

“The ANC will rule until Jesus comes”: The determinants of loyalty, switching and exiting for the African National Congress in the 2019 elections

by
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Declaration

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Abstract

Electoral volatility is considered a vital component in the optimal functioning of a multi-party democracy. The fact that parties can win or lose votes is what gives democracy meaning, as it is this threat of a loss of power that is essential in ensuring accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent.

However, electoral change is only possible if there is a genuine likelihood that a portion of the electorate will switch their vote between parties. While South African electoral politics does exhibit some signs of vote switching, the growth in abstentions far outstrips the rise in switching. Indeed, voters are increasingly retreating to the exiting category, instead of moving their support to an alternative party. This process of ‘dealignment without realignment’ is ominous for South Africa’s process of democratic consolidation, as it not only depresses turnout, but also stifles electoral competition and volatility.

Accordingly, this thesis investigates the motivations for both vote switching and exiting among the supporters of the African National Congress (ANC). This is done in order to understand the underlying mechanisms as to why some ANC voters are able to switch their vote, while other previously active ANC voters exit the party system and abstain when they become disillusioned with their traditional political home.

In order to address this research problem, this study employed a cross-sectional research design with a quantitative methodology and makes use of public opinion data sourced from the Comparative National Election Project (CNEP) 2019 post-election survey. The analysis began with exploring the bivariate relationships between a variety of theoretically relevant factors and a 2014 ANC voter’s decision to switch their vote or exit in the 2019 election. The bivariate findings show that the decision to either switch parties or exit largely pivots around trust in opposition parties. 2014 ANC voters with high levels of trust in the opposition are likely to switch parties in 2019, while distrust in opposition parties induces exiting.

This thesis also conducted a multinomial logistic regression, which controlled for other significant predictors of switching or exiting. The model showed that exiters are motivated by variables that typically drive turnout, such as age, partisanship, gender and campaign attention; while switchers are dissatisfied with, and distrustful of the ANC, perceive the Democratic

Alliance (DA) as inclusive, and are overwhelmingly urban. However, the results show that the more a voter trusts the opposition, the more likely they are to switch rather than to exit.

The main thrust of this analysis is therefore that the transition to opposition parties is, in part, marred by an inability to identify a trustworthy and racially inclusive political alternative to the ANC. As such, to arrest the current ‘dealignment without realignment’ trend and stimulate electoral volatility, levels of trust and inclusivity relating to opposition parties ought to be augmented. Opposition parties thus need to work towards presenting themselves as trustworthy, legitimate and inclusive options to the majority of the electorate.

Opsomming

Verkiesingsvlugtigheid word beskou as 'n belangrike komponent van die optimale funksionering van 'n veelparty-demokrasie. Die feit dat partye stemme kan wen of verloor is wat aan demokrasie sy betekenis gee, aangesien dit hierdie dreigement van 'n verlies van mag is wat aanspreeklikheid verseker en keer dat die posbekteer nie selfvoldaan word nie.

Verkiesingsverandering is egter net moontlik indien daar 'n werklike kans is dat sommige kiesers vir 'n ander party sal stem. Hoewel die Suid-Afrikaanse verkiesingspolitiek 'n paar tekens toon dat kiesers vir 'n ander party sal stem, is die groei in stemonthouding baie groter as die toename in oorskakeling na 'n ander party. Inderwaarheid, kiesers beweeg toenemend na die kategorie van onthouding, in plaas daarvan om hulle ondersteuning aan 'n alternatiewe party te gee. Hierdie proses van 'afwyking sonder herbelyning' (*dealignment without realignment*) is onheilspellend vir die proses van demokratiese konsolidasie in Suid-Afrika aangesien dit nie net opkoms onderdruk nie, maar ook verkiesingsmededingendheid en -vlugtigheid smoor.

Gevolgtrek ondersoek hierdie tesis die motiverings vir beide stemverandering en -onthouding onder ondersteuners van die African National Congress (ANC). Dit is gedoen om 'n begrip te bekom van die onderliggende meganismes wat daartoe lei dat sommige ANC-kiesers hulle stem kan verander, terwyl ander voormalig aktiewe ANC-kiesers uit die partystelsel tree en hulle stemme weerhou wanneer hul tradisionele politieke tuiste hulle ontneem.

Om hierdie navorsingsprobleem aan te spreek, het hierdie studie gebruik gemaak van 'n kwantitatiewe navorsingsontwerp met deursnee openbare meningsdata afkomstig van die *Comparative National Election Project* (CNEP) ná-verkiesingsopname in 2019. Die analise het begin met die verkenning van die tweeveranderlike verhoudings tussen 'n verskeidenheid teoreties relevante faktore en 'n 2014 ANC-kieser se besluit om hulle stem te verander of om nie in 2019 te stem nie. Die tweeveranderlike bevindings toon dat die besluit om van partye te verander of van stemming te onthou grootliks berus op vertroue in opposisieparty. Daar was 'n groot kans dat ANC-kiesers in 2014 met hoë vlakke van vertroue in die opposisie vir 'n ander party in 2019 sou stem, terwyl 'n gebrek aan vertroue in opposisieparty gelei het tot onthouding.

Hierdie tesis het ook multinomiale logistiese regressie gedoen wat vir ander beduidende voorspellers van verandering of onthouding kontroleer het. Die model toon dat onthouers gemotiveer is deur veranderlikes wat tipies opkoms dryf, soos ouderdom, partydigheid, geslag en aandag skenk aan veldtogte, terwyl dié wat van party verander het, ontevrede was met óf wantroue in die ANC gehad het, óf die Demokratiese Alliansie as inklusief beskou het. Hulle was ook oorweldigend stedelik. Die resultate toon egter dat hoe meer 'n kieser die opposisie vertrou, hoe groter die moontlikheid dat hulle sal verander eerder as om te onthou.

