

# A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

## *Gender Differences in Attitudes to Electoral Participation and Experience in South Africa<sup>1</sup>*

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### ABSTRACT

*Despite a sizeable body of literature on the extent and nature of gender differences in electoral participation in developed countries there is limited evidence for developing countries such as South Africa. This study employs data from two nationally representative surveys, namely the 2010 Voter Participation Survey and the 2011 Election Satisfaction Survey, to investigate the relative importance of factors associated with voting decisions among men and women. The article specifically considers cultural modernisation and rational choice accounts of voter turnout. On average, we find more similarity than difference between women and men. Multivariate analysis shows that political efficacy, political interest and a history of voting were common significant determinants of intention to vote in municipal elections, though a sense of a duty to vote, satisfaction with service delivery and political knowledge were important for women exclusively. Political orientation emerges as more important for electoral*

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*abstinence than administrative and other individual barriers, again with little discernible gender variation. The results highlight the importance of civic education initiatives and improved responsiveness of elected officials in meeting the needs of women and men. Continued investment is also required to consolidate recent gains in electoral administration and ensure that the benefits of voting continue to outweigh the costs. Sustained turnout levels in future municipal elections are likely to be determined by the success of such interventions.*

## INTRODUCTION

On the eve of South Africa's second democratic local government election – in 2000, Van Donk (2000, p 4) argued persuasively that local government in South Africa needed to become 'a strategic site of struggle for gender equity', especially since women represent the primary consumers of municipal services due to their gender roles. Given their developmental mandate and critical role in basic service delivery, municipalities thus have the potential to produce significant improvements in women's quality of life. From a political participation and accountability perspective electoral turnout is considered fundamental in ensuring legitimacy of the elected government and the accommodation of the needs of constituencies in planning processes.

Although there are numerous ways in which the public can exert an influence over politics, the electoral connection still represents the primary means of influence or control available to citizens in representative democracies, since it determines who manages government, develops policies and plans and makes daily decisions that affect them (Dalton 2006, p 127).

In this paper we set out to provide a preliminary examination of the extent and nature of gender differences in turnout in the context of the 2011 local government election. While much scholarly attention has been devoted to the representation of women in South African politics, especially in Parliament and Cabinet and increasingly at provincial and local government levels, considerably less is known about the gender dimensions of electoral participation in the country. This dearth of evidence is particularly pronounced in relation to election-related behaviour at local government level.

Available evidence of gender gaps in electoral participation derives mainly from the USA and Western Europe, which raises questions about the relevance of explanations for such gender differences in developing democracies like South Africa (Coffe & Bolzendahl 2011).

This study compares and evaluates two broad conceptual traditions relating to turnout. The first of these is the rational choice approach, which is an

influential model initially elaborated by Downs (1957) and amended by Riker & Ordeshook (1968) and Norris (2004, p 15) and considers the rational decisions that the electorate makes in weighing up the costs and benefits of voting. From an electoral management perspective the emphasis would be on trying to reduce the costs of registering and voting by making procedures more efficient and effective and thereby increase turnout.

The basic idea is that people vote when expected benefits are higher than expected costs, and abstain otherwise. In terms of rational choice theories, Norris (2004) suggests that the primary incentives for citizens to vote in elections relate to the costs of registering and voting, time and effort required to register and vote, the party choices available to voters and the degree to which casting a ballot determines the composition of Parliament and government. The electorate would weigh up aspects such as the registration process, accessibility of voting stations, ease of voting procedures, voter safety, supportive electoral staff, domestic issues, child care while voting and provision for voters with special needs (Norris 2004, p 15).

The cultural modernisation approach differs in emphasis on the primary motivational factors influencing human behaviour. The theory suggests that the electorate is influenced more by socio-economic status and political attitudes, beliefs and values which produce behavioural patterns of participation. The emphasis is on the civic duty to vote, experience of successive elections, knowledge of and beliefs about the state and political leaders, political efficacy and evaluations of the political process (eg, institutional trust, satisfaction with government performance).

According to Norris (2004, p 16), cultural theories emphasise that habits of civic commitment are engrained from an early age and through experience in successive elections. The tendency to participate or abstain from voting is acquired through early and successive voting experience. This voting experience is associated with related civic attitudes and values, including an interest in public affairs, a belief in a civic duty to vote and a need to express support for a particular party or to express disapproval of performance. Norris argues that civic education is one of the most important mechanisms available for encouraging political engagement and suggests that children should learn about democracy and citizenship from an early age.

What does international research suggest we might expect about gender differences in electoral behaviour and its determinants? In terms of the gender differences in voter turnout, analyses of participation in established democracies have tended to show that women either equal or surpass men (Welch 1977; Wirls 1986; Beckwith 1986; Schlozman, Burns, Verba & Donahue 1995). Even the recent examination by Coffe & Bolzendahl (2011) of gender gaps in political participation

in sub-Saharan Africa found that in South Africa there was no significant gender gap in the probability of registering to vote, with this conclusion remaining unchanged even after socio-economic characteristics and political attitudes between men and women had been controlled for using multivariate modelling. We would therefore anticipate that our findings will show little variation between women and men in electoral participation. Because of this we intend to explore whether different determinants assume greater or lesser importance in explaining why women and men vote or abstain, drawing on the two conceptual explanations outlined above.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows: We begin by providing a methodological overview, describing the two sources of survey data employed for the analysis as well as our analytical approach. This leads into a discussion of the political mood preceding the 2011 local election, focusing particularly on levels of political support and the psychological involvement in politics displayed by voting-age women and men. After this descriptive analysis we turn to multivariate analysis of the extent to which intention to vote in municipal elections can be explained by socio-economic and attitudinal attributes conventionally associated with the cultural modernisation account of turnout behaviour and whether such characteristics assume differential importance in motivating voting decisions among women and men.

The relative contribution of institutional or rational choice factors and cultural, motivational factors in informing abstention is then investigated and discussed. Using data collected at voting stations on election day we explore the electoral experiences of voters and again determine whether any gender gaps exist. We conclude by reviewing the main findings and reflecting on the implications for our understanding of electoral participation and efforts directed at improving voter turnout in future.

