

AN ANALYSIS OF THE VALUE PATTERNS OF SOUTH AFRICAN ELITES ON SELECTED MORAL ISSUES

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Abstract

Political transitions that mark a breakaway from one regime to another, are in many instances accompanied by decisive shifts in the basic value orientations of the old order to the new. Significantly, such shifts usually have a definite impact on the public policy-making process. It would, therefore, be fair to assume that in South Africa, where a distinction can be made between old and new order leadership, two divergent sets of moral values would inform the policy-making process. The data of 2000 Opinion-leader Survey was employed to establish whether such a 'value rift' does indeed exist among those who may be able to influence South African public policy. Surprisingly, it was found that with the exception of a few items, South African opinion leaders largely share similar value orientations on a number of topical moral issues. It is argued that the liberal orientation of the South African Constitution may have had a significant impact on the orientations of South African opinion leaders.

1. Introduction

Not all of the many demands made upon government receive serious consideration by the public policy-makers. Public problems must compete for attention due to limited time and resources. Those problems that do receive attention constitute the policy agenda. It is only really when there is a serious difference among the public on how to resolve the problem that it becomes an issue.

With the exception of natural disasters, very few political and social problems reach agenda status without being promoted by the elite or opinion-leaders (these concepts will be used interchangeably). These are the people that determine 'who gets what, when, (and) how' or to put it in David Easton's well known phrase, they are involved in the 'authoritative allocation of scarce resources and values for the whole society'. Elites would include those people who hold 'authoritative positions in powerful public and private organisations and influential movements, who are therefore able to affect strategic decisions regularly'.¹

In previous studies on the role of elites in South Africa, with reference to the political transition and the public policy-making process, the following aspects were emphasised:

- elites are the 'switchmen of history' and as such are the societal agents through which broader forces such as ethnicity, class, religion, etc. are filtered to ordinary people;
- the most important agents in the transition were the political leaders - an important part of the elite; and,
- the ability of the elite (or individuals in the elite) to affect decision, attitudes and behaviour is a function of either power or influence².

1. This definition is a slightly adapted version of the one used by Higley, et al (1976:17).

2. Power can be defined as the ability to make offers and threats that are likely to alter the motivations of persons other than the power-wielder (Higley, et al 1976:17). Influence, on the other hand, can be seen as the ability of an individual or group to initiate voluntary adjustments and change in attitudes, opinions or behaviour of another individual or group by means of persuasive reasoning or conduct. (See Bell, 1974:4).

There is, therefore, no doubt about the important position that elites occupy in the policy-making process.

Recognition of the existence of a public problem and the need to act are the first steps in the policy process. The actual policy formulation is a complex and highly diffuse set of procedures with different issue networks at work³. In both the agenda-setting and policy formulation processes opinion-leaders from various sectors of society play a major role in bringing the problem to the attention of policy-makers and choosing a solution to the problem. The bulk of the decisions that opinion-leaders make regarding public policy issues are to a large extent based on their social values⁴.

This article deals with the elite's attitudes to a selection of social issues, some of which are very relevant in the contemporary policy debate in South Africa. Knowledge of the position that the elite takes on these and other issues makes it possible to get an understanding of the value patterns on which most human decisions are based. This article represents an effort to present a measurement of some value patterns – in this case a very broad division between conservative and liberal – of the South African elite by means of a 'value' scale. An important motivation for measuring the values of elites is expressed by Feldman (1988: 418) who writes that political evaluations may be based, in part, 'on the extent to which policies, and actions are consistent or inconsistent with certain important beliefs and values... Policies and actions are simply judged right or wrong because of their implications for deeply-held values'. Understanding the value patterns of opinion-leaders may therefore give us an indication of their policy preferences and performance judgements of policies.

2. Strategy of enquiry

The Centre for International and Comparative Politics (CICP) has over the past decade conducted an in-depth analysis of the social, political and economic transformation taking place in South Africa. A longitudinal study on the attitudes and values of the country's elite formed one of the core elements of this project. Since 1990 five opinion-leader surveys (1990, 1992, 1993, 1995 and 1998) have allowed us to build up an extensive database on South African elite perspectives⁵. The sixth of these surveys, the '2000 National Opinion-leader Survey', was completed late in 2000. Data obtained from the 2000 survey will be analysed in this analysis.

The Sample

A positional sample – the most widely used approach in elite sampling (Hoffman-Lange, 1987:29-32) – was employed to select respondents for this particular survey. Such a procedure implies that individuals holding the most authoritative positions in influential institutions are approached to participate as respondents in a survey. This project has identified respondents in eight key sectors (see Table 1) – covering the public and private spheres of South African society – to complete a structured questionnaire on some of the most pressing issues facing the nation.

The selection of the elite sectors was based primarily on the following criteria:

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3. For a discussion on the policy formulation process see Howlett and Ramesh, 1995:122-136.
 4. Rokeach (1968:124) defines values as follows: 'I consider a value to be a type of belief, centrally located within one's total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave, or about some end-state of existence worth or not worth attaining'
 5. See amongst others the following publications based upon these studies: Kotzé (1991), Kotzé and Du Toit (1995), and Kinghorn and Kotzé, (1997).