Die hoofstrekking van hierdie analise is dus dat die oorgang na opposisiepartydeels aangetas word deur 'n onvermoë om 'n betroubare en ras-inklusive politieke alternatief vir die ANC te identifiseer. As sulks is dit nodig om vlakke van vertroue en inklusiwiteit met betrekking tot opposisiepartydeels aan te vul om sodoende die huidige tendens tot 'afwyking sonder herbelyning' te stuit en om verkiesingsvlugtigheid te stimuleer. Opposisiepartydeels moet dus werk om hulleself as betroubare, regmatige en inklusiewe opsies vir die meerderheid kiesers daar te stel.

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Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Opsomming	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Table of Contents	viii
List of figures.....	xii
List of Tables	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background and rationale.....	1
1.1.1 South Africa’s electoral predictability	1
1.1.2 Beneath South Africa’s electoral predictability	3
1.1.3 All frustrated with nowhere to go: dealignment without realignment.....	4
1.2 Problem statement	6
1.3 Summary of the literature review	8
1.3.1 Unpacking the concept of electoral volatility	8
1.3.2 Electoral dealignment	8
1.3.3 Exploring vote switching and exiting	9
1.3.4 Situating the study: South African literature on voting behaviour	12
1.4 Research questions and hypotheses.....	15
1.5 Overview of research methodology and operationalisation.....	17
1.5.1 A quantitative cross-sectional study using public opinion survey data	18
1.5.2 Operationalisation of variables	18
1.6 Significance of study.....	19
1.7 Chapter outline	20
Chapter 2: Literature review.....	22

2.1	Introduction	22
2.2	Unpacking the concept of electoral volatility	22
2.2.1	Macro- and micro-perspectives.....	24
2.3	Electoral Dealignment.....	26
2.3.1	The sources of dealignment	28
2.3.2	The consequences of dealignment: switching and exiting.....	29
2.4	Exploring vote switching and exiting.....	30
2.4.1	Defining vote switching.....	30
2.4.2	Global determinants of vote switching	31
2.4.3	Defining exiting	36
2.4.4	Global determinants of exiting.....	37
2.5	Situating the study: South African literature on voting behaviour.....	39
2.5.1	Government performance and declining partisanship	41
2.5.2	Vote switching in South Africa.....	42
2.5.3	Exiting in South Africa	46
2.6	Conclusion.....	47
Chapter 3: Research design and methodology.....		48
3.1	Introduction	48
3.2	Research design: A quantitative cross-sectional study using public opinion survey data ...	48
3.2.1	A quantitative approach: survey research.....	49
3.2.2	Secondary data analysis	51
3.3	The Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP)	52
3.4	Operationalisation of variables.....	53
3.4.1	Dependent variable	53
3.4.2	Independent variables	57
3.4.3	Control variables.....	70
3.5	Statistical Techniques.....	70
3.6	Ethical considerations	72
3.7	Limitations	72
3.8	Conclusion.....	73

Chapter 4: Bivariate Results.....	74
4.1 Introduction	74
4.2 Bivariate analysis	74
4.2.1 Political sophistication	76
4.2.2 Dissatisfaction with preferred party.....	81
4.2.3 Institutional disaffection	82
4.2.4 Party image evaluations	88
4.2.5 Social network composition.....	90
4.3 Interpretation of bivariate results	91
4.3.1 Political sophistication	93
4.3.2 Dissatisfaction with preferred party.....	97
4.3.3 Institutional disaffection	98
4.3.4 Party image evaluations	101
4.4 Conclusion: The differences between switchers and exiters.....	102
Chapter 5: Multivariate Results.....	104
5.1 Introduction	104
5.2 Multivariate analysis: multinomial logistic regression	104
5.2.1 Switchers.....	104
5.2.2 Exiters	106
5.3 Interpretation of multivariate results	108
5.3.1 Dissatisfaction with preferred party.....	108
5.3.2 Institutional disaffection	109
5.3.3 Party image evaluations	111
5.3.4 Political sophistication	112
5.3.5 Control variables.....	112
5.4 Conclusion.....	113
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	116
6.1 Introduction	116
6.2 Summary of findings	116
6.3 Research implications	118

6.4	Shortcomings and recommendations	120
6.5	Conclusion.....	122
	Bibliography	124
	Appendix: coding of variables	155

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Vote switching 2004-2019 and VAP exiting 1994-2019, in percentages (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c; Citizen Surveys, 2019).....	4
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List of Tables

Table 3.1: Global comparison of the operationalisation of vote switching.....	56
Table 3.2: Global comparison of the operationalisation of political sophistication.....	60
Table 3.3: Global comparison of the operationalisation of dissatisfaction with preferred party	62
Table 3.4: Global comparison of the operationalisation of institutional disaffection.....	65
Table 3.5: Global comparison of the operationalisation of party image evaluations.....	67
Table 3.6: Global comparison of the operationalisation of social network composition.....	69
Table 4.1: Guideline for interpreting the strength of association.....	75
Table 4.2: Frequency table: Dependent variable, 2014 ANC supporters who remained loyal, switched or exited in 2019.....	76
Table 4.3: Level of interest in politics by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages	77
Table 4.4: Campaign attention by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	78
Table 4.5: Level of education by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	79
Table 4.6: Perceived ability to influence politics (internal political efficacy) by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	80
Table 4.7: Perceived ability to understand politics by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	80
Table 4.8: Dissatisfaction with preferred party by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	82
Table 4.9: Trust in the government of South Africa by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	83
Table 4.10: Trust in the IEC by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	84
Table 4.11: Trust in the ANC by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	85
Table 4.12: Trust in opposition parties by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages	86
Table 4.13: Satisfaction with democracy by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	87
Table 4.14: Government responsiveness (external political efficacy) by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages.....	88

Table 4.15: 2014 ANC supporters’ decision at the 2019 election by perception of the Democratic Alliance’s inclusivity and exclusivity, in percentages 89

Table 4.16: 2014 ANC supporters’ decision at the 2019 election by perception of the Economic Freedom Fighters’ inclusivity and exclusivity, in percentages 90

Table 4.17: 2014 ANC supporters’ decision at the 2019 election by perceived partisan congruence between respondent and discussants (scale includes family, friends, neighbours and co-workers)..... 91

Table 4.18: Correlation coefficients – 2014 ANC supporters’ decision at the 2019 election and independent variables. 92

Table 5.1: Multivariate model: 2014 ANC supporters: loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019 107

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

Electoral volatility is a concept that has intrigued political science scholars for decades. As Rattinger (1997:86) opines, “the study of stability and change of party systems and electoral behaviour is one of the most important areas of political research.” This importance is not only displayed in the rich history of literature examining volatility and patterns of change, but also in the fact that volatility is considered by many to be the fulcrum of a thriving democracy (Lipset, 1966; Strøm, 1992; Przeworski, 2003). Dalton (2013:103) writes about how a degree of uncertainty and changeability in election results is what gives democracy meaning, because it is the potential for punishment that is crucial in encouraging politicians to represent their constituents as well as possible (Manin, 1997).