## METHODOLOGY

The data we employ to examine gender differences in self-reported preferences for and determinants of electoral participation, as well as election day experience, derive from two nationally representative surveys conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (the authors) on behalf of the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC). Firstly, the 2010 Voter Participation Survey (VPS) was a study of 3 214 South African citizens aged 16 years or older living in private households. Fieldwork was undertaken in November and December 2010, six months prior to the 2011 local government elections.

The primary objective of this study was to inform and guide the commission in its plans, policies and practices. More specifically, the study evaluated voting

behaviour in South Africa, levels of interest in and perceptions of the forthcoming local government elections, the performance of municipal government, the electoral and political involvement of specific groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities and, finally, public confidence in the IEC. Population census enumerator areas (EAs), 500 of which were selected throughout South Africa, formed the primary sampling unit (PSU). In each of these areas seven households were randomly selected for interviewing, followed by the random selection of one age-eligible member in each household. Questionnaires were administered using face-to-face interviewing in the respondent's language of choice. A small qualitative component consisting of focus group discussions with special interest groups was also carried out, though these results are not reported.

The second data source used is the 2011 Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS), which was conducted on election day (18 May 2011) with the aim of determining the perceptions and experiences of voters and election observers alike concerning the freeness and fairness of the electoral process. The study also focused on assessing the operational efficiency of the IEC in managing the municipal elections.

A complex sample design was used in drawing the sample of voting stations. The design included stratification and a multi-stage sampling procedure. The database of voting stations obtained from the IEC was merged with that of the EAs. Voting stations were sampled proportionally to the dominant race type, geo-type and the number of voting stations in a given province. This was to ensure that a nationally representative sample of voting stations was selected and the results of the survey could be properly weighted to the population of eligible voters in the country.

At the voting stations fieldworkers selected voters using random sampling, to ensure a fair representation in terms of gender, race, age, and disability status. A sample of 300 voting stations countrywide was selected. At each voting station 50 voters were interviewed during the course of the day. The day was divided into four time slots to ensure a fair spread of interviews at different times, when different dynamics might have been in operation. Voters were requested to comment on various issues pertaining to the voting day.

### *Analytical strategy*

In the analysis that follows we begin by providing an overview of the political context in which the 2011 municipal elections were conducted. This is achieved by examining and comparing the political attitudes of women and men using the 2010 Voter Participation Survey. This is important since it imparts a sense of

the mood of the nation ahead of the elections and also serves as the basis for the subsequent assessment of the influence that these attitudinal indicators, such as institutional trust, political interest and political efficacy, have on voting intention. More specifically, the pre-election data are used to produce two stepwise logistic regression models of intention to vote in the 2011 municipal elections for women and men independently. We initially include a model that controls for socio-economic factors, after which a second model contains both socio-economic and political attitude control variables.

The modelling provides a clear indication of the importance of select cultural modernisation factors in determining the decision of South African women and men about whether or not to exercise their vote. Basic descriptive analysis is then undertaken to better understand motivations provided for intended electoral abstinence. The emphasis is again on the relative contribution of different considerations that dissuade or impede age-eligible citizens from voting.

The second component of our analysis uses the Election Satisfaction Survey conducted on election day to reflect more narrowly on the experiences of those women and men who eventually cast their vote. Recognising that perceptions of electoral procedures, and electoral freeness and fairness more generally, may exert an influence on future decision-making processes regarding individual electoral participation it is important to ascertain aspects of the electoral experience that receive broad approval ratings and those that are a source of concern and warrant attention.

## POLITICAL MOOD AHEAD OF THE 2011 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

In the classic election study, *The American Voter*, by Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes (1960, pp 101-102), it is contended that electoral turnout behaviour relates to what the authors termed the 'individual's psychological involvement in politics'. Similarly, Almond & Verba's influential *Civic Culture* (1963) stresses that certain civic attitudes may serve to motivate political participation, most especially certain cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations of the potential voter.

Cognitive orientations include knowledge of and beliefs about the state, political leadership and policy concerns. Affective orientations typically comprise a sense of internal and external political efficacy, a sense of duty to vote, as well as political interest, while evaluative orientations focus on traits such as personal assessments of electoral and government performance.

Cultural modernisation accounts of electoral participation tend to argue that such political attitudes are critical to understanding the decisions of the voting age population to vote or abstain. Therefore, recognising the potential salience

of civic attitudes and values in determining electoral behaviour, this section examines briefly select political attitudes using the 2010 Voter Participation Survey data in order to convey a general sense of the political mood of both female and male members of the electorate in the months prior to the 2011 local government elections. Firstly, we find a sense of underlying support for the political system by examining cognitive and evaluative elements such as satisfaction with democracy, with political leadership and municipal performance, together with measures of confidence in political and other key institutions in the country. We then direct attention to more affective attitudinal indicators, namely interest in politics, a sense of duty to vote and political efficacy. The link between such attitudes and electoral participation is addressed in a subsequent section on self-reported intention to vote.

### *Support for the political system*

Satisfaction with democracy is one of the most common indicators of political support employed in survey research. It is generally regarded as a straightforward, reasonable but nonetheless imperfect means of assessing levels of support for the way the democratic regime is working in practice (Norris 1999a,b; Canache, Mondak & Seligson 2001; Anderson 2002; Linde & Ekman 2003; Dalton 2004; Blais & Gélinau 2007; Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Davids & Hadland 2008).

The 2010 survey asked South African citizens whether they were satisfied, neutral or dissatisfied with the way democracy works in the country, with responses captured on a five-point satisfaction rating scale. From the results we found that equal shares of women were satisfied and dissatisfied (both 41%) while men were moderately more satisfied (46% satisfied and 36% dissatisfied) (Table 1). Comparing mean satisfaction scores by sex reveals that both men and women generally were relatively critical of the functioning of democracy in the country a matter of months before the election, with voting-age women on average significantly less contented than voting-age men.

This rather negative appraisal is mirrored in other indicators of political support. One such example concerns approval of elected officials. When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the current political leaders in the country, only 35% of women and 38% of men nationally were very or fairly satisfied, compared with slightly more than two-fifths of both sexes who were very or fairly dissatisfied with the performance of political leaders. A virtually indistinguishable pattern is evident regarding the perceived performance of municipalities in meeting the needs of residents, which is a fundamental measure ahead of local government elections. On aggregate, 39% of women and 38% of men

were satisfied with current municipal performance, while more than two-fifths again registered dissatisfaction. Unlike satisfaction with democracy, statistical tests indicate that gender differences in mean performance ratings of both political leaders and municipalities were not significant, suggesting that male and female members of the electorate expressed equivalent levels of discontent in the months prior to election day.