- The sector must be regarded as important by experts on the South African scene in terms of the power and influence it has in policy issues (for example, parliament, the civil service, the business sector); and,
- The sector is regarded as important if it fulfills some or other formal representative function (for example, the churches or trade unions)

Table 1: Respondents in the different sectors of society

Sector		Composition of Sectors	No of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	Parliament	Available Members of the National Assembly	103	26.2%
2	Civil Service	The ten most senior officials in each government department	63	16.0%
3	Business	CEO's and directors from top South African companies	54	13.7%
4	Media	Managers, editors and senior journalists of the print and electronic media.	39	9.9%
5	Trade Unions	Most senior members of COSATU and its affiliates	42	10.7%
6	NGO's	Top managers and researchers in the NGO sector	62	15.8%
7	Churches	Executive members of South Africa's largest churches	21	5.3%
8	Agriculture	Executive members of national and regional agricultural unions.	9	2.3%
Total Survey			393	100%

The market research company, Markinor, was contracted by the CICP to distribute and collect completed questionnaires - parliamentary and agricultural sectors received their questionnaires by mail. Due to an initially low response rate among parliamentarians, a second batch of questionnaires was mailed, followed by a third that was distributed by fieldworkers of the CICP. From the original sample of 804, a realised response rate of 48.8% (N=393) was achieved.

Nearly fifty six percent of respondents (N=211) named the ANC as their party of preference - an increase of 10.5% percentage points on the 1998 survey (The valid percentage is used here because 16 respondents out of 393 refused to declare their party allegiance). Since the questionnaire was printed before the launch of the Democratic Alliance (DA), no provision was made for this particular political grouping in the party category. Inferences regarding support for the DA were made by combining support for the Democratic Party (DP), New National Party (NNP) and the Federal Alliance (FA). Combined, respondents supporting these three parties constitute 31% (N=119) of the sample. Of these 35 were NNP supporters.

It should be noted that unlike public surveys, elite surveys should not be used to draw conclusions about the attitudes of a whole population. Their value lies in the ability to discern particular trends among the most influential decision-makers in both the public and private sphere. The fact that some parties or racial groupings are over- or under represented in this sample should, therefore, not detract from the usefulness of this study. Concern may, for example, be raised about the fact that 'only' 56% of the respondents reported support for the African National Congress (ANC) whilst the party drew nearly two thirds of the vote in the 1999 election. It should, however, be remembered that in sectors like business, the media, agriculture, and to some extent the NGO sector, supporters of the Democratic Alliance (DA) still occupy a disproportionate number of influential positions. Furthermore, it must be mentioned that a relatively low response rate among parliamentarians (under 30%) and to some extent also among the civil service may have detracted from achieving a higher overall response rate and thus also higher support levels for the ANC.

Socialisation

An important aspect regarding the opinion-leaders is their process of political socialisation⁶. The question is to whether the social and political origins of the elite are important for the attitudes they hold. The following generalisations are almost without exception true as far as the social background of elites are concerned: political leaders are recruited in a disproportional way from the upper-status professions and privileged families; the social background of the administrative elite is just as exclusive as that of the political leaders; economic and other sub-elites come from even more privileged social backgrounds than that of the political and administrative elite - especially in capitalist states; and, other strategic elites such as the journalists and church leaders all show an exclusive background. In most modern societies it is only labour leaders who have relatively modest backgrounds⁷.

This general picture regarding recruitment to the elite does not hold in all respects for South Africa. The kind of political system - apartheid - which existed until 1994 reflected in the composition of the elite. Recruitment from the top positions in the various sectors took place mainly from the well educated in the white group. However, this situation changed dramatically since the advent of democratic government in South Africa. This change is expected to be reflected in the composition and socialisation pattern of the present elite. For instance, the racial composition of the supporters of the ANC and DA differ remarkably (see figure 1). Against the background of the different patterns of socialisation during the apartheid era this factor may explain some of the differences between the supporters of the two parties.

In all descriptions of the socialisation process and its possible influence on value patterns it should be noted that apartheid impacted virtually on all socialisation agents. In

6. Political socialisation is a twofold process. On the one hand, an individual acquires certain attitudes and orientations regarding politics and life in general and s/he is integrated into a political context through the political culture of the group, as well as learning his/her role in the group. On the other hand, it is a process whereby a society transfers political norms, behaviour and convictions from one generation to the next. In terms of this conceptualisation, socialisation is a lifelong process. The agents of political socialisation include the following: the family, educational institutions such as schools and universities, peer groups, political organisations such as political parties, and non-political organisations such as churches and social clubs. See Sears (1974) for a discussion of the concept.

7. For a more elaborate discussion of these aspects see Putnam, 1976:22-26. See also Barton, et al, 1973:125 and Bonilla, 1970:79-84.

addition differences in important demographic variables such as gender (figure 2), age (figure 3), levels of education (figure 4) and religious preference (table 2) may also have led to variations in socialisation. However, since party policy plays such an important role in determining policy outcomes, party support will be used as the independent variable in this description of value patterns among the elite. I will, therefore, mainly focus on the values regarding social issues of supporters of the two largest parties, the ANC and DA. This approach finds support in the work of Putnam (1976:88-89) where he states that: 'Elite beliefs are usually structured by partisan ideological commitment often along the familiar Left-Right continuum... Knowing where a leader stands on one issues is likely to help us understand and predict his stance even on tangential or as yet undiscussed matters'.

