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Mapping Possibilities

Assessing policy positions across nine opposition parties in South Africa

Project Leader:

Dr Heather A. Thuynsma

Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria

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1. Purpose of this document

This paper studies the policy positions of nine opposition parties in South Africa (listed in alphabetical order): the African Christian Democratic Party, ActionSA, Build One South Africa, Democratic Alliance, Freedom Front Plus, Inkatha Freedom Party, Rise Mzansi, United Independent Movement, Spectrum National Party.

These parties share a similar vision for the country – each wants to tackle unemployment, public safety and education reform – but their approaches vary.

This paper aims to provide:

- An outline of policy overlaps and distinguishing positions
- A common language that interested stakeholders could use to develop partnerships
- An assessment for parties as to how validly their policy positions are communicated to an active reviewer

This paper is a tool for seeking alignment. Its information will be of interest to political parties, the general public, and the media.

Caveats

- This document captures information about selected South African parties from the perspective of its authors. While efforts were made to supplement the desktop research with interviews, this document is not comprehensive and reflects the authors' interpretations. Any errors and omissions are those of the authors. This paper has not been academically peer reviewed.
- This paper uses a specific dataset to outline the policy positions of the selected political parties. These positions are likely to change before the 2024 election.

2. Political context

After nearly 30 years of democratic rule, South Africa is still battling to overcome three intractable socio-economic issues – rising levels of unemployment, corruption and poverty. According to Patel et al, these issues persist because one political party, the African National Congress (ANC), dominates all levels of

government and its actions or rather inaction has compromised the country's political and legal system[1].

Polling figures show that the growing demand for service delivery and governance, that is both inclusive and accountable, is reshaping the country's political landscape. The ANC's relatively poor showing in the 2021 local government elections, the failure to address persistent socio-economic issues and meet a wide range of service delivery promises, has led to pollsters to suggest that the ruling party will lose its 50% parliamentary majority in the 2024 election[2]. If this does indeed happen, then it will be necessary for political parties to find partners with whom they can collaborate.

Coalition politics is not new in South Africa, especially at the local level. But the level of distrust between parties in recent months has been very public and has affected the delivery of essential services in many constituencies. In addition, the distrust between the parties has further reinforced the public's cynicism and has created an environment where more populist positions can flourish. This complicates the political context for opposition parties. Moreover, since it is unlikely that any of these parties will earn an outright majority in the forthcoming elections, there is a need to try and re-establish a working relationship amongst these partners and their base voters.

Amanda Tattersall[3] **has studied strong coalitions** in different geographic locations and situational contexts and determined that there are some core characteristics. **First, and the most important,** being that coalitions are bound by a **shared desire to shift a political climate** and to use their common interests to win election. But there are certain costs to working in such partnerships, which makes it difficult to maintain assurances to both voters and political allies.

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[1] Patel, Leila, Sadie, Yolanda, Bryer, Megan. and de Klerk, Jacklyn. (2021). *Factors Determining Voter Choice between 2017 and 2021.* Johannesburg: Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg. Available here: https://www.uj.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/factors-determining-voter-choice-_-report-_-may-2021-_-web_final.pdf (Accessed: 1 May 2022); Thambo, S. (2022). 'Conditions worsening in SA under ANC govt — EFF.' *Politicsweb*, 15 May 2022. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20220516160147/https://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/conditions-worsening-in-sa-under-anc-govt--eff (Accessed: 15 March 2023); Zondo, R.M. (2022). *Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Capture Report: Parts I-VI*. Available at: https://www.statecapture.org.za/site/information/reports (Accessed: 23 April 2023)

[2] Harris, Mari. 2022. *On the eve of the NASREC conference*. Johannesburg: Ipsos. Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/en-za/south-africas-unemployment-nightmare-burden-its-people (Accessed: 25 July 2023)

[3] Tattersall, Amanda. 2010. Power in Coalition: Strategies for Strong Unions and Social Change. New York: Cornell University Press.

Recent forays into governing coalitions in South African municipalities have illustrated the effects of not following this principle. Local-level coalitions have largely been built *after* the election results were tallied and so parties were able to leverage their political strength (based on the number of seats they gained in legislative structures) to negotiate for lucrative perks and political positions. These post-election negotiations meant that coalitions were built based on political necessity instead of a shared vision, set of values and expertise that could consolidate a broad base of voters and donors. This horse-trading has been covered extensively in the media and has reinforced an underlying political cynicism amongst voters.

Second, and equally important for a strong coalition, says Tattersall[4], is the **commitment and strategic skill of each party's leadership**. Strong leaders can sway the support of their donors and key party officials, which can also be used to garner support for the coalition during the election itself. It may also help the coalition build depth in that each party would be able to use their respective resources wisely. Unfortunately, recent municipal-level coalitions have not lasted long enough to see whether this dynamic is true within the South African context.

To try and reverse this trend, **this paper focuses on the third of Tattersall's key principles i.e. building the coalition around certain issues.** It is important that these issues are selected based on the strategic needs of each coalition partner and because they can be connected to the public interest.