**Table 1**  
**Indicators of political support by sex (percentages and mean scores)**

	Women	Men
<b>Satisfaction with democracy</b>		
Satisfied	41	46
Neutral	18	18
Dissatisfied	41	39
Total	100	100
Mean score <sup>1</sup>	2.93	3.05*
<b>Satisfaction with current political leaders</b>		
Satisfied	35	38
Neutral	19	19
Dissatisfied	46	43
Total	100	100
Mean score <sup>1</sup>	2.77	2.84 <sup>n.s.</sup>
<b>Satisfaction with municipal performance</b>		
Satisfied	39	38
Neutral	17	18
Dissatisfied	45	44
Total	100	100
Mean score <sup>1</sup>	2.83	2.81 <sup>n.s.</sup>
<b>Institutional trust</b>		
National government (% strongly trust/trust)	51	56
Provincial government (% strongly trust/trust)	45	47
Your local government (% strongly trust/trust)	37	39
Politicians (% strongly trust/trust)	26	29
Political parties (% strongly trust/trust)	28	31
Index of confidence in the political system (0-100) <sup>2</sup>	57	59 *
Index of confidence in other institutions (0-100) <sup>2</sup>	69	71 *
Index of confidence in all institutions (0-100) <sup>2</sup>	63	65 *

Source: authors' calculations based on the HSRC's *IEC Voter Participation Survey 2010* data, which were collected in November/December 2010.

Note: <sup>1</sup> Mean of a five-point Likert scale, where 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4=satisfied and 5=very satisfied. <sup>n.s.</sup> means that the mean scores are not statistically significant based on ANOVA testing, while \* indicates that the mean scores are significant different ( $p < 0.05$ ). <sup>2</sup> The index of confidence in the political system includes: national, provincial and local government, politicians and political parties. The index of confidence in other institutions includes religious organisations, the SABC, the IEC, courts and the police. These indices have been transformed into scales ranging from 0 (no confidence) to 100 (complete confidence).



As for more specific indicators of political support, we investigated public confidence in political institutions, which has become a variable of increasing interest in studies of democratic performance in recent decades. (Norris 1999c, 2011; Dalton 2004; Bäck & Kestilä 2009; Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi 2005). Political trust is viewed as important, since declining trust is broadly perceived as dysfunctional to democracy in that it may adversely affect the implementation of government policies and the willingness of citizens to comply with the rule of law (Citrin & Muste 1993, p 465; Dalton 2004, p 12; Schyns & Koop 2010, p145; Askvik 2008).

The 2010 Voter Participation Survey included a set of items with which to evaluate various political and social institutions. Specifically, the electorate was asked to indicate its level of satisfaction with the performance of the institutions on a five-point satisfaction scale. In relation to the political system, only national government received a positive rating from more than half the adult population, with provincial government following closely behind. The relatively low trust vested in local government, political parties and politicians by men and women alike is rather sobering. Combining these items into an index of political trust we found that, in the South African context, women appeared on average to express slightly less confidence than men in the political system. The same pattern emerged in relation to other social and political institutions.

Taken together, these results suggest that, ahead of the 2011 municipal elections, the public tended to display a considerable level of concern about the supply of democracy in the country and the quality of governance, as reflected in perceptions about the performance of the democratic regime and elected officials. In most instances there was no disparity in perceptions on the basis of sex and, where gender gaps were discernible, as was the case with satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions, women were only moderately more solemn than men in outlook. The less than favourable assessment of political support offered by voting-age women and men raises questions about the implications for other attitudes that are conventionally seen as correlates of voting behaviour, such as political interest, a well-developed sense of political efficacy and a conviction that it is one's civic duty to vote. Attention will now be directed to profiling such attitudes and the extent to which they vary by sex.

### *Psychological involvement in politics*

Politically interested people have been shown in a number of studies, particularly in the United States and Western Europe, to exhibit greater political knowledge, as well as a greater likelihood of voting and participating in other forms of non-electoral politics (see, eg, Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996; Verba, Schlozman & Brady

1995; Powell 1986; Luskin 1990; Aarts & Semetko 2003; Blais 2007; Prior 2010; Bratton, Alderfer & Simutanyi 1997; Mattes & Southall 2004).

Two main measures of political interest were included in the 2010 Voter Participation Survey. Firstly, respondents were asked, 'How interested would you say you personally are in politics?', with responses captured on a four-point scale, namely: very interested, fairly interested, not very interested, not at all interested. A follow-up question was also asked: 'When you get together with your friends, relatives or fellow workers, how often do you discuss politics?'. From the results in Table 2 it is apparent that South African citizens tend to demonstrate middling levels of interest in politics. Overall, in late 2010, 38% of women and 46% of men described themselves as having fair or high interest, while the majority professed that they were not very or not at all interested in politics.

Similar results are found for the measure of frequency of political discussion. Replying to the question, 38% of women and 46% of men stated they engaged 'often' or 'sometimes' in political discussion, with greater shares indicated that they rarely or never do so. These questions were transformed into a 0-100 score and, in both instances, significance tests on differences in mean scores suggested that female citizens exhibit less political interest than their male counterparts.

In spite of the moderate levels of political support and political interest among the voting age public there was a robust belief in the duty of citizens to vote, which is indicative of the value that many South African men and women place on the right to vote in free and fair elections as the most fundamental democratic right (Blais 2000, p 93). Almost eight in ten of the electorate agreed that it was their duty to vote, with no significant sex-based differences. Also, for the most part, measures of political efficacy included in the study provided a consistent perspective, showing that the electorate still had some confidence in the political system. Internal efficacy relates to the belief that one is able to understand and effectively participate in and influence politics (Craig, Niemi & Silver 1990; Cho 2010).