Figure 1: Racial composition of ANC and DA supporters

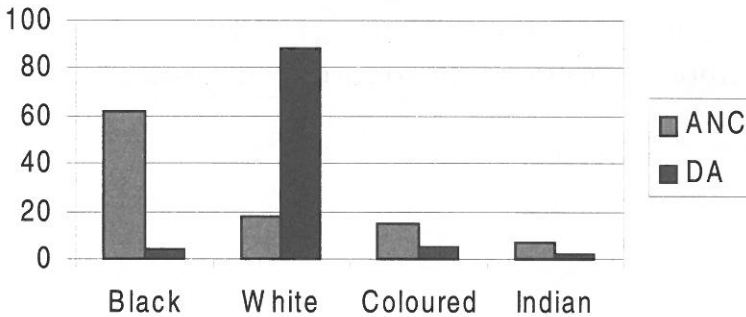
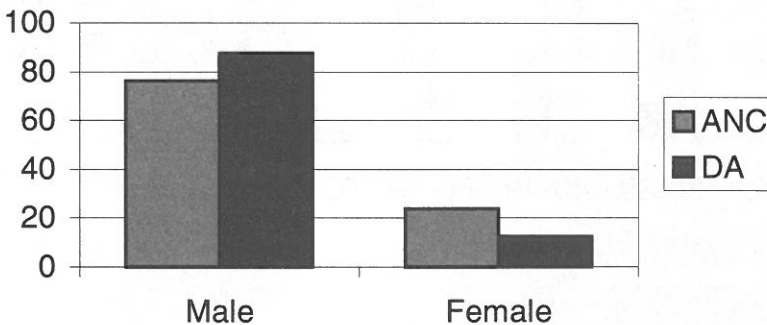
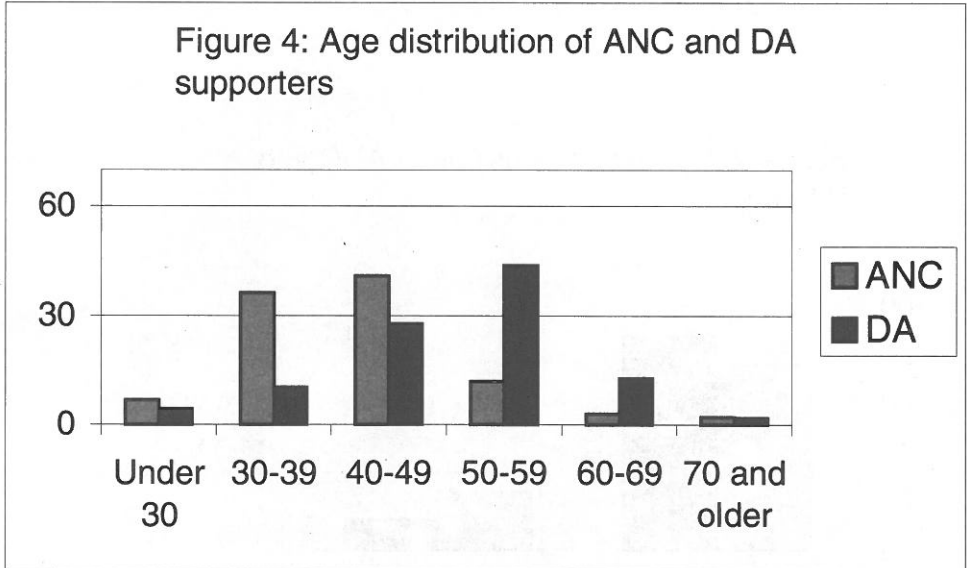
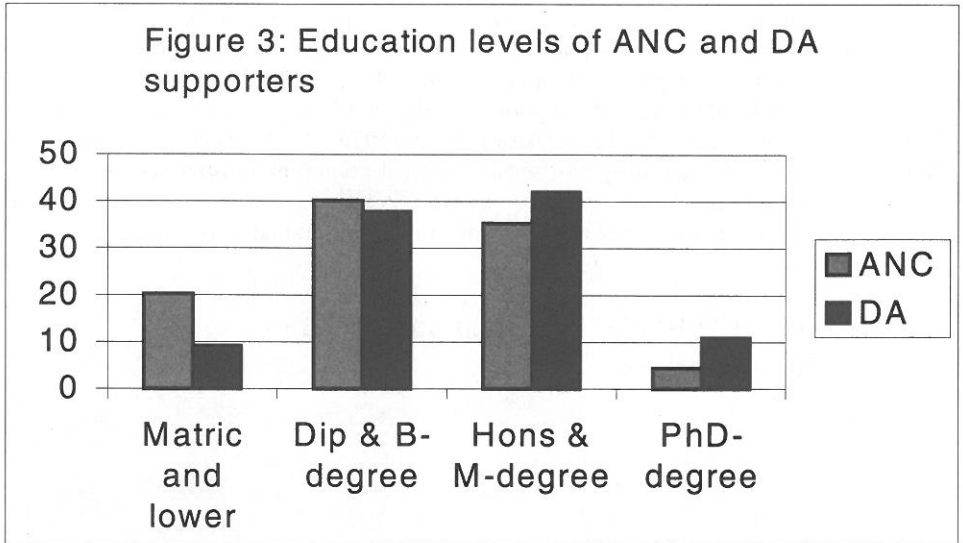