This paper identifies three potentially galvanising issues –

1. **the economy and rising unemployment;**
2. **corruption, crime and justice; and**
3. **education.**

It outlines where these parties share similar sentiments on these issues but also where they differ in order to provide a basis for future collaborations.

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[4] Tattersall, Amanda. 2010. Power in Coalition: Strategies for Strong Unions and Social Change. New York: Cornell University Press.

3. Methodology

This paper analysed nine South African opposition parties that represent a mix of centrist (right and left leaning) and conservative political values[5]:

- African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)
- ActionSA
- Build One South Africa (BOSA)
- Democratic Alliance (DA)
- Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus)
- Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)
- Rise Mzansi
- United Independent Movement (UIM)
- Spectrum National Party (SNP)

The first objective of this paper is to outline each party's key issues and their respective approaches. Since the parties have not finalised their policy positions ahead of the 2024 National and Provincial elections, the paper conducted a content analysis of the following dataset:

- The campaign manifestos used during the 2019 National and Provincial elections by the ACDP, DA, FF Plus and the IFP;
- The policy positions used during the 2021 Local Government elections by the newer parties such as ActionSA, the UIM and SNP; and,
- Campaign material such as websites and brochures were used in conjunction with media reports for BOSA and Rise Mzansi since neither has contested an election.

The second objective was to corroborate the findings of this content analysis and also understand the policy nuances that may be present within these positions.

This was achieved by using the findings of the desktop analysis to generate a list of guiding questions that were posed to senior officials within the ACDP, ActionSA, DA, FF Plus, the IFP and the SNP. These interviews provided essential

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[5] For an explanation of these terms, see page 21 of Hofmeister & Grabow. 2011. Political Parties: Functions and Organisation in Democratic Societies. Available at:
https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=324ad119-cf8d-c71e-ba4d-78b0552f3bbb&groupId=264850 (Accessed: 10 August 2023)

feedback and pertinent contextual insight into the party's positions. Rise Mzansi, BOSA and the UIM did not respond to requests for an interview.

How are word clouds generated and how does one use the information?

This paper uses word clouds to summarise and visually represent key words and concepts that are repeated in the dataset. In these clouds, popular words or concepts appear as larger text i.e. the words that are more frequently used within a specific document such as a campaign manifesto or the complete dataset.

Since they are a summarising tool, word clouds do not provide much detail. For this reason, this paper uses them to illustrate the degree of similarity that exists amongst the parties, both in terms of concepts that are identified as well as the vocabulary they use to describe them. The interviews and dataset provided additional depth and contextualisation.

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4. Overview of each party

The nine political parties targeted in this paper bring a range of experiences, resources and skills to the political arena. This section summarises each party's political importance and past positions.

a) African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)

Lead by Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, the ACDP is the sixth largest party in the National Assembly and has a presence in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provincial legislatures. After the 2016 municipal elections, the ACDP joined coalition governments in Nelson Mandela Bay, Johannesburg and Tshwane. Founded in 1993, it represents conservative Christian values and advocates for moral issues, family values, and religious freedom. With a primarily Black constituency, the party bridges the gap between traditional African culture and Christian beliefs. The ACDP's influence lies in its ability to sway parliamentary decisions and form coalition partnerships with larger parties. Its presence ensures that Christian perspectives are heard, providing a voice for conservative voters in South African politics.

Priorities from 2019 campaign manifesto: the seven giants.

Figure 1:   Word cloud featuring keywords present in ACDP's 2019 Campaign Manifesto

In 2019, the party identified seven key issues, or "giants," that hindered the country's unity, and overall well-being[6]. These giants included: high unemployment, poor economic growth, substandard education and skills development, inadequate health services, escalating crime, corruption in the public and private sector, the threat to property rights and rural development. To mitigate the issues, the ACDP proposed creating more job opportunities, protecting property rights, improving education and health services, and fighting corruption and crime. The party emphasised its commitment to its Christian values and its goal of creating a safe and prosperous South Africa. It also prioritised family and community interests but preferred the state take the lead in solving societies challenges. Its conservative Christian values have meant that its positions on the death penalty, abortion, same-sex marriage and drug decriminalisation differ from other political parties.

b) ActionSA

Herman Mashaba founded ActionSA in 2020 and, after a strong showing in the 2021 local government elections, the party is considered a viable alternative to the ruling ANC. Its policies appeal to disenchanted voters who want a change from corrupt systems and persistent economic challenges. Its non-racial approach emphasises economic growth and focuses on addressing the issues of urban

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[6] African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). 2019. **2019 Manifesto National Elections.** Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181510_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)

voters[7]. The party currently holds 90 seats in six municipal councils – Johannesburg, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, eThekwini, KwaDukuza and Newcastle.

Overall, ActionSA's emergence reflects a growing demand for change, inclusivity, and accountable governance in South Africa, reshaping the country's political dynamics and offering a new voice for citizens seeking alternatives to the traditional political parties.

Priorities from 2021 local government elections campaign manifesto: economic growth, job creation and private sector development.

Figure 2:   Word cloud featuring keywords present
in ActionSA's 2021 Campaign Manifesto

ActionSA's 2021 manifesto[8] prioritised economic growth, job creation and private sector development, by positioning itself as a centrist pro-business alternative. It emphasised market-oriented policies in an attempt to attract support from entrepreneurs and those seeking solutions to the country's unemployment crisis.