About three-quarters of men and women believed their vote makes a difference, while two-thirds felt their vote would ensure that they received quality social services. More ambivalence was evident in the ability to understand politics, with women significantly more likely to struggle than men. There was an essentially favourable assessment with regard to external efficacy, which refers to perceptions of responsiveness of elected officials and politicians to public demands (Semetko & Valkenburg 1998; Cho 2010). Slightly more than one-third of respondents (38% of women, 35% of men) believed that the party they voted for did not serve their interests, with a slightly lower share (30% of women, 29% of men) expressing the view that the post-election behaviour of political parties diminishes the effectiveness of the vote.

**Table 2**  
**Political interest, citizen duty to vote and political efficacy ahead of the 2011 municipal election (percentages and mean scores)**

		Women	Men
<b>(A)</b>	<b>Political interest</b>		
(1)	Interested in politics (%)		
	Very / fairly interested	38	46
	Not very / not at all interested	62	54
	Total	100	100
	Mean score (0-100)	38	45 *
(2)	Discusses political matters (%)		
	Often / sometimes	38	46
	Rarely / never	63	54
	Total	100	100
	Mean score (0-100)	36	44 *
<b>(B)</b>	<b>Duty of citizens to vote</b>		
	Agree	78	78
	Neutral	11	10
	Disagree	12	12
	Total	100	100
	Mean score (0-100)	73	73 <sup>n.s.</sup>
<b>(C)</b>	<b>Sense of political efficacy</b>		
	<i>Internal political efficacy</i>		
(1)	My vote makes a difference		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	72	74
	Mean score (0-100)	68	70 <sup>n.s.</sup>
(2)	My vote will ensure I get quality services		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	65	67
	Mean score (0-100)	65	66 <sup>n.s.</sup>
(3)	Politics is too complicated to understand		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	41	36
	Mean score (0-100)	48	53 *
	<i>External political efficacy</i>		
(1)	Voting is pointless as all parties are the same after being elected		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	30	29
	Mean score (0-100)	57	59 <sup>n.s.</sup>
(2)	The party that I voted for did not protect my interests		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	38	35
	Mean score (0-100)	50	52 *

Source: authors' calculations based on the HSRC's *IEC Voter Participation Survey 2010* data, which were collected in November / December 2010.

Note: For the purpose of mean score analysis the scales associated with the two political interest items, the civic duty measure, as well as the first two internal political efficacy items, were reversed and transformed into 0-100 scores so that larger numbers represent greater political interest and belief in the duty to vote. The third internal political efficacy item and two external efficacy items were not reverse scaled, though they were transformed into 0-100 scores. On these measures, higher mean scores again represent a great sense of political efficacy. <sup>n.s.</sup> means that the mean scores are not statistically significant based on ANOVA testing, while \* indicates that the mean scores are significant different ( $p < 0.05$ ). Due to rounding off, column percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

What can we deduce from the analysis in this section about the prevailing political climate mere months before the 2011 municipal elections? The data suggest that the electorate exhibited considerable concern about the functioning of democracy in South Africa and was unimpressed with the performance of municipalities, political leaders, politicians and political parties, resulting in disquietingly low levels of confidence in political institutions. Voting age women were marginally more critical in this orientation than their male counterparts. Yet, in the face of such dissatisfaction, South African women and men demonstrate substantial resilience. Rather than disengaging from conventional politics there is a resolute belief in the duty to vote and a largely optimistic view of both internal and external political efficacy. If the latter attributes are indeed integral to enhancing electoral participation, in accordance with international literature on cultural modernisation theory, this bodes well for electoral turnout. Nonetheless, the empirical evidence based on the determinants of voting behaviour in South Africa remains rather circumscribed. The following section aims to contribute to establishing what encourages and dissuades women and men from casting their vote in local government elections in the country.

### INTENTION TO VOTE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The common purpose of surveys conducted prior to election day is to measure voting intentions and attitudes to a variety of election-related issues (Scheuren & Alvey 2008). The 2010 IEC Voter Participation Survey similarly examined views on electoral participation by asking respondents the following: 'If local government elections were to be held tomorrow, would you vote?'. Approximately eight in ten (79%) of those age-eligible to vote favoured turnout, 15% indicated they would prefer to abstain, with the remainder either uncertain or unwilling to say. An estimated 81% of female respondents indicated they would choose to vote, with 14% abstaining, while among male respondents 77% opted for electoral engagement and 17% preferred to withhold their vote.

For those familiar with South African election turnout statistics these percentages seem somewhat inflated.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, this is not an atypical finding, since, according to Belli, Traugott, Young & McGonagle (1999), over-reporting of voting behaviour is one of the most frequently observed survey measurement errors. Recognising this, in predicting voting intention we undertake regression

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2 It is, however, interesting to note that the share declaring an intention to vote in municipal elections is similar to the share of the voting-age population that eventually registered for the 2011 municipal elections. Combining the IEC's voters' roll data and StatsSA's mid-year population estimates, approximately 75% of the voting-age population registered for the election, with 78% of voting-age women and 71% of voting-age men ultimately registering. On election day 58% of those who registered and an estimated 43% of the voting-age population cast their vote.

analysis instead of focusing on basic descriptive statistics to explore the role of select socio-demographic attributes and political attitudes of the women and men surveyed.

Since the voting intention outcome we are attempting to model is a discrete choice between a 'yes or no' decision rather than a continuous measure of activity, use was made of logistic regression models. A step-wise approach was used for the modelling, in which a set of step-wise logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine with more precision the relationship between political variables and the voting intention measure (Appendix Table 1).

Four regressions were conducted. In the first instance, voting intention was regressed exclusively on a set of demographic and socio-economic variables for women and men separately (Models I and III). Thereafter, the voting intention measure was regressed on the same demographic and socio-economic variables, together with the following set of political attitudes and behaviour variables (Models II and IV):

- *Support for the political system*, including satisfaction with democracy, satisfaction with the current political leadership and the trust in institutions index.
- *Political efficacy and civic duty*, which comprised three items on internal political efficacy, two items on external political efficacy and one item on the duty to vote.
- *Government responsiveness*, as measured by a general municipal performance variable, and the Service Delivery Index.
- *Political engagement and knowledge*, which included the 0-100 point scales on interest in politics, discussion of political matters, following politics in the media, an item on interest in municipal elections, as well as the local government knowledge index.
- *Political participation*, which consisted of indicators of whether respondents were registered voters and had voted in previous elections, in addition to the group membership index, political participation index and political activism index.
- *Issue salience*, as measured by the composite index (0-100 scale) of the importance attached to public policy issues in voting decisions.