Figure 2: Gender composition of ANC and DA supporters





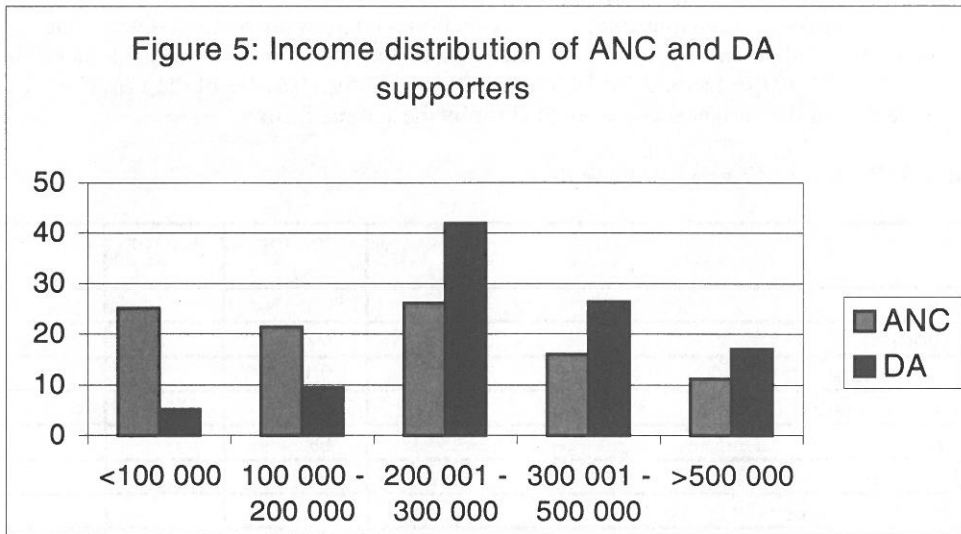


Table 2: Religious preferences of ANC and DA Supporters

Religious Preference	ANC	DA	Percentage of total
Traditional English Protestant	36.1	26.6	32.0
Traditional Afrikaans Protestant	4.9	44.0	27.1
Catholic	13.2	13.8	13.4
Pentecostal	9.7	3.7	7.1
Hindu	0.7	0.9	0.8
Islam/Muslim	0.7	0.0	0.4
Traditional African	0.0	0.9	0.4
'Christian'	0.7	2.8	1.6
Jewish	0.7	0.9	0.8
Agnostic	2.8	0.0	1.6
Other	4.2	0.9	2.8
None	26.4	5.5	17.4
	N=144*	N=109	100

❖ *It is interesting to note that more than a quarter of the ANC respondents did not complete this question in the questionnaire.*

3. The Instrument

The value scale used in this study consisted of 17 items and was based partly on items from the Wilson Patterson Conservatism scale (Wilson and Patterson, 1968) and items from the World Value Survey designed by Ron Inglehart (1990). The introduction to the items

was as follows: 'Please indicate which of the following statements are always justifiable, never justifiable, or something in between'.

A factor analysis – principle component extraction with varimax rotation – was done on the 17 items used in this scale. The result is tabulated in table 3. In table 3 factor 1 accounted for 31.797%, factor 2 for 19.398% and factor 3 for 10.664% of the variance – in total 61.859% of the variance was accounted for by these three factors.

Table 3: Factor loadings on value scale

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1. Divorce	.805		
2. Abortion	.797		
3. Prostitution	.790		
4. Homosexuality	.781		
5. Premarital sex	.769		
6. Euthanasia	.661		
7. Explicit sex scenes in films	.648		
8. Suicide	.644		
9. Birth Control	.531		
10. Avoiding a fare on public transport		.836	
11. Accepting a bribe in the course of duties		.810	
12. Claiming government benefits to which you're not entitled to		.809	
13. Cheating on taxes if your have a chance		.780	
14. Corporal punishment			.734
15. The death penalty			.690
16. Strict discipline			.653
17. Press censorship			.353

The following three multi-item indices were compiled from items in factors 1-3 using as cut-off a very high loading of 0.6:

Moral index – the items included were divorce, abortion, prostitution, homosexuality, premarital sex, euthanasia, explicit sex scenes in films, and suicide⁸.

Corruption index – the items included were: Avoiding a fare on public transport, someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties, claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled and cheating on taxes if you have a chance⁹; and,

Discipline index – the items included were: corporal punishment, the death penalty and strict discipline¹⁰.

8. The alpha reliability for this index was a high 0.8872.

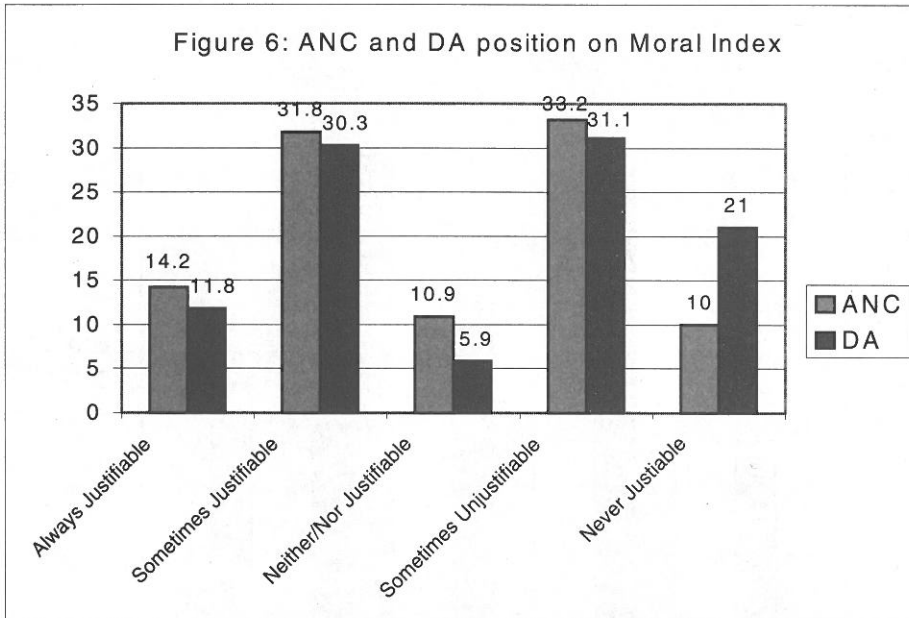
9. A high alpha reliability of 0.8520 was scored on this index.

