as had occurred in areas such as Warden, Memel, Vrede and Harrysmith, during the 2004 municipal elections had been peaceful. In 2005 there been violent disruptions and protest action in Frankfurt but this area was also peaceful (Van Wyk, 2006:1).

Events on Election Day

Mr Chris Mepha, head of the IEC, said that by 6 pm on Wednesday the registered voter turnout in the Free State stood at 22.8 percent. It was reported by officials that 301109 voters had voted by 8 pm. This was a large decline from the 1,3 milion voters who had registered for the 2006 elections. Mepha said that due to long queues, voting stations in Manguang, Maluti-a Phofung, Matjhabeng, Nala and Phumelela had stayed open past 7 pm. Most parties agreed that the elections went well but the low voter turnout was a point of concern to most parties. Mr Mxolisi Dukwane commented on the good spirit of the elections but added that voter education was needed.

The voters needed to understand the importance of voting and that it empowered them. They also need to understand that voter apathy is not conducive with nor is it good for democracy (Internet, 2006…Long queues at). Premier Beatrice Marshoff cast her ballot at the Doubell voting station in Heidadal in Bloemfontein. This voting station ran smoothly and was on the quiet side. She encouraged voters to cast their ballots and she expressed the wish that a large number of voters would to cast their votes. She even commented that as it did not rain she saw no

reason for voters not to cast their votes (Internet 2006…..Some Bloem voters)

Some poling stations in Bloemfontein had not opened by 8.30 am. The Grootrvlei Motors polling station at Rodebeck had not opened because they were still waiting for voting boxes and stands. Voters calmly accepted the situation and either sat on the ground outside the polling station or on chairs, some voters even had umbrellas. Several voters arrived at the polling station at 3.30 am and so were not happy with the delay because they had other commitments such as having to go to work. In the Qwa Qwa region, the IEC reported minor delays at Harrismith where the ballot papers had been delivered late. (Internet, 2006: Some Bloem voters have to wait of polls).

Despite heavy rains and uprisings in the rural areas voting in the Eastern Free State occurred on schedule. A few polling stations opened late, Mr Lucas Mkwanee, election officer of the Free State's local municipality which includes Bloemspruit, Clocolan, Ficksburg, Gumtree, Libertas, Marquard, Moemaneng and Senekal, said that Election Day was largely quiet and uneventful. By lunch time 20 729 people had voted. Most polling stations opened on time except for the Berlinhall in

Ficksburg which only opened at 7:40. The reason for this was that the bridge had washed away (Van Wyk, 2006:1).

Mr Vikie Mhbele, project coordinator of the IEC in Bethlehem said that by 13.00 on the day of the election 12298 voters had cast their ballots in the Dihlaberg municipal area. This area includes Bethlehem, Clarens, Fouriesburg, Kraaifontein, Paul Roux, Rosendal and Valsrivier

The municipal voting official Delta Kganyago said that in the Maluti-A Phofung area which includes Aberfeldy, Harrismith, Kestell, Namahadi. Phuthadithjaba, Swinburne and Witsieshoek, voting day went smoothly. By 13.30, on election day, 27 383 voters had already cast their ballots. She had added that minor problems had resulted from the polling stations which had opened late. Harrismith opened 25 minutes late while Eeram was 30 minutes late and Aberfeldy 10 minutes. (Van Wyk, 2006:1).

In many areas heavy rains had washed away roads and bridges were flooded. Where this affected the delivery of voting material to places that could not be reached by road, special arrangements were made to transport the necessary material by army helicopter and police four wheel drive vehicles (Van Wyk, 2006:1).

Mr Keiser Maxztshwa the municipal voting official of Nkatoara said that 8600 people had voted at 38 voting stations in the area. This area includes Arlington, Blydskap, Danielsrus, Kaallaagte, lindley, Middenin, Petrussteyn and Reitz. (Van Wyk, 2006:1).

In the Mefube municipal area, Fikile Radebe, the project coordinator of the IEC in Mafube, said that the residing officer's vehicle got stuck in the mud with the result that a voting station in the area, Boompie-Alleen, opened ten minutes late. By lunch time, 27 of the voting stations in this area had been visited by 326 voters. (Van Wyk, 2006:1).

Mr Liba the municipal voting official said that in the Mantnapa local municipality, which includes Allandale, Exelsior, Hobhouse, Kommisiepoort, Ladybrand, Marseilles, Modderpoort, Thaba Phatsura, Tweespruit and Westminster, elections were conducted in a peaceful manner. This compared favourably with the last national election. He said that by 13:00 at least 10 000 voters had voted at the 27 polling stations (Van Wyk, 2006:1).

Voter Behaviour

De Wet (2006:9) visited Hanipark in Welkom to asses the situation at the polling station. As a result of heavy rains the roads had turned into mud. Despite these problems, voters had already started to queue very early in order to cast their ballots. The people hoped that by voting they would indicate their trust that the municipality would heed their requests for service delivery and a betterment of their living conditions. An example is that they are obliged to share one tap for water and have no suitable sanitation facilities. For voters to reach the voting station, they had to use the muddy roads which are, in some places, filled with large pools of water. There were no party candidates to greet one but the voters had the utmost faith that their vote on the ballot paper would bring relief.

In Heidadal and Bochabela areas, voters, especially the elderly, dressed in their Sunday best, arrived very early at the polling stations. There was an atmosphere of excitement under the waiting voters with lively debates, concerning the elections. Some voters were adamant that they had faith that their vote would definitely count while others debated for whom they should vote. Troms, an elderly voter, reasoned that it was advisable to come before 7.00 to cast her vote. She said that she was led to believe that her vote influenced water, housing and pension facilities. She was born in 1920 and

although she is not young she reasoned that by voting she adds her contribution to the state. This was the general attitude among the elderly at the voting station. Another elderly gentleman, Mr Smith, decided that he would vote for service delivery. He said that the government had called on the people to vote and by doing so, this is a call on the government to deliver services.

There was a decided difference in the voting areas of Heidedal and Bochebela. Heidedal where voters appeared at a trickle throughout the day, while voters at Bochabela already started to queue before 7.00. By the time the polling station had opened long queues had already developed at the various polling stations. Despite the long queues, the voters were cheerful and did not mind waiting to cast their ballots. Even the disabled were full of hope that their vote would contribute to obtaining the assistance for the disabled (Van der Berg.2006:2).

Gender was also a very important issue. According to a workshop presented by Mr Chris Mepha about the state of readiness for local government elections, gender issues were on the table to be discussed. Clear guidelines were outlined for all parties and candidates. There were three stipulations which needed to be adhered to. Firstly, the right of

women to communicate with parties and candidates had to be repeated. The equal participation of women in political activities had to be facilitated. Finally women should have free access to public meetings, marches, demonstrations, rallies, and any other political event. Also dealt with were the implications of the electoral systems on women's participation. Parties play the most important role in determining who stands as a candidate. Political parties were encouraged to ensure that 50% of party candidates are women. These guidelines support President Mbeki's views that South Africa has taken huge steps in the emancipation of women in the recent municipal elections. The number of women has substantially increased in the municipal elections (Mepha, 2006. 24-25).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that many parts of the Free State, especially the Eastern Free State regions. had been characterised by instability due to the citizen protests against the lack of service delivery and corruption. Despite this factor, voting day occurred in a peaceful, calm manner. Voters who did vote were optimistic that their vote would count to improve conditions. A matter of concern to all parties was the low turnout at polls especially among young voters. The day of the

elections however, revealed an increased support for the ANC who now have tabled an extensive plan in which local government is to be strengthened and problems resolved.

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