Electoral volatility manifests in several different forms, including voters who split their ticket when possible, switch parties between elections and decide who to vote for later in the campaign (Lachat, 2007:4). However, switching one’s vote between parties is arguably the most direct mechanism for citizens to hold their political leaders accountable, and imbue the political system with a higher degree of electoral volatility (Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson, 2002). Considering this, it has long been argued that the lack of electoral competition in the South African political system is a concern. This lack of electoral volatility is often attributed to the ongoing dominance of one political party, and the lack of meaningful multi-party competition brought about by seemingly predictable voting outcomes that have characterised the country’s elections since 1994 (Lijphart, 1991; Schlemmer, 1994; Giliomee and Simkins, 1999; Friedman 1999; Letsholo, 2005).

1.1.1 South Africa’s electoral predictability

On the face of it, South Africa’s post-apartheid political milieu has indeed been characterised by relatively steady and predictable results, with the African National Congress (ANC) winning six consecutive national elections since its ascension to power in 1994. After achieving 62.7% of the vote in South Africa’s inaugural election, the ANC’s vote share increased to just below 70% by 2004 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:464). The ANC continued to obtain north of 60% in the 2009 and 2014 election cycles before declining slightly in the 2019 elections, which saw the governing party “returned to power with a reduced national vote share of 58% and continued control of eight of the nine provinces” (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:464).

Support for the opposition, however, declined and fragmented in the years between 1994 and 2009, reaching a low of 30.4% of the vote share in 2004 before growing to 37.8% in 2014 and again to 42.5% in 2019. Despite a steady uptick in national election performances, the opposition bloc remains very fragmented – going from sixteen contesting parties in 1994 to forty-eight by 2019 – and relatively weak, demonstrated by the fact that the ANC trounced their closest competitor, the Democratic Alliance (DA), by a margin of 37% in 2019 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b:171). These electoral disparities and consistently predictable voting outcomes have stoked concerns among researchers and observers alike regarding the depth and quality of South Africa’s nascent multi-party democracy (Southall 1998; Friedman 1999; Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi 2005).

This perceived lack of electoral competition prompted Giliomee and Simkins (1999) to describe South Africa’s early democracy as a “dominant party” regime.” Scholars also promoted the ‘racial census’ thesis, warning that the inflexible racial cleavages shaped by colonialism and apartheid would likely continue to inform voter behaviour in democratic South Africa (Lijphart, 1994; Schlemmer, 1994; Friedman, 1999; Letsholo, 2005). South African’s early elections were thus seen by many as a mechanism to express one’s identity as well as one’s commitment to a certain group – “black people voted for ‘black parties’ and white people supported ‘white parties’” (Letsholo, 2005).

It was against this backdrop that former President Jacob Zuma proclaimed in 2004 to supporters that “the ANC will rule until Jesus comes back” (van Onselen, 2012). Jacob Zuma’s statement was indicative of a governing party that had stopped fearing the ballot box, as it became increasingly aware that opposition parties were unable to seriously compete with the ANC at elections. Without a viable threat to the governing party’s electoral fortunes, the sanctioning power of elections is eroded (Riker, 1982). If a dissatisfied voter is willing and able to defect from the ANC, this imbues within the electoral system a degree of uncertainty, which is important to prevent complacency from taking root within the ruling party. However, if voters are constrained by strong cleavage identities, as posited by scholars above, they are unlikely to shift to alternative parties in the political market (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:2). As a result, opposition parties have little reason to invest resources into persuading new voters to vote for them and governments have little reason to consider the potential negative electoral impacts of unpopular public policies.

1.1.2 Beneath South Africa's electoral predictability

Despite the initial appearance of electoral stability and ANC dominance, this thesis argues that when South Africa's electoral outcomes are examined more closely, the national vote shares for the largest parties obscure significant signs of electoral volatility and individual-level flux. The first of these signs can be found in the declining amount of actual votes garnered by the ANC and its deteriorating eligible voting age population (VAP) support. In 2019, the ANC dipped below 60% of the vote share for the first time and in terms of actual votes cast, 1.5 million fewer people voted for the ANC in 2019 than in 2014 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:470). Furthermore, only 28% of the eligible VAP cast a vote for the ANC in 2019, down from 35% in 2014 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:470).