Since the party has only contested a local government election, it understandably focused on fixing local governments structures and delivery. It proposed an efficient customer-centric government, an ethical, inclusive and professional public service, a business-friendly environment that creates jobs,

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[7] https://www.actionsa.org.za/ (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[8] ActionSA. 2021. **Let's Fix South Africa: Local Government Manifesto 2021.** Available at: https://www.actionsa.org.za/manifesto/ (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

and safety and security. ActionSA's plan was to reconceive service standards, reprioritise budgets, insource staff, implement anti-corruption measures, improve financial management practices, provide free basic services to those in need, and invest in critical infrastructure and basic services. ActionSA also prioritised sustainability, community engagement, and empowerment. Overall, the party aimed to fix local municipalities by providing quality services, promoting economic growth, and ensuring safety and security for all residents.

c) Build One South Africa (BOSA)

BOSA is a political party founded in September 2022 by Mmusi Maimane, Nobuntu-Hlazo Webster, Hlumelo Biko, and Khutsa Jack Rooted in promoting black empowerment, social justice, and economic transformation, BOSA is hoping to attract a diverse voter base who is disillusioned with traditional parties[9]. By challenging the status quo and advocating for progressive reforms, BOSA wants to reshape the political landscape and pressure established parties to address fundamental socio-economic concerns. Electoral success in 2024 would imply a growing demand for inclusive governance and represent a potential shift in South African politics[10].

Policy positions: Citizen activism.

Figure 3:   Word cloud featuring keywords present in the BOSA documents

[9] Davis, R. 2023. *In run up to 2024, Maimane's BOSA bets on talent over profile in candidates.* Daily Maverick, 1 August. Available at: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-08-01-in-run-up-to-2024-maimanes-bosa-bets-on-talent-over-profile-in-candidates/ (Accessed: 1 August 2023)

[10] https://bosa.co.za (Accessed: 12 July 2023)

BOSA aims to establish a South Africa where all citizens can prosper and live together peacefully, with access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities[11]. BOSA believes in citizen activism, community, public and private partnerships, and aims to address issues such as unemployment, education, healthcare, basic services, load shedding, crime, and corruption. It advocates for a revitalised South Africa led by ethical and values-based leaders selected by the community. Its 10 big ideas include stimulating the township economy, introducing a school voucher program, punishing corruption, empowering communities in policing, promoting public-private partnerships, providing healthcare and housing assistance, offering universal access to free Wi-Fi, introducing empowerment policies and ensuring energy security.

d) Democratic Alliance (DA)

Founded in 2000 and led by John Steenhuisen, the DA is a merger of various liberal and centrist parties and is the main opposition party in the country's national legislature[12]. The DA is committed to a liberal democratic ideology that emphasises individual freedoms, private sector involvement in market-oriented policies, less state intervention and the rule of law. As a staunch advocate for non-racialism, the DA strives to transcend the country's history of racial divisions and build a united and inclusive South Africa.

As a vocal opposition, the DA challenges the African National Congress's (ANC) dominance and seeks to attract support within urban areas that transcends traditional racial lines. Through its inclusivity drive the party aims to recruit leaders from diverse backgrounds and develop policies that resonate with a wider cross-section of society. These efforts have helped the party forge multiparty coalitions across the country and to successfully lead the provincial legislature in the Western Cape.

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[11] Build One South Africa (BOSA). 2023. **With you. By you. For you. Building One South Africa Together.** Available at: https://bosa.co.za (Accessed: 12 July 2023)

[12] http://www.da.org.za (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

Priorities from 2019 campaign manifesto: Crime, Infrastructure, youth unemployment.

<u>Figure 4</u>:   Word cloud featuring keywords present in DA's 2019 Campaign Manifesto

The party was intent on holding the ANC accountable for its governance and policy decisions, which is why its 2019 manifesto focused on addressing: crime, corruption, economic inequality and rising levels of youth unemployment, addressing and service delivery failures and improving general infrastructure that has been compromised by corrupt behaviour[13].

e) Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus)

Led by Dr Pieter Groenewald, the FF Plus is a conservative, right leaning party that advocates for minority rights, particularly Afrikaner interests. Founded in 1994, the party has maintained a consistent presence in the political landscape. In 2019, it became the fifth largest party nationally, has a presence in the North-West legislature, and dominates the Oranja local government structures. It has also partnered with other opposition parties to form governing coalitions, most notably in Johannesburg and Tshwane. The party appeals to conservative Afrikaans-speaking voters who want to protect their language, culture, and land rights in a diverse and evolving nation. While its support base is very specific, the party influences strategic alliances by informing policy discussions. Its presence also protects minority rights, which reflects the ongoing complexities of post-apartheid South Africa[14].

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[13] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[14] https://www.vfplus.org.za (Accessed: 14 July 2023)

Priorities from 2019 campaign manifesto: individual freedom, private property rights, and limited government intervention.