This modelling method enables researchers to ascertain the additional power of the political variables in explaining the intention to vote among the survey respondents. In presenting the regression results only those variables that had a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) effect on the voting intention indicator were retained.

A comparison of Models I and III reveals that a number of the demographic and household socio-economic variables were statistically significant predictors of voting intention for both women and men. Age was shown to be positively related to the intention to vote in municipal elections for both, suggesting that older women and men are more inclined to want to vote than younger citizens. Indian women and white men were less inclined to want to vote than their African counterparts, with no significant difference between other population groups with regard to voting intention.

Educational attainment, religious affiliation and disability status were all statistically insignificant determinants of voting intention. The only exception was in the case of women, where those with a tertiary education were more likely to express an intention to vote than women with no formal education. As for household characteristics, household size and living standard levels do not emerge as significant predictors in the base models for men and women. Geographic location also does not play a strong role.

For women, rural/urban residence does not have a bearing on voting intention, while only those living in the Free State are less inclined to vote than those in the Eastern Cape. For men, those in formal urban areas are less likely to express an intention to vote in municipal elections than their counterparts in rural, traditional authority areas. Additionally, men based in the Free State are less inclined to vote relative to those in the Eastern Cape, while those in Limpopo are more predisposed towards electoral participation.

Turning now to the models that introduce a variety of political variables alongside the full range of respondent characteristics to better understand the specific effects on voting decisions (Models II and IV), a number of salient findings emerge. In these models, indicators of *support for the political system* are not significantly associated with voting intention for men and women, controlling for other political and social-demographic variables. Nonetheless, it is apparent that *political efficacy* matters in choosing whether or not to cast one's vote in municipal elections. One of the three internal political efficacy measures ('my vote makes a difference') has a significant, positive regression coefficient for women and men alike, while for men another internal efficacy item ('vote will ensure I receive quality services') was also a significant predictor. This means that a belief in the power of the vote to influence political outcomes is an important factor in electoral choice.

For women exclusively, external political efficacy is also important to some degree, with those who believe the party they voted for looked after their interests generally appearing to be more inclined to electoral participation. Similarly, a belief that it is one's duty to vote also increases the odds that women (but not men) will vote in municipal elections.

As for the contribution of evaluations of *state responsiveness* to voter decisions, none of the three indicators included was statistically significant in the case of men, controlling for all other variables. For women, the more positively they rated the performance of government's service delivery efforts the greater was the chance that they would vote. This seems to suggest that it is the contented rather than the discontented who are more likely to express an intention to vote, a phenomenon referred to by the economist J K Galbraith (1992) in relation to voting behaviour in the United States as the 'culture of contentment'.

*Political engagement* also appears to matter to both female and male citizens, with those who are more interested in municipal elections generally following through and expressing the intention to vote. The interest in politics scale, discussion of politics scale and follow political media scale are all insignificant, at the 5% level. However, if each of the political engagement indicators is included in regressions individually (results not shown) all emerge as significant predictors of voting intention. Therefore, being engaged politically, whether by being interested in and discussing political events, by following political developments in the media, or by being interested in local government elections, clearly exerts an influence over whether one decides to turn out on election day. So, too, does awareness of one's ward committee, councillor or candidates. Awareness of ward committees and councillors in one's area is also a predictor of intention to vote among women, though it does not emerge as a significant factor for men.

*Participation in politics* exerts a strong influence on voter decisions, with those who have previously participated in an election significantly more likely to declare an intention to vote in municipal elections than those who have not. Women who have voted in past elections are 5.7 times more inclined to vote than women who have not yet participated in a post-1994 election, while men with a history of electoral participation are 6.2 times more likely to vote than those who have never voted. The political participation index is also a significant indicator when included in the regression model. Therefore participation in electoral and non-electoral politics is also a notable determinant of municipal turnout.

In sum, the decision whether or not to vote in municipal elections is related to various factors. Yet it would seem that the most critical components are the belief in the power of one's vote in determining electoral and other political decisions, a conviction that the political system is responsive to change through individual or collective action, whether one is interested in politics or not, whether one feels it is one's civic or moral obligation to vote and whether one has a personal history of casting one's vote in a democratic South Africa.

This finding augurs well for voter turnout, given the cultural modernisation theory, which proclaims that voter turnout is related to civic attitudes and values, interest in public affairs, a belief in a civic duty to vote and habits of

civic commitment through experiences in successive elections. This finding is of immediate relevance for voter education initiatives undertaken by the IEC and other stakeholders, especially in promoting messages about the power of voting in making a difference, the importance of exercising one's right to vote, as well as strengthening programmes aimed at instilling a culture of voting by getting young South Africans interested in, discussing and following political events.

### *Abstention*

As the 2011 local government elections approached there were a number of media reports of incidents of discontented citizens expressing the intention to deliberately abstain from casting their vote on election day as a form of protest. In order to gain greater insight into the role played by different rational choice and cultural modernisation factors in driving voter abstention this section examines the principal reasons for abstention given by those respondents to the 2010 Voter Participation Survey who indicated that they would not vote if local government elections were to be held tomorrow.

Among those age-eligible to vote who specified they would abstain, the largest cluster of reasons by a considerable margin related to a lack of interest and disillusionment (66% for women, 65% for men) (Table 3). Chief among the explanations offered within this grouping is general lack of interest (38%), while lack of interest in political parties accounts for another 7%. Disillusionment with politics is cited by 8%, while 11% mention that casting a vote would not make a difference. These reasons all relate to the cultural modernisation account of electoral behaviour. Only nominal differences exist between self-declared female and male abstainers in the shares citing different aspects of disillusionment and lack of interest.

Turning to reasons that would typically be categorised as part of a rational choice account of voting we find that only 18% of self-reported abstainers cited administrative barriers as a reason. Of these barriers, not being registered and lack of the documentation required to register predominate. When analysed by the sex of the respondent it was clear that possession of the necessary documents presented more of a barrier for women than for men. Other barriers, such as polling stations being too far away or queues being too long, were, surprisingly, not an issue for women. Obstacles such as intimidation or personal reasons such as ill health, migrancy or illiteracy account for nominal shares.