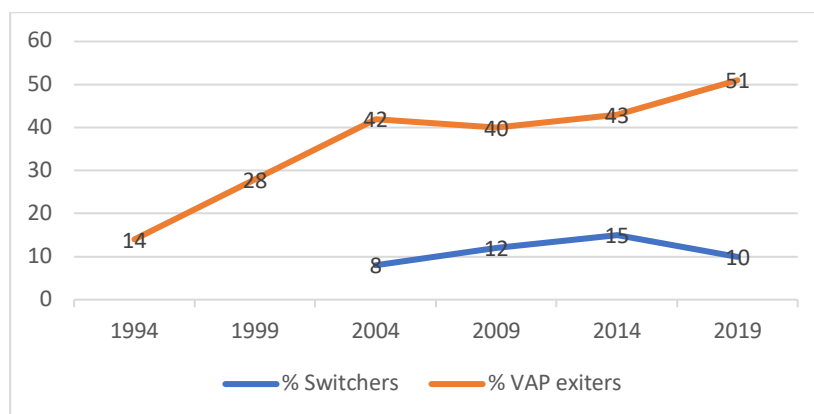
Another less visible sign of electoral volatility relates to a decline in levels of party identification. Past studies by Ferree (2006), Bratton and Mattes (2003) and Schulz-Herzenberg (2009; 2011; 2012; 2019a), among others, have consistently illustrated the dwindling levels of party identification among South African voters, mirroring trends in other industrialised nations (Dalton, 2002). Dwindling voter turnout rates are another indication of electoral volatility, with turnout declining from 73% in 2014 to 66% in 2019, which is the steepest downturn since 2004 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c:53). Moreover, turnout as proportion of the VAP dropped from 89% in 1994 to 49% in 2019, which means that "less than half of eligible South African voters cast a vote in 2019" (Norris, 2002; Franklin 2004; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c:54). As figure 1.1 shows, the number of abstainers, also known as exiters, keep increasing, rising from 43% of the VAP in 2014 to 51% in 2019 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:471).

Another sign of increasing fluidity is found in longitudinal evidence which suggests that South Africans are increasingly switching their votes between elections. Since collecting data for the first time in 2004, the Comparative National Election Project (CNEP) survey has shown that 8% of voters reported having switched their vote between the 1999 and 2004 elections, 12% between 2004 and 2009, 15% between 2009 and 2014 and 9,5% between the 2014 and 2019 general elections (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:473; Citizen Surveys, 2019). Notwithstanding, these increases in vote switching pale in comparison with the rise in exiting, which has ballooned by 37 percentage points between 1994 and 2019, from 14% in 1994 to 50.7% in 2019 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c:54). Figure 1.1 provides a stark visual representation of how

this growth in exiting far outstrips the rise in vote switching, which is deeply concerning for South Africa's democratic project.

These aforementioned signs of electoral change seem to portray an electoral environment that is not as static and predictable as previously hypothesised and that South African voters are not immune to poor government output because of their unquestionable support for the ANC (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a:33; 2011:10; Justesen, and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018:1150). To the contrary, voters are quite willing to punish the ANC for their increasingly poor political and economic performances. However, research also indicates that even if the voter grows disillusioned and distances themselves from the incumbent, this does not necessarily result in that voter shifting their vote to a different political party (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg and Mattes, 2022). Instead, many potential voters seem to be withdrawing from the electoral process entirely, which is underlined by the rampant rates of exiting present in South Africa.

Figure 1.1: Vote switching 2004-2019 and VAP exiting 1994-2019, in percentages (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c; Citizen Surveys, 2019).



1.1.3 All frustrated with nowhere to go: dealignment without realignment

Electoral dealignment entails “fundamental changes in the relationship between parties and voters,” which includes the waning significance of party ties and traditional societal cleavages, changes in generational patterns, as well as the decoupling of parties and voters (Dalton *et al.*, 1984; Franklin, Mackie and Valen, 1992; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). Realignment, on the other hand, occurs when “the party balance of the electorate shifts in an enduring way,” as many voters switch to a new party or when a great number of former abstainers turn out to vote for one or two parties due to mobilisation (Weisberg, 1999).

Considering this, although the South African electoral system is exhibiting signs of volatility – found in increases in partisan dealignment, limited vote switching and abstentions – this thesis argues that certain factors appear to be impeding more voters from switching to a different party. Voters are increasingly retreating to the abstentions or exiting category, instead of moving their support to an alternative party. This process of ‘dealignment without realignment’ is ominous for South Africa’s process of democratic consolidation, as depresses turnout and stifles electoral competition. Instead of switching their vote and remaining active voters in the political system, many South African voters are simply abstaining. As Schulz-Herzenberg explains,

“A partisan dealignment process that produces high levels of abstentions, as an increasing amount of people decline to cast their ballots for any party whatsoever, can spell disaster for electoral politics. Far from freeing more voters to shift their party support, dealignment ensures that participation at elections simply declines. This decreases the chances for electoral competition and consolidates the support given to existing parties” (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:478).

The question that therefore emerges is, why are large numbers of eligible ANC voters opting to withdraw from elections altogether, rather than switching their vote when they become disillusioned with the ANC? In other words, what are the perceived obstacles to vote switching among ANC voters? Accordingly, this thesis aims to understand the underlying mechanisms as to why some ANC voters are able to switch their vote, while other previously active voters exit the party system and abstain.

This study is among a handful of research that systematically investigates the reasons for, and obstacles to, vote switching in South Africa, using a quantitative methodology and survey research (exceptions include Paret, 2018; Runciman, Bekker and Maggott, 2019; Harris 2020 Schulz-Herzenberg, C and R. Mattes. 2022). Understanding why some ANC voters switch parties while others instead opt out of electoral politics in South Africa will yield valuable insights into the actions required to stimulate electoral participation and thereby increase volatility, accountability, representation and effective multi-party competition in South Africa (Granberg and Holmberg, 1990). Furthermore, it will help elites and political parties work towards the creation of an electoral marketplace that is attuned to the demands of the public,

so that dissatisfaction with the output of the incumbent does not result in a complete withdrawal from the electoral system.

1.2 Problem statement

Electoral volatility is long considered a vital component in the optimal functioning of a democracy (Lipset, 1966; Strøm, 1992; Przeworski, 2003). Regular elections provide voters with an important tool to hold their leaders accountable, as they can decide whether to extend a government's tenure or give a different party the opportunity to govern. This looming threat of a loss of power sensitises governments "to the wishes and needs of the electorate" (Przeworski, Stokes and Manin, 1999:9). Indeed, the capacity of voters to "throw the rascals out" is one of the primary normative allures of multi-party democracies (Citrin, 1974).