<u>Figure 5</u>:   Word cloud featuring keywords present
in the FF Plus's 2019 Campaign Manifesto

In 2019, the party steadfastly supported equal rights and opportunities for all, regardless of skin colour and advocated for an end to affirmative action[15]. Its manifesto pushed for socioeconomic-based empowerment rather than race-based policies and championed appointing public servants based on merit. While supporting the need for land reform, the party was against the policy of expropriation without compensation. It also touted the need for greater self-determination for minority groups and was particularly concerned with promoting their language and cultural rights. To curb corruption, misappropriation, and excessive taxes, the party proposed limiting state expenditure, privatising state-owned entities, and stimulating economic growth. It also suggested establishing a fiscal commission and a smaller local government system to improve service delivery.

f) Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)

The IFP was founded in 1975 by Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi MP and is currently the fourth largest party in the National Assembly.

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[15] Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). 2019. **There is Hope: 2019 Election Manifesto.** Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181710_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)

During the transition to democracy in the 1990s, the IFP played a pivotal role in negotiations and participated in the first democratic elections in 1994. Although the party lost support to the ANC, the IFP has remained influential in KwaZulu-Natal and a vocal opposition party in the national and the Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provincial legislatures. Now led by Velenkosini Hlabisa, the IFP's presence represents a market-orientated and more socially conservative perspective to ANC policies.

Priorities from 2019 campaign manifesto: Social and economic justice.

Figure 6:   Word cloud featuring keywords present
in the IFP's 2019 Campaign Manifesto

The party's 2019 manifesto[17] focused on issues such as social and economic justice, gender equality, access to land, economic growth, healthcare, housing, safety and security, education, and the environment. The IFP encouraged private enterprise by emphasising the principles of a market economy. However, the party also acknowledged the importance of government interventions to redress social and economic equality especially in rural areas.

g) Rise Mzansi

This is a new party formed in early 2023 with Songeso Zibi as head of its National Leadership Collective. Claiming to be a grassroots movement, it

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[16] https://www.ifp.org.za (Accessed: 12 July 2023)

[17] Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). 2019. **Trust Us: 2019 Election Manifesto.** Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181910_2019.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

champions centre-left policies to address socio-economic inequalities, corruption, and youth empowerment. Its anti-establishment message seeks to appeal to disillusioned voters looking for an alternative to traditional parties. Its promises of inclusive governance and transparent decision-making are designed to attract marginalised communities. As it challenges the dominant political landscape, its success could signal a shift towards a more pluralistic democracy, encouraging healthy competition and increased representation. However, its sustainability will rely on how it forges alliances and develops concrete approaches to core national challenges[18].

Policy positions: Provide Social-Democratic alternative.

Figure 7:   Word cloud featuring keywords present in Rise Mzansi's documents

Rise Mzansi emphasises a strong constitutional democracy and large scale political and public sector reform. To promote greater accountability, it advocates for an ethical state and leadership, comprehensive electoral and judicial reform as well as transparent and merit-based executive appointments. It mentions promoting economic growth by improving transport infrastructure and focuses on a just energy transition that accommodates essential food security.

h) Spectrum National Party (SNP)

This party was founded by businessman and pastor Christopher Claassen in 2019 (launched in 2021) and is positioned as a centrist party that advocates for

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[18] https://www.risemzansi.org (Accessed: 24 July 2023)

pragmatic solutions[19]. Founded on the principle of bridging divides - the party has an Equal Race Governing Policy to address past injustices - SNP seeks to appeal to voters across the demographic divide that want compromise and reconciliation. By promoting inclusivity, economic stability, and social cohesion, the party is positioning itself as a viable alternative to the traditionally dominant parties. Its policies intend to bridge opposing ideologies and foster a more cooperative and progressive political climate. With a focus on socio-economic reforms, the SNP addresses key issues such as inequality, corruption, and unemployment.

Policy positions: inclusivity, good governance and electoral and judicial reform.

Figure 8:   Word cloud featuring keywords present
in Spectrum National Party's 2021 Manifesto

The SNP's top issues in 2021 included crime prevention, education reform, economic stimulus, expropriating vacant or unused government-owned land (but it does not support land grabs), and an improved social security system. They also advocated for stricter borders and addressing water shortages. The party prioritised clean and effective governance, equal treatment of all people, and the development of efficient checks and balances[20]. The party's ability to achieve their goals and implement policies is yet to be seen, as they are a relatively new party.

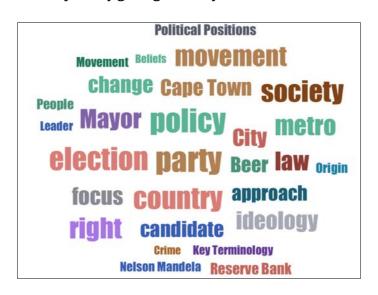### i) United Independent Movement (UIM)

Founded in 2020 by Neil de Beer, a former national security advisor to Nelson Mandela and an uMkhonto we Sizwe veteran, the UIM is a coalition of independent candidates intent on challenging the dominance of traditional

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[19] https://www.spectrumnationalparty.co.za (Accessed: 21 July 2023)
[20] Spectrum National Party (SNP). 2021. **Restoring Government Back to the People: Election Manifesto.** Available at: https://www.spectrumnationalparty.co.za/election-manifesto (Accessed: 15 July 2023)

political parties. The movement advocates for greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance to appeal to disillusioned voters seeking alternatives. With a focus on grassroots mobilisation and community empowerment, the UIM's rise is yet another indicator of a strong desire for a fresh approach to politics. In the 2021 elections, it won seats in the Cape Town, Johannesburg and Ethekwini metros where it was also involved in coalitions talks. The party advocates for Christian values while claiming to work in the "moderate middle"[21].