10. The alpha reliability of this index was a relatively low 0.6493.

In the next section I will describe the most important value patterns that appear when the above indices are applied to fathom the value positions of the opinion-leaders supporting the two largest political parties.

4. Indices and Value patterns of ANC and DA supporters

The *Moral Index* contains an interesting mix of items from which the value positions of ANC and DA supporters can be deduced (see figure 6)

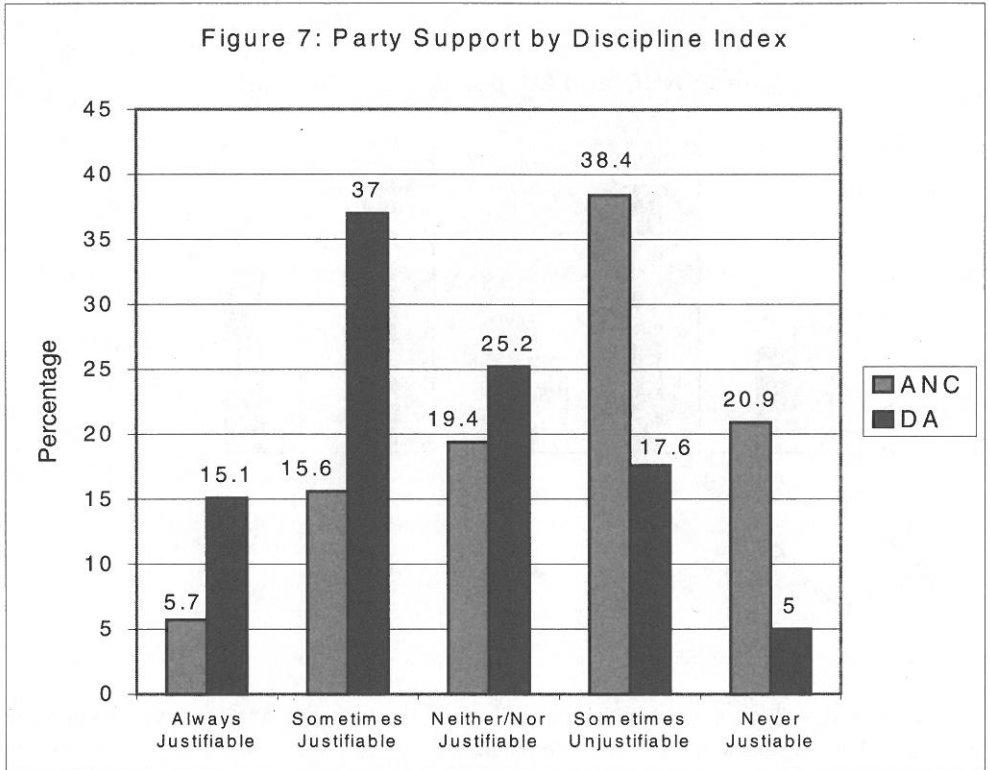


It is clear that there is not much of a difference between the ANC and DA supporters regarding their attitudes towards the items in the *Moral Index*. More or less the same number from both parties was on the 'liberal' side, that is indicating their support for the items included in the Index that are justifiable. For the ANC 46% indicated support for these items and among the DA it was 42.1%. It is only on the 'conservative' side that there is somewhat of a difference. The DA with 52.1% significantly outnumbered the ANC's 43.2%. However, if the DP's supporters are compared with the ANC there is not much of a difference – the DP has 41.5%. The bulk of the conservative supporters in the DA on this Index therefore come from the NNP, where 72.2% of that party's supporters expressed the view that it was not justifiable to support items in the index.

Using the means to compare the ANC and DA supporters, the largest standard deviations were on 'homosexuality' (3.123), 'abortion' (2.877), 'prostitution' (2.802) thus indicating the largest amount of disagreement. The lowest differences were on 'divorce' (2.318), 'euthanasia' (2.369) and 'pre-marital sex' (2.611). Moreover it is interesting to note that on all three the items with high standard deviations the DA supporters were more 'conservative' than those of the ANC. On all eight items in the index the ANC supporters were only more 'conservative' than those of the DA on 'suicide' and 'explicit sex scenes in films'.

On the *Corruption Index* there was no significant difference between ANC and DA supporters. In fact, there was a remarkable degree of similarity between the two groups. In the case of the ANC 97.2% indicated that they find the acts included in the index unjustifiable and for the DA this figure was 99.2%.

The *Discipline Index* on the other hand showed that the opinion-leaders supporting the ANC were much less inclined towards the type of 'discipline' that the items in the index suggest than the supporters of the DA (see figure 7).