Electoral change or uncertainty is crucial because volatility, or at least a potential for volatility, suggests that the political system is adaptive, which is considered a crucial factor in "promoting both links in a dynamic process of representation" (Granberg and Holmberg, 1990; Dassonneville, 2015:3). First, electoral volatility ensures that shifts in the public's concerns or priorities are accurately represented by their elected leaders and reflected in the policies that they pursue (Erikson *et al.*, 2002). As Dalton (2013:103) asserts, "the potential variability of electoral outcomes is what gives elections — and democracy — meaning. The public can steer the ship of state by casting their votes for a different party to set a new course." In other words, by switching parties, citizens can ensure that the policies that are pursued by government are responsive to public opinion.

Second, electoral volatility can be understood as the citizenry responding to the actions of leaders and policymakers. Switching their vote from election to election is the most direct mechanism for citizens to hold their political leaders accountable, and to communicate their feelings regarding the strategies that the governing party has undertaken (Erikson *et al.*, 2002). In essence, the act of switching parties empowers voters with the ability to punish or reward politicians, by making sure that those who have performed below par are thrown out, whereas those who performed admirably stay in office (Granberg and Holmberg, 1990; Erikson *et al.*, 2002). Consequently, a reasonable level of electoral volatility can be a signal that accountability and good representation is present within a political system, leading to a healthier, more robust, democracy.

However, electoral change is only possible if there is a genuine likelihood that a substantial chunk of the electorate will switch their vote between parties from election to election. Encouragingly, South Africa's political system does show signs of this type of volatility. For instance, "8% of voters reported having switched their vote between the 1999 and 2004 elections, 12% between 2004 and 2009, and 15% between 2009 and the 2014 General Elections" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:473). Notwithstanding, these increases in vote switching pale in comparison with the rise in another form of volatility namely, exiting.

South Africa's last few elections have been characterised by dwindling rates of voter turnout. For example, voter turnout among registered voters declined from 73% in 2014 to 66% in 2019, which is the steepest downturn since 2004 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c:53). Moreover, turnout as proportion of the VAP dropped from 89% in 1994 to 49% in 2019, which means that the majority of South African voters exited the electoral system in 2019 (Norris, 2002; Franklin 2004; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c:54). It is therefore clear that abstainers continue to be the fastest growing cohort in South Africa, rising from 43% of the VAP in 2014 to 51% in 2019 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:471).

The growth in abstentions therefore far outstrips the rise in vote switching, which is deeply concerning for South Africa's democratic project because, ideally, if a voter becomes dissatisfied with their preferred party, they should be able to shift to a different party. This possibility of electoral change is, in many ways, the lifeblood of a thriving and robust democracy, as established earlier. The fact that parties can win or lose votes is what gives democracy meaning; as it is this threat of a loss of power that is essential in ensuring accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent (Riker, 1982). As Przeworski (1986:57) states, in a democratic regime "no one can win once and for all: even if successful at one time, victors immediately face the prospect of having to struggle in the future."

However, South African researchers have consistently indicated that even if the voter grows disillusioned and distances themselves from the ANC, this does not necessarily result in that voter shifting their vote to a different political party (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014). This process of 'dealignment without realignment' is ominous for South Africa's process of democratic consolidation, as it not only depresses turnout, but also stifles electoral competition because instead of switching their vote and giving a different party

the opportunity to govern, many ANC voters are simply abstaining. Accordingly, this thesis investigates the motivations for both vote switching – in order to understand why some ANC voters are willing to switch parties – and why other ANC voters choose to exit the party system and abstain rather than switching their vote, when they become disillusioned with their traditional political home.

1.3 Summary of the literature review

1.3.1 Unpacking the concept of electoral volatility

Broadly speaking, electoral volatility refers to the degree of change in voting behaviour and electoral support received by parties between elections (Ascher and Tarrow, 1975; Tavits, 2008:538; McLean and McMillan, 2009). Aggregate-level volatility refers to “the net change within the electoral party system resulting from individual vote transfers” (Ascher and Tarrow, 1975:480; Pedersen, 1979). In other words, this approach to studying volatility views electoral change from a macro-perspective and is the aggregation of individual decisions. On the other hand, individual-level volatility views electoral change from the micro-perspective and is defined as the proportion of voters who changed their vote between two elections (McLean and McMillan, 2009). Besides a voter switching their vote between elections, individual-level volatility also manifests in the form of split-ticket voting and late decision makers (Lachat, 2007).

1.3.2 Electoral dealignment

In light of this, research has shown that electorates around the world are exhibiting an increased level of volatility when compared to a few years ago (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Mair, 2002). Scholars investigating the underlying causes of this upsurge electoral volatility have pointed to broader processes – or sources – within society, such as the waning significance of traditional societal cleavages, generational patterns, as well as the decoupling of parties and voters (Dalton, Flanagan and Beck, 1984; Franklin, Mackie and Valen, 1992; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Fieldhouse, Green, Evans, Mellon, Prosser, Schmitt and van der Eijk, 2019).

These trends have given rise to a phenomenon of electoral or partisan dealignment, which refers to “fundamental changes in the relationship between parties and voters” (Dalton *et al.*, 1984; Lachat, 2004). This phenomenon has resulted in a reassessment of traditional conceptualisations of voting behaviour that emphasised the image of a stable electorate, where

an individual's social position and their partisanship were understood to be the primary drivers a voter's behaviour (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Lachat, 2004; Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019).

Due to electoral dealignment, voters have become more loosely attached to these traditional forms of allegiances, whereas issue voting, and the influence of short-term political factors have risen in prominence within the calculus of voting (Dalton 1984; Lachat, 2004; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). As such, it becomes more likely for voters to switch parties or to display other consequences of electoral dealignment, which includes split ticket voting, exiting, or making their electoral choice later in the campaign (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Lachat, 2004; Dalton, 2008; Huddy, 2013).

1.3.3 Exploring vote switching and exiting

In light of the previous sub-section, it is clear that there are numerous consequences associated with the phenomenon of electoral dealignment. However, the goal of this thesis is to deepen understandings on two specific consequences of dealignment, namely vote switching and increased abstentions or exiting.