Policy positions: inclusivity and fight against injustice.

Figure 9:   Word cloud featuring keywords present in UIM's documents

The party's charter prioritised the needs of the nation, rejected corruption in all forms, and wanted to see a zero-tolerance policy implemented towards crime. The movement also advocated for protecting the rights of citizens as outlined in the constitution and encouraged individuals to independently raise societal issues when necessary. Additionally, the movement championed better socio-economic conditions for all South Africans[22].

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[21] https://uimsa.org (Accessed: 23 July 2023)
[22] https://uimsa.org (Accessed: 23 July 2023)

5. General Results from Desktop Analysis

An analysis of the manifestos, the campaign materials, and the subsequent interviews that were held with key party officials shows that there are several common concepts that each party addresses. The word cloud below shows these commonalities, the larger words being the ones that were most repeated within the dataset.

Figure 10:   Word cloud of common concepts across the dataset

Broadly speaking, the parties emphasise their **patriotism** and have directed their campaign approach towards attacking the current government and prioritising the **rights and needs** of the South African people. They push messages that seek to foster a united South Africa, where all citizens feel included and represented, regardless of their race or background. They are further keen to see the **constitutional rights** of citizens protected and promoted while also emphasising **transparency and widespread reforms of governing institutions**.

In the process their approaches seek to **promote diversity while echoing their shared values of integrity, respect, resilience, and individualism**.

Key Topics for Voters:

Since this paper has been compiled well ahead of the 2024 election, there is no polling data available that indicates the specific perceptions of registered voters. In lieu of this data, this paper chose to use the findings of the 2023 annual *Ipsos What Worries the World Survey* as a measure of what South Africans are concerned with now and are likely to continue caring about in 2024.

The survey found[23] that:

- for 69% of South Africans unemployment is the topic of most concern, this is a 5% increase from April 2022. Statistics South Africa Q4: 2022[24] results also indicate that 32.7% or 7.8 million people are currently unemployed with 35.5% being women and 61% being youth under the age of 24. The persistent problem of unemployment is a drag on the country's economy with only 14% of respondents describing the current returns as "good".
- 58% of South Africans are concerned about the rising incidents of crime and violence.
- 57% of those polled cite an unease over financial and political corruption.

Internal research conducted by political parties correlate these statistics. The internal surveys also identify the mutually reinforcing nature of unemployment and crime and linked them to another area of concern, namely an inadequate education system. As a result, this paper collated party positions on these three broad topics: the economy and rising unemployment; corruption, crime and justice; and, education.

Each topic is structured to show the similarities between the party's positions before identifying where there are differences or distinguishing details.

a) The Economy and Rising Unemployment

As the word cloud below suggests, the parties agree that the country's poorly performing economy has encouraged a rise in corruption, fewer job opportunities, and tax and land policies that do not support business growth or investment.

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[23] Arnold, K. 2023. *South Africa's unemployment nightmare: The burden on its people.* Johannesburg: Ipsos. Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/en-za/eve-nasrec-conference (Accessed: 24 July 2023)
[24] StatsSA. 2022. https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Presentation%20QLFS%20Q4%202022.pdf (Accessed: 20 July 2023)

<u>Figure 11:</u>   Word cloud with repeated concepts under the economy and rising unemployment

The analysis found that there is broad agreement in the following economic areas (ranking of importance not implied):

- Promoting market principles that include some level of privatisation of state owned enterprises such as Eskom.
- Reducing the role of government and its expenditure by streamlining a bloated civil service and creating greater efficiency that will support infrastructure development and service delivery.
- Replacing cadre deployment and affirmative action policies with merit-based appointments.
- Promoting employment equity by developing and resourcing skills development opportunities that can further develop an individual's ability to be self-reliant, innovative and entrepreneurial. This includes developing the renewable energy industry to support a switch to an environmentally-conscious industry.
- Developing safe, reliable and efficient cargo and public transport systems as well as pertinent ICT infrastructure, both of which are essential for growing the economy.
- Securing property rights and pursuing a fair and equitable land restitution programme where current owners are adequately compensated.
- Ensuring a sustainable electricity supply that is preferably, but not solely, renewable and environmentally friendly.
- Reforming tax policies to lower personal and company tax and adjusting tariffs and levies to stimulate consumer expenditure (especially on

renewable energy sources), foreign investment, jobs opportunities and broader economic growth.