In this case the a majority of the DA supporters (52.1%) as opposed to only 21.3% of the ANC were in general supportive of the discipline items. Again it was the NNP component of the DA with only 5.8% that found the items unjustifiable against 31.5% of the DP that skewed the DA towards a more conservative stance on the discipline index. In this index the 'death penalty' reflected the largest difference between the supporters of the two parties. While 71.2% of ANC supporters indicated that it is unjustifiable only 16.6% of the DA supporters were of this opinion. This pattern correlates strongly with the policy position of the parties. The ANC vowed never to bring it back while the NNP supports its reintroduction and the DP allows a 'free' choice on the issue.

As indicated it is only on one of the three indices, the discipline index, that distinct differences emerged. On the moral index the supporters of the government party and the largest opposition party seemed to hold more or less the same general position - they tend to gravitate towards the 'liberal' side of the index. On the corruption index there was virtually no variation at all.

Although respondents were asked to give their positions on the broad principles underlying these social issues, future policy developments could be inferred from these positions. The discussion now turns to a brief overview of two issues in the *Moral Index*, prostitution and euthanasia, on which the government is expected to prepare new legislation in the next year or so. This way we may be able to gain an insight of the possible stances that the opinion-leaders may take on these issues

Prostitution

In South Africa, like in most countries of the world, prostitution or 'sex work' is illegal. However, it seems that the present policy of 'criminalising' prostitution is not very effective. A very lucrative sex industry, mainly under the guise of escort agencies, has managed to establish itself in South Africa over the last number of years (*Cape Times*, 23 April 1999). South Africa is also known as Africa's 'underage sex capital' with more than 28 000 child prostitutes on the streets (Davids, 2000: 1). In this 'industry' a number of health-threatening diseases, most importantly of all, HIV/Aids cannot be regulated very effectively. Apart from the moral and health aspects of the industry some observers also point out that the state is losing out on millions of Rands because it is not possible to tax the industry (*Finansies en Tegniek*, 11 February 2000:9).

Against the above background, and also the fact the present policy is not in line with the Constitutional requirements of equality and freedom of choice (Luiz and Roets, 2000:37) the Dept of Health in March 2000, in a presentation to parliament's health portfolio committee, announced that the department is 'pressing ahead with the reviews that could lead to the decriminalisation of prostitution'¹¹. They intended to arrange a series of 'consultative workshops and forums' in which they have hoped to include all the relevant role players on this issue. As main reasons for this new direction the department pointed out that while this sector of society was operating illegally it was difficult to fight the spread of HIV/Aids. Furthermore, a more open approach would also help combat child abuse.

It is clear that the state's move to prepare legislation to decriminalise prostitution will not receive much support from the general public. It seems that the stigma attached to sex work influences their views negatively. In 1999 Market Research Africa in an opinion poll in Gauteng established that only 20% of the respondents would support the legalisation of prostitution and that 63% believed that HIV/Aids rates will increase with legalising prostitution (Wojcicki, 1999:101). Moreover, in the 1995 World Values Survey 81% of the respondents indicated that prostitution is 'never justifiable'¹².

Confirmation for this conservative view was also portrayed in a survey by Research Surveys. In December 1997, OmniChek a Division of Research Surveys posed the following question to a sample of 2000: 'Do you think prostitution should be legalised in South Africa'. Overall, only 17% came out in favour whereas 70% were not in favour of the idea (www.researchsurveys.co.za).

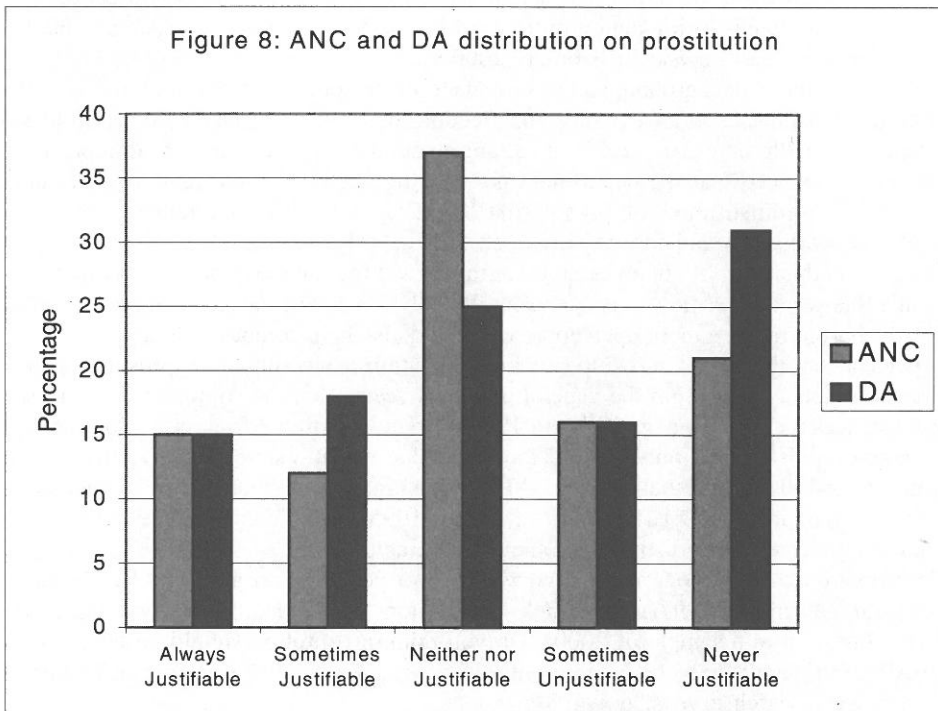
Having been much more exposed to the policy debate on this issue and the requirements of the Constitution, one can expect the opinion-leaders to be more supportive of the drive for the decriminalisation of sex work. This is indeed the case. Among the ANC supporters