A review of the justifications provided by respondents for their intended abstention from municipal elections therefore indicates that at this juncture in South Africa's democracy the barriers to participating in elections are primarily associated with factors related to cultural modernisation theory. By contrast,



rational choice barriers serve as a disincentive to voting in municipal elections for approximately a fifth of cases for women and men alike. This is a salient finding, since, in electoral management operations over the last decade, much emphasis has been placed on improving registration processes, access to voting stations, accommodating the special needs of women, the aged and disabled, easing voting procedures and strengthening safety and security measures. Arguably, the subsidiary position of rational choice factors underlying abstention may – at least to some extent – reflect a history of efficient management by the IEC of previous elections as well as the laudable strides the IEC has made in addressing such logistical challenges in recent elections.

**Table 3**  
**Reasons for not intending to vote (column%)**

	Reasons why I would not vote if there was a municipal election tomorrow	Women	Men	All
(A)	<b>Cultural Modernisation Explanations</b>			
	Lack of interest and disillusionment	66	65	65
	Not interested	38	38	38
	My vote would not make a difference	11	11	11
	Disillusioned with politics	9	6	8
	Not interested in any of the existing political parties	7	8	7
	Too much effort required	0	2	1
	Only one party could win	1	0	0
(B)	<b>Rational Choice Factors</b>			
	Administrative barriers	18	18	18
	Not registered as a voter	10	11	11
	Do not possess necessary documents to register	7	4	5
	Polling station too far away	0	1	1
	Very long queues	0	1	1
	Lack of transport	0	0	0
	No assistance is given to persons with disabilities	0	0	0
	Do not know where to vote	0	0	0
	Intimidation	1	2	2
	My employer would not allow me to vote	1	2	2
	My spouse or partner would not allow me to vote	0	0	0
	Fear of intimidation or violence	0	0	0
	Individual barriers	3	2	2
	Health reasons or sick	1	1	1
	I am away from home	1	1	1
	I do not know how to read and write	1	0	0
(C)	<b>Other</b>	12	13	13
	Total	100	100	100
	Unweighted N	261	233	494

Source: HSRC. 2011. *IEC Voter Participation Survey, Nov/Dec 2010*

Note: Due to rounding off, row percentages may not add up to exactly 100%

The results may also be seen to contain a cautionary message about the potential downward pressure that political disillusionment, reduced political interest and loss of a sense of internal political efficacy could begin to impose on voter turnout in future elections.

While political support and psychological involvement in politics appear to matter to participating and abstaining in South African elections, rational choice theorists would assert that a voter's actual experience on election day is likely to shape the cost-benefit equation that plays a role in influencing decisions about whether or not she decides to participate in successive elections. Accordingly, while positive experiences are likely to encourage future voting, it could be contended that difficulties in accessibility, or incidences of long queues or intimidation at voting stations could possibly deter electoral turnout. With this in mind we now turn to data from the Election Satisfaction Survey (henceforth 2011 ESS) in order to better determine the nature of the experiences of female and male voters on election day.<sup>3</sup>

### ELECTION DAY EXPERIENCE

From an electoral politics perspective the fourth local government elections, held on 18 May 2011, were notable for the record number of South African voters registered (23.7-million, or 75% of the voting-age population) and for a higher than anticipated level of turnout (58% of registered voters and 44% of the voting-age population). Schulz-Herzenberg (2011) has shown how this represents an improvement on all indicators relative to the 2000 and 2006 local elections.

In terms of sex differences in voter participation 78% of voting-age women compared to 71% of voting-age men registered. As for turnout, 62% of registered women and 53% of registered men voted.<sup>4</sup> This translates into an estimated 43% of voting-age women and 38% of voting-age men.<sup>5</sup> In this section we use the 2011 ESS data to examine levels of satisfaction recorded by those who made it to the ballot box with specific dimensions of their experience on election day as well as their overall evaluation.

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3 The Election Satisfaction Survey is, in many respects, similar in design to an exit poll, though the principal difference is that it does not explicitly ask respondents which party they voted for. This is due to the fact that the IEC commissioned the study as an input into determining whether elections were free and fair as well as to assist in identifying areas warranting attention as part of future electoral management efforts. The intention was never to predict election results before official results were made available, as is common with exit polls.

4 The shares of registered men and women who voted are official statistics obtained from the IEC.

5 The share of voting-age men and women who voted was calculated by taking IEC voting statistics and dividing by StatsSA's mid-year population estimates. For this reason the results are to be considered indicative rather than definitive because of a likely margin of error in the population estimates.

Specifically, we examine voter ratings of voting station accessibility, voting procedures, safety and secrecy of the vote and performance of electoral staff. We then examine the extent to which male and female voters perceived the elections as free and fair. It should be remembered that we are reporting here exclusively on the experiences of those who made it to their voting stations and cast their vote in May 2011. Considerable numbers of both registered voters and the voting-age public abstained from voting and their views are thus not accounted for here. The motives for abstention were explored in the preceding section, using the 2010 Voter Participation Survey data.

### *Accessibility*

The IEC places a strong emphasis on progressively widening access to voters. In order to ensure this, the commission has committed itself to continuous innovation, informed by research. Recognising that long queues and travelling distance are barriers to voter participation the IEC established 20 859 voting stations around the country for the 2011 municipal elections – an increase of 1 133 compared to the 2009 national elections. The 2011 municipal elections also marked the first time that special voting was available for voters. This implied that voters who were eligible to vote and whose name appeared on the voters' roll but who could not vote on election day at the specific voting station qualified for a special vote. Special arrangements were also made for the physically infirm or disabled.

With regard to access to voting stations, men and women reported similar experiences. On average, it took 17 minutes to reach the voting station (regardless of the mode of transport), with only a third indicating that it took them longer than 15 minutes. In terms of actual queuing, voters waited on average 23 minutes to cast their vote. Almost all (97%) of both male and female voters were satisfied with the instructions and signs at voting stations.