- While most parties prefer to limit the role of the government, the issue of social grants is an exception. The parties agree to develop a better social assistance system to provide grants that will protect families from abject poverty but that also help people unlock opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty. This includes, for example, continuing the child grant but in a manner that provides adequate support for both the mother and the child.
- Addressing unemployment, and specifically youth unemployment, by:
  - Ending corrupt practices, for example in awarding tenders and the prosecution of individuals found guilty of malfeasance through both criminal and civil cases.
  - Building a conducive environment for job creation and investment, which includes lifting restrictive labour legislation to encourage private sector industries that will create more jobs. With more people employed, there will be fewer people that depend on the state's limited resources.
  - Making it easier for foreign skilled workers to attain visas to contribute to mentoring and growing the domestic economy.
  - Developing educational programmes that encourage innovation and support pertinent skills development courses such as internships for secondary school graduates.
  - Addressing funding models and banking practices to allow for greater access to loans for small and medium sized enterprises.

Areas of difference / agreement not apparent

- **Promoting and protecting agriculture**: The FF Plus pushes for protecting the agricultural sector "…against tariff and subsidy benefits of international role players and the dumping of substandard imported agricultural products"[25]. The party also cites inefficient administrative procedures for the delay in implementing land reform projects and proposes increasing state expenditure on research, disaster relief, and infrastructure for the sector.

- The DA, on the other hand, proposes that "…stock theft at station level [be developed] in order to identify the rural areas facing the most significant challenges and under-resourcing. This will allow for the deployment of

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[25] Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). 2019. **There is Hope: 2019 Election Manifesto.** p.11. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181710_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)

> resources to those farming areas and rural communities worst affected by crime"[26].

- While the SNP advocate for the expropriation of "...vacant government owned land" and "... dormant government owned farms in and around urban areas for the purposes of providing decent housing and establishing industries close to residents"[27].

- **Infrastructure development:** The DA proposes building a resilient infrastructure that could adapt to the disastrous effects of climate change, particularly within vulnerable communities. To strengthen intergovernmental cooperation, the party mooted establishing a National Natural Resources and Infrastructure Database to improve planning and decision-making for disaster management and a dedicated Disaster Management Department to improve communication and coordination during disasters[28].

- **Tax policy reform**: Proposals to improve current tax policies show some variability. For instance, the FF Plus propose establishing a fiscal commission to regulate when and for how long VAT is increased[29].

> "VAT must rather be used as a fair instrument to supplement budget deficits. VAT broadens the tax base and VAT is fair precisely because everyone will pay more. On the other side of the company spectrum though, more funds will be made available to better provide *[sic]* for social needs"[30].

While the DA more specifically advocates for:

> "Introduc[ing] a temporary moratorium on VAT, PAYE and corporation/turnover tax penalties levied on businesses with annual

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[26] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.36. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[27] Spectrum National Party (SNP). 2021. **Restoring Government Back to the People: Election Manifesto.** Available at: https://www.spectrumnationalparty.co.za/election-manifesto (Accessed: 21 July 2023)

[28] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.77. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[29] Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). 2019. **There is Hope: 2019 Election Manifesto.** p.7. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181710_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)

[30] Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). 2019. **There is Hope: 2019 Election Manifesto.** p.7. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181710_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)

turnover below R30 million, while implementing a review of the tax code through the Davis Tax Committee"[31].

"Firms [that] should also be supported to adapt through focused Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) incentives on steel that would offer tax breaks and export credits similar to the current Automotive Investment Scheme which has created value chains in the vehicle sector. This could be linked to the Special Economic Zones (SEZs)"[32].

"Requiring networking companies to contribute to financing, and in kind, the infrastructure build and maintenance of operational networks to marginalised communities, and well as to community- owned, not-for-profit, networks. These networking companies will be given tax relief for as long"[33].

"Work on eliminating transfer duties on all first-time home purchases less than R1,75 million in value. Transfer duties can be considered a regressive tax for South Africans when purchasing assets"[34].

Also linked to this last point is ActionSA's proposal to:

"Increase access to property ownership by fixing the title deed transfer regime and by revamping the social housing model to create more housing options near economic centres"[35].

b) Corruption, Crime and Justice

As the word cloud below shows, the parties paint a grim picture of a state that is both violent and lawless where gang and drug-related offenses, murder, abuse of women and children have spiked. Other concepts that are repeated throughout the dataset describe the effects of corruption across all sectors of

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[31] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.25. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[32] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.30. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[33] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.37. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[34] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019.**The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.47. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[35] ActionSA. 2023. **Submission to Multiparty Pact.** p. 5

society, inadequate capacity within SAPS and the justice system to enforce the law and effectively patrol and secure the country's borders.

<u>Figure 12:</u>   Word cloud with repeated concepts highlighted under the broad topic of corruption, crime and justice

The parties depict the country's safety and security as one that is intertwined with other persistent problems such as a struggling economy, a lack of service delivery, and a deficient education curriculum. Their pitch to voters and other stakeholders is underscored by proposals that uphold the rights of citizens as stated in the constitution, supporting individuals to be active citizens within the law, rejecting corruption in all its forms and enforcing the law to combat crime.

The analysis found that there is broad agreement in the following governance areas (ranking of importance not implied):

- Adopting a decentralised approach to improving public safety by delegating more resources and authority to provinces and municipal structures.
- Addressing the shortage of police officers, which includes encouraging community partnerships to assist with various aspects of policing within neighbourhoods.
- Enforcing the country's constitutional democracy by professionalising the police service and improving its capacity to investigate and expedite criminal proceedings against those accused of a crime. This includes developing specialised education and training programmes for counsellors and social workers to address cases of sexual and domestic violence. The parties also mention training technicians and engineers to detect and investigate cybercrimes and the illicit wildlife trade.