11. See www.iol/newsview, 7 March 2000: 29 January, 2001. Decriminalisation entails the scrapping of legislation that criminalises adult commercial sex workers. In essence the law will then allow consensual adult sexual activities for financial gain (see Scholtz, 1997 and SWEAT, unknown)

12. The question was put as follows: 'Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between'. The respondent's answer could be placed on a continuum ranging from 1-10. Those answers in categories 1-4 were coded as 'never justifiable', categories 5-6 as 'undecided' and those in 7-10 as 'always justifiable'.

more than a quarter (26.5%) and among the DA supporters 28% were of the opinion that prostitution is justifiable. However, the DA with 47.0%, outnumbered the ANC with 36.6% among those that feel it is unjustifiable. A large number of supporters in the case of both parties, ANC with 37% and DA with 24.6%, have no strong position on the issue and indicated that prostitution was 'neither justifiable nor unjustifiable'. These supporters may be regarded as the 'swing supporters' on this issue – they may quite easily go with the proposals for the decriminalisation of prostitution. Again it was the NNP component in the DA that pushed the overall pattern toward a more conservative stance on this issue with 61.7% that indicated it is unjustifiable.

Analysing some of the other independent variables that may have influenced the conservative-liberal pattern on this issue a number of interesting patterns were reflected in the data. The race, age and religion variables showed significantly different patterns. Black and white respondents among the ANC and DA were more 'conservative' on the issue of prostitution than their coloured and Indian counterparts. Among the respondents 40 years and older the same 'conservative' trend was noticeable.



Of all the variables one of the strongest indicators of a respondents position on prostitution was that of religious preference. No less than 68.0% of the respondents belonging to the traditional Afrikaans protestant churches indicated that prostitution was unjustifiable whereas the figures for the traditional English protestant, Catholic and Pentacostal churches were 40.0%, 40.9% and 50.1% respectively. For those respondents that have indicated that they belong to no church this figure was 27.3% and those that did not complete the question on 'religious preference' at all, the figure was 28.0%. As far as religion is concerned, there seems to be a relatively high correlation between church preference in general and a 'conservative' stance on prostitution. Finally, as far as gender is

concerned, it seems that the female respondents were somewhat more 'liberal' than the males. Among ANC and DA supporters a total of 30.7% females indicated that prostitution was unjustifiable whereas this figure for the males was 42.7%.

From the above value patterns there seems to be a distinctly more liberal attitude among opinion-leaders compared to the general public on the issue of prostitution. It can, therefore, be expected that there will not be much resistance on the side of opinion-leaders to the government's intended decriminalisation of sex work.

Euthanasia

In March 2000 the South African Law Commission's report on euthanasia was tabled in Parliament. This report, which was finalised in November 1998, caused considerable controversy when it was published in 1999 and presented to the Minister of Justice (*The Star*, 2 March 2000). In short, the report recommended that a competent person may 'refuse any life-sustaining medical treatment...even though such refusal may cause the death or hasten the death of such a person'. Moreover, it recommended that medical practitioners or 'under specified circumstance' nurses, may 'relieve the suffering of terminally ill patient by prescribing sufficient drugs...even though the secondary effect of this conduct may be the shortening of the patient's life'. It also recommended that the families of mentally incompetent terminally ill patients be allowed to give permission to cease treatment (SA Law Commission, 1998:xi). All the much discussed dimensions of 'assistance with dying', such as voluntary active euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide (PAS), the withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining medical treatment (so-called 'passive euthanasia') and euthanasia¹³ were thus included in the proposals¹⁴.

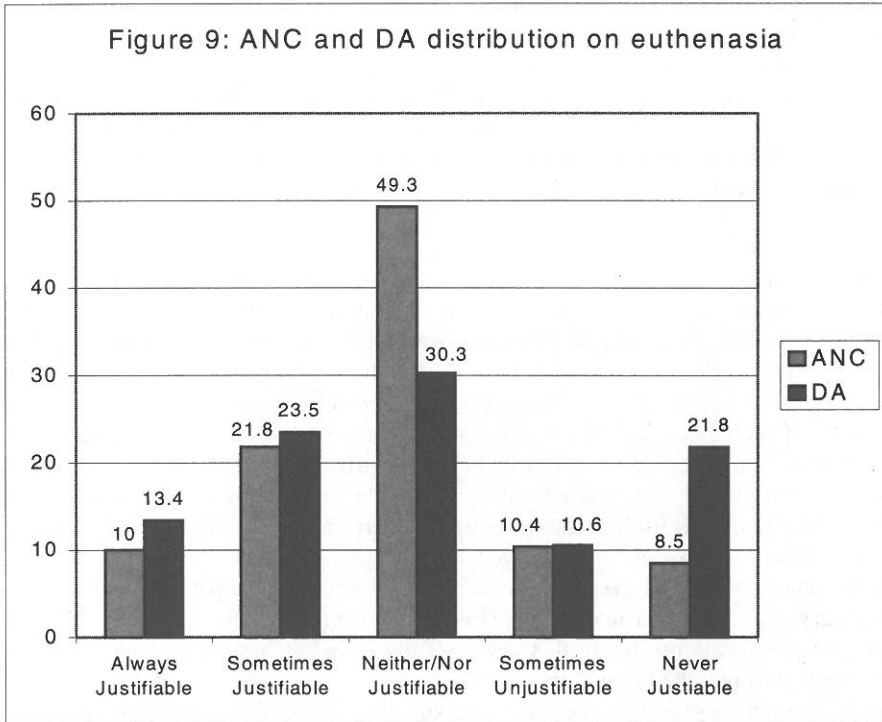
A number of interest groups protested quite vocally against the report and proposed legislation. The national Alliance for Life, Doctors for Life and Pro-life South Africa had also embarked on a nation-wide awareness campaign. On the other hand, such organisations as the Living Will Society said they will 'back up the already living will', that is the already recognised legal device. This stipulates that an individual may indicate his or her will to die (*The Independent*, 8 October 1999). Following the changes in the legal position on abortion, which was based on the Bill of Rights (Section 12) of the South African Constitution, that deals with 'freedom and security of the person', the proposed Bill may have a relatively easy passage into legislation.