### *Ease of voting procedures*

In terms of electoral processes there was near universal agreement (98%) that the procedures inside the voting station – which include names being checked on the voters' roll, identity documents being stamped and thumbs inked, being issued with ballot papers, going to the voting booth and placing the ballot in the ballot box – were 'very' or 'somewhat' easy to understand. Again, no significant differences were found between male and female voters. In terms of groups with special needs, both male and female participants agreed that they were highly satisfied with provisions made (Table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Satisfaction with IEC's provisions for people with special needs**  
**(percentages and mean scores)**

	All		Male		Female	
	% responding to 'a great' or 'some' extent	Mean (0-100 scale)	% responding to 'a great' or 'some' extent	Mean (0-100 scale)	% responding to 'a great' or 'some' extent	Mean (0-100 scale)
The elderly	90	89	90	89	90	89
Persons with disabilities	80	83	80	83	81	84
The partially sighted	70	81	70	81	71	81
The blind	66	79	66	79	66	80
Women	84	86	83	86	85	86
Women with babies	78	85	77	85	79	84

Source: HSRC. 2011. *IEC Election Satisfaction Survey*, 18 May

Note: Mean scores are based on a four-point scale where 1=To a great extent, 2=To some extent, 3=To a minor extent and 4=Not at all. The scale was reversed and transformed into a 0-100 score, with 0 representing Not at all and 100 representing To a great extent. Do not know values were omitted from consideration.

A substantial majority of voters recognised these efforts and acknowledged that voting procedures on election day considered to 'a great' or 'some' extent the needs of the elderly (90%), women (84%), persons with disabilities (80%), women with babies (78%), the partially sighted (70%) and the blind (66%). The lower levels of agreement reported in the cases of the blind and partially sighted are attributable to a relatively high level of voter uncertainty. None of the mean score differences between male and female voters presented in Table 4 is statistically significant, suggesting a consensual (and favourable) position on the IEC's performance in accommodating the requirements of special needs groups.

#### *Voter safety and secrecy of the vote*

Ensuring the secrecy of the vote is an integral component of the electoral process and, ultimately, of the credibility of elections, in accordance with the IEC's guiding principle that 'Your vote is your secret'. Votes are cast in booths where voters are alone to make their mark on ballot papers that are subsequently placed in sealed ballot boxes. With nearly all voters (97%) happy about the secrecy of their vote – 76% 'very satisfied' and 21% 'somewhat satisfied' – it seems a fair assertion that a convincing job has been done in respect of this aspect of the electoral process. No

significant differences were found between the experiences of male and female voters.

### *Satisfaction with electoral staff*

For the 2011 municipal elections the IEC appointed approximately 215 000 officials (presiding officers, deputy presiding officers and voting officers) from various sectors of society to manage election activities at voting stations and ensure the efficient operation of voting and counting procedures. Recognising the importance of properly skilled, competent and impartial electoral staff to the overall success of election activities at voting station level as well as nationally, the IEC places considerable importance on recruitment and training procedures. Therefore, voter evaluations of the performance of IEC officials on election day are, to a considerable degree, a reflection of the rigour of the recruitment process and the quality of the training approach and materials as well as the trainers themselves. On aggregate, 97% of voters were 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied with the quality of service rendered by IEC officials on election day, which is a tremendous compliment to the systems established by the IEC as well as to the dedication and commitment of electoral staff. No significant differences were found between the experiences of male and female voters.

### *Overall evaluations of electoral freeness and fairness*

The delivery of free and fair elections not only represents a core component of the IEC's constitutional mandate, it also stands at the heart of the organisation's vision and mission statement. It is thus testimony to the electoral management performance of the IEC that the voting public was overwhelmingly confident that the 2011 municipal elections were both free and fair (95% and 94% respectively) with problems being reported in only a minority of cases (Table 5). No statistically significant differences were evident on the basis of the sex of voters.

A fundamental component in determining whether elections are free and fair is the absence or presence of coercion and intimidation (UNGA 1999). Recognising this, the ESS asked voters the following question: 'Did anyone try to force you to vote for a certain political party?'. On aggregate, 94% of the voting public reported that no one tried to force them to vote for a certain political party. The remaining 6% declared that they *had* experienced coercion – 5% prior to arriving at their voting station and 1% while waiting in a queue to vote. Of those who had experienced coercion, political parties and family members or friends were the most commonly mentioned perpetrators, followed, to a much lesser extent, by other voters and election officials. No statistical difference was noted in the

reported experience of coercion to vote for a specific political party by sex or disability status.

**Table 5**  
**South African perceptions of electoral freeness and fairness**

	All	Male	Female
<i>Do you think that the election procedures were free?</i>			
Yes, completely free	95	94	95
Yes, with minor problems	2	2	2
Not at all free	1	1	1
Don't know	2	3	2
<i>Do you think that the election procedures were fair?</i>			
Yes, completely fair	94	94	94
Yes, with minor problems	2	2	2
Not at all fair	1	1	1
Don't know	3	3	3
<i>Did anyone try to force you to vote for a certain political party?</i>			
Yes, before coming to the voting station	5	5	5
Yes, while waiting to vote	1	1	1
No, not at all	94	94	94

Sources: HSRC. 2011. *IEC Election Satisfaction Survey*, 18 May

The analysis of the 2011 ESS data reveals that female and male voters were uniformly and overwhelmingly satisfied with different aspects of their election day experience. This is a reassuring result in that it signals that most of the voters are unlikely to have experienced difficulties or irregularities that will adversely influence future turnout decisions. The implication, however, is that we need to focus again on the reasons and barriers that prevented those members of the voting age population (both registered and unregistered) from participating in the elections. As observed in the previous section, these motivating factors relate principally to political attitudes associated with cultural modernisation, coupled, to a lesser extent, with some lingering administrative barriers.

## CONCLUSION

Steadily declining patterns of voter turnout in established democracies have been a matter of concern and controversy among political scientists for several decades (Blais 2007). Researchers have long sought to understand the reasons for participation in elections and the differentials in voter turnout. High voter turnouts are often considered desirable as they are generally seen as evidence of the legitimacy of the system in place.

This article has focused on analysing recent empirical evidence from South Africa to reflect on turnout in local government elections. In so doing we have attempted to better understand how turnout in the country relates to two conceptual accounts of participation in elections, namely rational choice and cultural modernisation (Norris 2004). The rational choice approach focuses on the behavioural decisions the electorate makes based on weighing up the costs and benefits of voting, with people deciding to vote in instances where the benefits (opportunity to vote) exceed the costs (institutional and physical barriers) and abstaining where the converse applies.