- Establishing specialised courts, magistrates and prosecutors and revising the minimum sentencing guidelines as part of a campaign to reform the judicial system to improve prosecution of cyber criminals and traffickers of humans, weapons, drugs and wildlife.
- Investigating and prosecuting those responsible for farm murders and illegal land invasions.
- Taking appropriate action to police and curb all incidents of hate speech.
- Modernising and increasing available resources for the SANDF to protect the country's borders and combat the illicit trade in humans, weapons and drugs and wildlife.
- Fighting corruption by streamlining government, encouraging greater transparency and instituting independent forensics units, conducting lifestyle audits of officials, protecting whistle blowers, and implementing stricter financial controls.
- Reforming immigration regulations to facilitate legal entry for those with scarce skills and knowledge that can contribute to the country's economy.

Areas of difference / agreement not apparent

- **The role of traditional leaders**: The IFP extends its proposal for decentralisation of policing to include empowering traditional leaders to resolve civil dispute settlements. The IFP is also keen to open "…a national debate on the reinstatement of the death penalty as a means to deter violent crimes"[36].

- **Gun ownership**: The FF Plus specifically mentions the need to police legal gun ownership and, like the DA, wants to properly vet "…those registering for firearms and ensuring they have not been previously convicted of criminal activity, domestic abuse, assault or have protection orders instituted against them or be registered as a sex offender"[37].

- **Education and gender-based violence**: While all parties mention this link, the DA's solution specifically advocates for "implementing Life Orientation classes at school which deal with issues surrounding gender-based violence and sexuality"[38].

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[36] Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). 2019. **Trust Us: 2019 Election Manifesto.** p.3. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181910_2019.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[37] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.59. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

[38] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.60. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

- **Legalising prostitution**: The ACDP stands opposed to this, stating that there is a need to:

  "Amend laws and policies that undermine family values, such as those that grant access to contraceptives and abortion for young girls without parental consent, teach inappropriate sex education in schools, attempt to ban moderate parental chastisement, and legalise prostitution, pornography and abortion-on-demand"[39].

- **Anti-corruption measures**: There are differing opinions about the sentencing guidelines for guilty politicians. The ACDP recommends a "…ban [on] politicians who are found guilty of bribery and corruption from standing as candidates in any subsequent election"[40] while the DA proposes introducing:

  "…a minimum sentence of fifteen years for anybody found guilty of corruption in a case where either of the parties were a government official or public office bearer, and where public money in excess of R10 000 was used. This would mean an automatic fifteen-year prison sentence unless sufficient evidence is placed before the court that there are grounds for a shorter sentence"[41].

and

  "Ensuring that officials found guilty of financial misconduct or mismanagement are placed on a register that disbars them from working in procurement of supply chain management"[42].

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[39] African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). 2019. **2019 Manifesto National Elections.** p.7. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181510_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)
[40] African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). 2019. **2019 Manifesto National Elections.** p.8. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181510_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)
[41] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.65. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)
[42] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.65. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

- **Secure Transport**: The DA also want to reinstitute a "…dedicated police service in the form of railway police to take over security operations"[43] to protect essential transport infrastructure.

c) Education

Given their largely centrist stance on this issue, the parties' share a very similar definition of education as an issue and how it needs to be addressed.

Figure 13:   Word cloud with repeated concepts highlighted under education

The analysis found that there is broad agreement in the following areas related to education (ranking of importance not implied):

- The merits of investing in strong early childhood education programmes and encouraging parents to participate in their children's learning curriculum.
- The need to overhaul the basic education curriculum and raise standards throughout the system.
- Improving school infrastructure to ensure the dignity of staff and learners, especially those with special needs. This ranges from providing adequate access to sanitation services to equipping classrooms with both essential and digital learning platforms – a move that is meant to teach learners skills that they will use once they leave school and enter a modern workforce.

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[43] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.34. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

- Equipping both police and communities with the means to protect staff and learners from gangs and other violence as well as school infrastructure from vandals.
- Allocating appropriate funding to education institutions for research and scholarships.
- Developing and supporting adult basic education programmes.
- Developing better avenues and institutions for skills training. This includes suggestions for re-opening teacher, nursing and agricultural training colleges and re-branding vocational programmes and institutions to attract learners and build capacity in core industries such as steel manufacturing. Parties also tend to link these solutions to those touted for improving entrepreneurial opportunities and the economy, addressing the unemployment crisis and mitigating immigration.

Areas of difference / agreement not apparent

- **Funding education**: There are slightly different approaches to this issue with the FF Plus looking to "subsidise learners rather than schools"[44], BOSA pushing to "introduce a school voucher programme that empowers parents to choose which schools that their children attend"[45], and the DA and the SNP suggesting that a tiered structure based on household income be implemented. The DA further proposes "merging the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to form the Department of Post-School Education, Research and Innovation. It will direct and fund research and innovation as well as attract investment"[46].