1.3.3.1 Vote switching

Vote switching is defined as “the practice of not voting for the same party in consecutive elections” (Lane and Ersson, 1999:124; Mayer, 2007:367). It must be noted that some authors have employed the terms ‘gross volatility’ or ‘party switchers’ to refer to the number of voters who switch their vote between elections (e.g., Butler and Stokes, 1974; Lane and Ersson, 1996; Pedersen, 1997). However, to avoid confusion, this thesis will use the term ‘vote switching’ or ‘switching’ when referring to the particular behaviour of voters that switch their party choice between elections.

The literature delineates two different forms of vote switching, namely campaign switching and inter-election switching (Dassonneville, 2012). Inter-election switching refers to a voter who changes their vote between different elections, whereas campaign volatility describes the switching of party choices during an election campaign (Lachat, 2007; Dassonneville, 2012). Since the aim of this thesis is to understand the underlying mechanisms as to why some citizens are able to switch their vote, while other previously active voters exit the party system and abstain, this thesis will restrict its focus to inter-election vote switching.

1.3.3.1.1 Determinants of vote switching

Political sophistication

The literature identifies political sophistication as an important factor in determining whether a voter shifts their vote between elections. Within the political science sphere, the concept of sophistication encompasses two major components, namely interest in politics and cognitive skills (Lachat, 2007). As Luskin (1990:332) writes, “political sophistication refers to the extent to which political cognitions are numerous, cut a wide substantive swath, and are highly organized or ‘constrained.’” As such, studies have made use of numerous of indicators to measure political sophistication, including exposure to political information, internal political efficacy, political knowledge, participation, interest in politics, and political schemas (Luskin 1990; Lachat, 2007; Dassonneville, 2012).

However, the literature on the association between political sophistication and vote switching is inconclusive. Some studies find that it increases switching (Habert and Lancelot, 1988; Blais and Turgeon, 2004; Dalton, 2007, 2013; Dassonneville, 2012), others find the opposite (Albright, 2009; Marthaler, 2008; Kuhn 2009), while some find a nonlinear effect (Converse, 1962; Zaller, 2000; Lachat, 2007; Dassoneville and Dejaeghere, 2014; van der Meer, van Elsas, Lubbe and van der Brug, 2015). As such, what effect sophistication has on vote switching remains unclear.

Institutional disaffection

Institutional disaffection refers to a perceived dearth of responsiveness from the political system, which, in turn, leads to a low level of trust and belief in political authorities and the institutions they run (Torcal and Montero, 2006). This perspective sees vote switching as a manifestation of a “mood of protest” emanating from voters (Zelle, 1995:332; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017). This argument, known as Zelle’s ‘frustrated floating voter’ hypothesis, holds that vote switchers are disgruntled, distrustful, and frustrated with politics (Berelson et al., 1954; Zelle, 1995:350). Switching, according to this view, is therefore primarily an expressive act – enabling an individual voter to give voice to their discontent.

Several studies seemed to have confirmed this relationship between institutional disaffection and vote switching (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Muxel, 2009; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville, Hooghe, and Marien, 2014). However, some recent studies have cast doubt on this link between institutional disaffection and vote switching, finding instead that vote

switching is not a manifestation of frustration and disaffection, but rather the product of rational evaluations about party performances (Söderlund, 2008; Blais, Dassonneville and Dejaeghere, 2015).

Dissatisfaction with preferred party

The retrospective theory of voting holds that a large portion of voters act rationally when voting, and that the output of their political representatives play a big role in their decision making process (Key, 1966; Barro, 1973; Ferejohn, 1986; Söderlund, 2008). Accordingly, if voters are happy with how the incumbent is performing, then there is a greater chance that they will reward the government with their vote. In contrast, voters will defect to another party if they are dissatisfied with the performance of the incumbent (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007).

Authors that investigate the nexus between retrospective voting and vote switching have found that retrospective evaluations of a respondent's preferred party – instead of a more generalised sense of disaffection with politics – greatly influenced the chances that the individual would switch their vote (Söderlund, 2008:234; Blais, Dassonneville and Dejaeghere, 2015:16). As such, there should be clear delineation between dissatisfaction directed at an one's previous party – which is associated with vote switching – and political disaffection, which has been associated with exiting (Blais *et al.*, 2015; Söderlund, 2008).

1.3.3.2 Exiting

Abstention is a concept within election procedures that refers to instances “when an eligible voter refrains from voting” (Hayden, 2010:588). As mentioned earlier however, this thesis doesn't aim to explain the reasons for abstention in and of itself – which would require a more in-depth exposition of participation and turnout literature – but rather, aims to examine why some people who were previously electorally active, now choose to ‘exit’ the party system and abstain instead of switching their vote. This view of ‘exiting’ as one of three options alongside ‘loyalty’ and ‘switching’ stems from Albert Hirschman's (1970) general theory of individual behaviour vis-a-vis an organizational environment. There are numerous theories and factors put forward by scholars to explain why people abstain or ‘exit’ the party system.

The resource model posits that an important antecedent to a voter exiting is a lack of material and attitudinal resources available to the individual to cast a vote – more specifically, “money, time, and civic skills” (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995; Brady, Verba

and Schlozman, 1995; Blais, 2009:631). Another approach is the psychological engagement model, which argues that “it is not the number of resources available to an individual that determines whether they vote; rather, what really matters is whether a person actually cares about politics i.e., their level of psychological engagement with the political realm” (Blais, 2009:631).

A third model attempting to elucidate why citizens exit or vote is the mobilisation model. This model posits that people vote “because they are spurred on by the people and groups around them” (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Blais, 2009:632). A fourth school of thought, known as the rational choice model, posits that whether a voter turns out to vote is contingent upon the “costs and benefits” of voting. Accordingly, if a voter perceives the costs as outweighing the benefits, then they will in all likelihood exit the electoral system (Downs, 1957; Ricker and Ordershook, 1968; Blais 2009:632).

1.3.4 Situating the study: South African literature on voting behaviour

In light of the international literature discussed above, this section briefly summarises the literature on South African voting behaviour, with a specific focus on switching and abstention.