Similar to the issue of prostitution, public opinion reflects a very conservative position on euthanasia. In the 1995 World Values Survey 75% of the respondents indicated that this act is 'never justifiable'¹⁵. However, for the same reasons as that of the prostitution the opinion-leaders may have different positions on this issue.

13. A paralysed person, for instance, cannot commit PAS, and her/his life may therefore be ended on the basis of merciful grounds

14. For a discussion on the different procedures to perform euthanasia see Deigh (1998) and Frome (1999).

15. For the wording of this item see footnote 12.



The concept euthanasia was not operationalised in its different dimensions in the questionnaire and the format was the same as that of the question on the justifiability of prostitution. Although there was not much difference in the patterns of the ANC and DA supporters among those that found euthanasia justifiable, a comparatively large gap opened between the two parties regarding its unjustifiability. About a third (31.8%) of the ANC and somewhat more (36.9%) of the DA thought that euthanasia was 'justifiable'. Those that opted for 'unjustifiable' were 18.9% from the ANC and 32.1% from the DA. An interesting aspect of the response spread was the high percentage of both parties' supporters that did not want to take a clear position on the issue. Nearly half (49.3%) of the ANC and a third (30.3%) of the DA supporters fell in the 'neither justifiable nor unjustifiable' category. Amongst the DA supporters the difference between the two constituent parties, the DP and NNP, was noticeable. While only 17.2% of NNP supporters fell in the 'justifiable' category, the correspondent percentage for the DP was 46.4%.

As a group the Indian respondents were less conservative than the other groups on this issue. Half of them found it justifiable and only 13.6% found it unjustifiable. Blacks, whites and coloureds were almost evenly divided on the issue, but among the coloureds (47.4%) and blacks (54.5%) about half of the respondents were undecided. The number of whites in this category was only 28.9%. Females also indicated a much higher support level for euthanasia than men. About half of the females (45.6%) supporting the ANC and DA, versus only 29.3% of the men, found it justifiable, whereas 17.7% females versus 29.3% males indicated that they found it unjustifiable. In the undecided category there were 36.7% females and 41.7% males respectively.

On the level of education and level of income variables there were not any significant differences. However, respondents in the 60-70 age group were more 'conservative' than the other age groups. Close to half (48%) of them indicated that euthanasia was unjustifiable and 24% fell in the 'neither justifiable nor unjustifiable' category.

A similar pattern to that of prostitution emerged among the respondents when church preference was correlated with position on euthanasia. Among the four largest church groupings, namely Traditional Afrikaans Protestant, Traditional English Protestant, Catholic and Pentacostal, 43.1% of the respondents reporting a preference for the Traditional Afrikaans Protestant churches indicated that euthanasia was unjustifiable. For the Traditional English Protestant, Catholic and Pentacostal churches the numbers in this category were 30.3%, 33.4% and 38% respectively. It should be added that those respondents expressing a preference for the Traditional English Protestant churches were the most 'undecided'. Compared to the other churches more than double of any of the other groups namely 38.7% fell in the 'neither justifiable nor unjustifiable' category. Again it was those that reported 'no' religious preference with only 13.2%, and those respondents not completing the religious preference questions with 11.6% that reported the lowest levels of unjustifiability. It seems therefore that the 'religious preference' variable is one of the best indicators of a respondent's value position regarding euthanasia.

5. Concluding Remarks

One of the most remarkable differences in preferences that emerged from the above analysis is that between the public and the elite. Although there are differences in the value patterns of the elite supporters of the two main political parties, these differences are not as stark as those between the public and the elite. In general there were fewer discernable differences among the elite than one would have thought, keeping the great differences in political socialisation in mind. It may be that on the elite level the liberal orientation of the South African Constitution already has re-socialised those that are in closer contact with its 'letter and spirit'. This relatively homogeneous value pattern is an important predictor for the policy-agenda.

In the South African democratisation process the government should not only be analysed in terms of the means – the institutions or processes – but also in terms of ends or goals that they have set themselves and the value distribution patterns they strive to institute. The implications which these value patterns – expressed as a preference or otherwise for action on certain moral issues included in, for example, the moral index – have for public policy is therefore obvious. Public policy is a translation into action of the expressed intentions of top opinion-leaders. In a situation where there was such little difference between the spread of preferences of the top opinion-leaders of the main parties, one can expect that more 'liberal' legislation on moral issues - thus matching the value patterns among the elite - will be introduced without much opposition.

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