- **Offering curricula in mother-tongue**: This IFP and the FF Plus discuss this specific issue. But while the IFP proposes mother-tongue education during early childhood schooling, the FF Plus prefers for this to extend to the "highest possible level"[47]. The FF Plus further state that:

  "The conservation and development of the higher functions of South Africa's 11 official languages must be prioritised. Thus, for example, the

[44] Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). 2019. **There is Hope: 2019 Election Manifesto.** p.10. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181710_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)
[45] Build One South Africa (BOSA). 2023. **With you. By you. For you. Building One South Africa Together.** Available at: https://bosa.co.za (Accessed: 12 July 2023)
[46] Democratic Alliance (DA). 2019. **The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa for All.** p.22. Available at: https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/22160849/A4-Manifesto-Booklet-Digital.pdf (Accessed: 10 July 2023)
[47] Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). 2019. **There is Hope: 2019 Election Manifesto.** p.10. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181710_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)

mediums of education, should be expanded to include more languages instead of being reduced or anglicised. Educational experts from across the world agree that mother-tongue education promotes academic performance"[48].

- **Policy alignment to Christian values**: The ACDP specifically raises the issue of policies that undermine their interpretation of family values:

  "Amend laws and policies that undermine family values, such as those that grant access to contraceptives and abortion for young girls without parental consent, teach inappropriate sex education in schools, attempt to ban moderate parental chastisement, and legalise prostitution, pornography and abortion-on-demand"[49].

- **Administration reform**: For their part, ActionSA specifically addresses how to manage basic education administration:

  "Our education system requires a fundamental overhaul, and our efforts should focus on improving reading for meaning and basic numeracy outcomes. We must start by depoliticising the basic education administration and reintroducing fit-for-purpose performance management systems"[50].

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6. Conclusion

This analysis links improved employment numbers to a better performing economy that can fund basic services and develop essential infrastructure. It finds that the nine parties studied also mention a depoliticised and decentralised government as the solution to curb maladministration along with the need to fundamentally reform the education system to produce appropriately skilled graduates. In tackling these broad topics, the parties hope to attract investment for businesses and improving a market-driven economy.

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[48] Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus). 2019. **There is Hope: 2019 Election Manifesto.** p.11. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181710_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)
[49] African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). 2019. **2019 Manifesto National Elections.** p.7. Available at: https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu//down/originals/2021-1/181510_2019.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2023)
[50] ActionSA. 2021. **Let's Fix South Africa: Local Government Manifesto 2021.** p. 4. Available at: https://www.actionsa.org.za/manifesto/ (Accessed: 10 July 2023)

The parties have also broadly described issues that will likely resonate with voters in 2024, citing: spiking rates of unemployment especially amongst the youth, rampant crime, and a contracting economy. Each of these issues, they say, can be blamed on government leadership that is indecisive, governance that is riddled with corruption, an education system that is woefully inappropriate and a police service that is inadequately motivated and capacitated.

The analysis describes an environment that political parties will need to navigate in which the electorate is distrustful and indisposed to participate. If parties are unsuccessful, voter apathy will rise, and this will have a profound effect on the political system and the actors that work within it. Moreover, recent research by Robert Mattes and Collette Schulz-Herzenberg[51], which builds on an earlier study[52], warns that lower turnout numbers favour the ruling party and that if no viable, and trustworthy, opposition exists, then it is likely that the ANC will maintain its outright majority effectively nullifying any move to form an opposition coalition.

One suggestion to address this context, is to hold coalition negotiations well ahead of the election so that partnerships can be negotiated based on the resources each member brings to the table. In theory this will make a coalition easier to manage, more strategic in how it operates and able to focus on policy implementation and general service delivery. Such a scenario would also help restore voter trust in the political system and in political parties themselves.

Regardless, opposition parties need to address the three main issues of the economy, crime and education and use their proposals to counter growing levels of distrust as they prepare their 2024 election pitches.

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[51] Mattes, Robert and Schulz-Herzenberg, Collette (2023). "It takes two to toyi-toyi: One party domination and opposition party failure in South Africa's 2019 national election." *Democratization*, DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2023.2228710

[52] Schulz-Herzenberg, Collette. (2020). The South African non-voter: An Analysis. The Midpoint Paper Series No 2, December. KAS. Available at: https://www.kas.de/documents/261596/10543300/The+South+African+non-voter+-+An+analysis.pdf/acc19fbd-bd6d-9190-f026-8d311078b670?version=1.0&t=1608 (Accessed: 12 April 2023)

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- Actions SA (17 July 2023):
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    - Michael Beaumont, National Chairperson
    - Dr Nasiphi Moya, Chief Governance Director

- DA (26 July 2023):
    - Mat Cuthbert – Member of Parliament and Head of Policy

- FF Plus (18 July 2023):
    - Dr Pieter Groenewald, Party leader and Member of Parliament
    - Wouter Wessels, Member of Parliament and Head of Elections and Strategy

- IFP (17 July 2023):
    - Velenkosini Hlabisa, Party President and Member of KZN Provincial Legislature

- SNP (19 July 2023):
    - Christopher Claassen, Party President
    - Alnadrian Hofsta, Secretary General