1.3.4.1 Government performance and declining partisanship

Mattes, Taylor and Africa (1999:245) find that voters’ party choice is shaped by rational factors such as government performance and service delivery, an impactful election campaign and the impediments faced by opposition parties in persuading voters to view them as credible alternatives to the governing party. The role of rational choice-based factors in South Africans’ electoral behaviour intensified in the most recent national elections due to rising levels of unemployment, an increasingly sluggish economy and growing perceptions of corruption and state capture (Southall 2014:206; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b). The increasing importance of rational considerations has contributed to another trend mentioned in the South African voter behaviour literature namely, decreasing levels of partisanship.

Indeed, past studies by the likes of Ferree (2006), Bratton and Mattes (2003) and Schulz-Herzenberg (2009; 2011; 2012; 2019a), among others, have consistently illustrated the dwindling rate of party identification in South Africa, mirroring the trends found in developed nations (Dalton, 2002). The most notable outcome from this decline in partisanship is that it has engendered a burgeoning pool of “floating voters” who are not tied down to one party and

whose voting choice is based on rational short-term factors, as opposed to their party identification (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011).

1.3.4.2 Vote switching in South Africa

Before moving on to the obstacles to vote switching that the majority of South Africa's "floating voters" face, it is important to note that there is a growing – albeit small – number of voters who do switch their votes between elections (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a). Harris (2020) is among a handful of authors to systematically investigate this segment of the electorate. Since this study only used data from the Tshwane Municipality, its results cannot be applied to the whole country. Notwithstanding, factors such as possessing lower levels of partisanship, being younger, having "negative assessments of ANC performance and having fewer friends and family who support their preferred party" were all found to be associated with vote switching (Harris, 2020:207). Despite the growing number of switchers, the vast majority of South Africa's 'floating voters' still face a number of obstacles in shifting their vote.

Political sophistication

The first obstacle to vote switching that the literature identifies is a low level of political sophistication and a preponderance of apoliticals among South Africa's 'floating' or independent non-partisan electorate, who are typically less sophisticated, inactive, uninvolved, and detached from politics (Mattes, 2004; Schulz-herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Dalton, 2014b). The implication of this is that despite the existence of a growing portion of the electorate who are independent of party allegiances, most of these voters do not have the requisite cognitive abilities, resources and interest that would enable them to switch their votes based on short-term evaluative factors and party policy positions (Mattes, 2004). Furthermore, despite these non-partisans potentially being more susceptible to influence from different parties, it is also harder to mobilise them to vote, increasing their chances of abstaining from voting (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011). This phenomenon provides some insight into why many non-partisan South African voters opt to exit rather than switch their vote to a different party.

Social network composition

Another impediment to vote switching covered in the literature is an individual's social network, with politically homogenous discussion networks engendering lower levels of vote switching (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2013:32). In contrast, those individuals who live within more politically heterogeneous social contexts are more likely to "defect from their party

identification when they vote; are more likely to defect from their previous vote choice in subsequent elections, have weaker partisan ties and are more likely to consider alternative political homes” (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2013:32-33). As such, a voter’s social network can be an inhibitor or a driver of vote switching, depending on its level of diversity. However, considering South Africa’s legacy of segregation, “where most voters live in racially homogenous social environments,” social networks are likely to be an inhibitor of vote switching for the majority of the electorate (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2013:4-5).

Party image evaluations

Another obstacle to inter-party movement identified in the South African literature are racially exclusive party images. Richard Trilling (1976:2) defines party images as pictures of a mental or psychological nature that voters possess in relation to political parties. These party images are particularly useful when there is a dearth of political information at an individual’s disposal (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1991; Dalton, 2008). Multiple South African studies have demonstrated that prior to evaluating a party’s track record, promises and policies, voters will first assess a party’s overall image and must be persuaded that the party does not exclude them or their ethnic and racial in-group (Mattes, 1995; Mattes, *et al.*, 1999; Mattes and Piombo, 2001; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Ferree, 2010). Crucially, these views of party images play a restrictive role, severely constraining the choice of parties for both independents and partisans. As such, if a voter becomes disgruntled with the ANC, they often feel as though they cannot shift their support to a different party, which forms a major obstacle to inter-party vote switching (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012).

1.3.4.3 Exiting in South Africa

Since the late 2000’s, scholars have been raising the alarm over a pattern of deteriorating public participation and increased levels of exiting among the South African electorate (Kersting 2007; Schulz-Herzenberg 2007; Kimmie, Greben, and Booysen 2010). As explained earlier, this thesis isn’t concerned with the reasons for abstention in and of itself, but rather, aims to examine why some people who were previously electorally active, now choose to exit the party system instead of switching their vote or remaining loyal to their previous party.

Despite the dearth of studies that focus specifically on the growth of exiting in South Africa, it has been found that young people in South Africa, like youths around the world, register and vote at exceptionally lower rates than older citizens (Hofmeyr, 2004:14; Schulz-Herzenberg,

2019c). The likes of Oyedemi and Mahlatji (2016), Tracey (2016) and Roberts, Struwig, Gordon and Davids (2019) echo these findings by showing that abstainers are more likely to be younger on average. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that informal social networks and interpersonal discussants are influential predictors of voter turnout in South Africa. Dwindling levels of partisanship have also been shown to impact voter turnout in South Africa. For instance, Roberts *et al.* (2019:493) show how partisanship induces individuals to vote, whereas non-partisanship seems to sway citizens towards uncertainty or exiting.

Citizens' evaluation of government's performance has also been shown to have an impact on whether a person votes or exits, with negative evaluations of the governing party stimulating electoral participation, whereas positive evaluations were associated with abstaining (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020:27). Apart from this, Roberts *et al.* (2019:494) have shown that other psychological orientations, such as "political interest, sense of efficacy and belief in the civic duty to vote," are useful in differentiating abstainers from decided voters. Other quantitative research examining voter behaviour in South Africa point the existence of a culture of voting and having voted in the last election as being significant determinants of voting (Struwig, Roberts and Gordon, 2016).