In this context, costs would include the monetary and time considerations involved in registering to vote, proximity to voting stations, ease of voting procedures and the quality of general electoral management. Cultural accounts differ in that they emphasise that people vote or abstain based upon deeply embedded habits that are reinforced with each electoral experience and which are informed by motivational political attitudes such as political interest, political efficacy and a sense of duty to vote, in addition to facilitative factors such as individual socio-economic status and resource availability (Blais 2007; Bühlmann & Freitag 2006).

Using data collected six months prior to the 2011 local elections we found that the voting-age population was reasonably critical in its level of support for the political system, based on core indicators such as satisfaction with democracy, political leaders and municipalities and confidence in political institutions. However, these concerns, together with moderate levels of political interest, have not resulted in apathy and electoral disengagement, as the South African electorate continues to display a resilient belief in the civic duty to vote and an entrenched sense of internal and external political efficacy. To some degree these findings are reflected in our multivariate analysis of voting intention.

Political support variables were not significant predictors of voting among women, while, for men, only satisfaction with political leaders achieved statistical significance. Instead, for both women and men, a belief in the power of one's vote (internal efficacy), a conviction about the responsiveness of the political system (external efficacy), political interest, and a history of voting in previous elections were salient determinants of the intention to vote in municipal elections.

In other instances there are notable sex-based differences in the determinants of electoral behaviour. Interestingly, a civic or moral obligation to vote was only a significant predictor of electoral behaviour for voting-age women, as was satisfaction with services provided by the government and knowledge about local government. Additional descriptive analysis of the motives for abstaining suggests that, irrespective of sex, cultural factors predominate, especially a lack of political interest and the loss of a sense of internal political efficacy, while rational

choice factors such as concerns about registration and voting procedures were cited in barely a fifth of cases.

The results of the 2011 Election Satisfaction Survey demonstrated that both female and male voters were overwhelmingly positive about their election day experiences. Such evaluations suggest that the IEC has performed well in its efforts to address rational choice barriers associated with registration and voting by promoting accessibility of voting stations, improving procedures to better accommodate the needs of special groups (including women), holding the election on a public holiday, as well as ensuring the secrecy of the vote and the impartiality of electoral staff. Indeed, this is reflected in the considerable gains in public confidence vested in the IEC in the past decade (Struwig, Roberts, Pillay, Rule & Vivier 2011a).

Based on cross-national analysis, Norris (2004) concluded that rather than advocating for a polarised view of rational choice versus cultural theories of participation in elections we should be recognising the contributory role each set of factors plays in influencing and explaining political participation. We would argue that the South African case offers some confirmatory evidence for this assertion.

Admittedly, this preliminary investigation of turnout in local government elections using two nationally representative datasets demonstrates that cultural factors appear to play a central role in influencing who votes and who abstains in the country. Yet the fact that factors associated with rational choice theory are cited by an estimated fifth of self-declared abstainers means that this account still matters if we are to achieve a more holistic and dynamic understanding of electoral turnout and craft an appropriate and differentiated set of interventions to encourage engagement in future elections.

In recent years attention has been devoted primarily to making registration and voting procedures easier and more effective. The IEC will need in the future to consolidate the gains it has made in this regard to ensure that the benefits of electoral participation continue to surpass the costs for most members of the electorate. The importance of civic orientation in motivating participatory behaviour signifies that civic and democracy education both in classrooms and within community settings requires prioritisation in coming years, as does the need for elected officials to demonstrate political accountability to the voting public.

The well-established sense of duty to vote and the political efficacy that exists among the voting-age population must be recognised as an encouraging sign for turnout in local elections. Even so, there is an inherent risk that these values might, over time, be increasingly challenged and eroded by rising disaffection about the supply of democracy and performance of political institutions in the



country, alongside middling levels of political interest, with adverse consequences for conventional forms of political participation such as voting.

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Western Cape	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Northern Cape	a	a	-1.223	0.294	a	a	a	a
Free State	-1.079	0.340	-2.087	0.124	-0.932	0.394	-1.525	0.218
KwaZulu-Natal	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
North West	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Gauteng	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Mpumalanga	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Limpopo	a	a	a	a	0.835	2.305	a	a
<b>(C) Political variables</b>								
<i>(C1) Support for the political system</i>								
Satisfaction with democracy	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Satisfaction with current political leadership	...	...	a	a	...	...	0.273	1.314
Institutional trust index (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
<i>(C2) Political efficacy</i>								
My vote makes a difference	...	...	0.020	1.020	...	...	0.010	1.010
Politics is too complicated	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
My vote will ensure I get quality services	...	...	a	a	...	...	0.015	1.015
Voting is pointless as all parties are the same after being elected	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Party I voted for did not protect my interests	...	...	0.011	1.011	...	...	a	a
<i>(C3) Civic duty</i>								
Duty to vote	...	...	0.019	1.019	...	...	a	a
<i>(C4) Government responsiveness</i>								
Municipal performance	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Service delivery index (0-100)	...	...	0.018	1.018	...	...	a	a

	Women				Men			
Model:	I		II		III		IV	
<i>Explanatory variables in equation</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>
<b>(C5) Political engagement</b>								
Interested in politics (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Discuss political matters (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Follow politics in media index (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Interested in municipal elections	...	...	0.642	1.900	...	...	0.663	1.941
<b>(C6) Political knowledge</b>								
Local government knowledge index	...	...	0.222	1.249	...	...	a	a
<b>(C7) Participation in politics</b>								
Registered as voter	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Voted in previous elections	...	...	1.734	5.665	...	...	1.864	6.450
Group membership index	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Political participation index	...	...	-0.018	0.982	...	...	a	a
Political activism index	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
<b>(C8) Opinion on public policy issues</b>								
Issue salience index	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Constant	-0.7738		-4.389		0.5879		-3.452	
Pseudo R-squared	0.050		0.341		0.069		0.280	
Number of observations	1 632		1 336		1 299		1 046	

Reference variables are: African (race), no schooling (education level), low living standards (LSM), rural traditional authority area (location) and Eastern Cape (province). The symbol 'a' means that the variable is not in the equation as it did not have a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) effect on the voting intention indicator, while '...' indicates that the item set was not included in the model. Estimates are logit coefficients, while O.R. signifies the Odds Ratios from the logistic model.