1.4 Research questions and hypotheses

This study investigates why some voters who grow dissatisfied with the ANC switch their vote to a new party while others instead choose to exit the party system and thus abstain. As such, the overarching primary question that guides this study is, *what are the determinants of vote switching versus exiting among ANC voters in South Africa?* In order to answer this question, the following secondary research questions and concomitant hypotheses are formulated. These research questions will guide the data analysis and are interlinked but assess different components of the primary research question.

Secondary research questions:

Research question 1 (RQ1): Switchers: What are the individual-level factors that motivate a voter to switch from the ANC to another party in two consecutive elections?

Research question 2 (RQ2): Exiters: What are the individual-level factors that cause an ANC voter to vote in one election and abstain rather than switch in a subsequent election?

In light of the research questions guiding this study, this section now proceeds to set out the study's main hypotheses. A hypothesis is defined as "a tentative statement about the relationship between two or more variables. It is a specific, testable prediction about what you expect to happen in a study" (Mouton, 1996; Neuman, 2002:68; Lavrakas, 2008). Each formulated hypothesis stems from the literature and findings of scholars, both local and international, whose work focuses on the correlates of vote switching and exiting. Drawing on the above summary literature the following hypotheses guide this study:

Political sophistication

The literature on the association between political sophistication and vote switching is inconclusive. This thesis, however, follows the cognitive mobilisation hypothesis, which has been affirmed by recent studies, and predict that a higher level of sophistication will increase the chances of switching (Dalton, 1984; 2000; 2007; Inglehart; 1990).

H¹: High levels of political sophistication increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H²: Low levels of political sophistication increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

Dissatisfaction with preferred party

Dissatisfaction with the performance of the ANC is predicted to increase the chances of both switching and exiting the electoral system (Blais, Dassonneville and Dejaeghere, 2015; Söderlund, 2008).

H³: Dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H⁴: Dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

Institutional disaffection

Institutional disaffection has been shown to be associated with both vote switching and abstention (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Söderlund, 2008; Dassonneville, 2012; 2014; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017; Voogt and Dassonneville, 2020).

This thesis therefore expects institutional disaffection to encourage vote switching and abstention among 2014 ANC supporters.

H⁵: Institutional disaffection increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H⁶: Institutional disaffection increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

Party image evaluations

Party images are expected to influence whether a voter switches their vote or abstains, with inclusive party images engendering switching and exclusive party images resulting in exiting (Mattes, 1995; Mattes, *et al.*, 1999; Mattes and Piombo, 2001; Schulz-herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Ferree, 2010; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011).

H⁷: Holding positive party images of opposition political parties increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H⁸: Holding negative party images of opposition political parties increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

Social network composition

It is expected that voters who live within politically heterogenous discussion networks are more likely to switch their vote or exit than those who live in homogenous discussion networks (Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt, 2002; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2013).

H⁹: Politically heterogenous discussion networks increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H¹⁰: Politically heterogenous discussion networks increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

1.5 Overview of research methodology and operationalisation

In light of the above research questions and hypotheses, this section briefly discusses the research design and methodology employed by this study.

1.5.1 A quantitative cross-sectional study using public opinion survey data

This study will employ a cross-sectional research design using a quantitative methodology. A cross-sectional study is a type of observational research that analyses data of variables collected at one given point in time across a sample population or a pre-defined subset (Jupp, 2006:53; Burnham *et al.*, 2008:59; Pierce, 2011; Bryman and Bell, 2019:37; Babbie, 2020). Since the goal of this thesis is to explore associations between various variables as it pertains to ANC supporters at a single point in time – the behaviour of 2014 ANC supporters at the 2019 elections – a cross-sectional research design is highly appropriate (Spector, 2019). As such the research design also comprises a case-study that focuses on one South African political party's base of support, that of the ANC.

This study will employ a quantitative research method using public opinion data sourced from the CNEP 2019 post-election survey. Van der Merwe (1996) defines quantitative research as an approach that entails the collating and analysis of numerical data, with the aim of investigating the validity of theories, examining how variables are connected to each other and forecasting outcomes based on the information we have at our disposal. This method is therefore suitable to answer the research questions of this study. Furthermore, this thesis makes use of a public opinion survey, which has proven to be very “useful as a tool to gather data and assess causes and impacts of events; thereby having the power to provide explanations for events or changes within societies” (Brady, 2000:47). The survey data used in this study is derived from the CNEP 2019 South African post-election public opinion survey dataset. CNEP is an international multi-year project that primarily focuses upon elections and voter behaviour in democracies around the world (<https://u.osu.edu/cnep/>). The CNEP data is obtained from in-person interviews with a nationally representative sample of South African citizens over the age of 18 directly after the 2019 national elections.

1.5.2 Operationalisation of variables

1.5.2.1 Dependent variable

This thesis aims to measure two aspects of electoral volatility: that of vote switching and abstention. To measure these two distinct acts, the study creates a new trichotomous dependent variable from existing variables in the CNEP 2019 dataset. Thus, the newly computed dependent variable is a trichotomous categorical variable with the following categories:

- (1) Loyal voter - voting for the ANC in both the 2014 and 2019 elections

(2) Switcher - voting for the ANC in 2014 and voting for a different party in 2019.

(3) Exiter - voting for the ANC in 2014 and abstaining in 2019.

Refer to Chapter Three and the Appendix for a detailed discussion regarding their operationalisation and category coding. A three-way dependent variable with loyalty, switching and exiting as the three possible outcomes of electoral behaviour is largely neglected in South African studies. However, this method aligns with numerous international studies which highlight how crucial it is to utilise “unified models” that test for both vote choice and abstention at the same time (Sanders, 1998; Thurner and Eymann, 2000; Pierce, 2003; Söderlund, 2008; Tillman, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015).

1.5.2.2 *Independent variables*

In line with other studies, this thesis will assess the relative impact of a variety of variables, that are theoretically relevant to the study of vote switching in South Africa and abroad, in determining an individual’s choice to either switch parties, exit or remain loyal. Refer Chapter Two for the conceptualisation of these key concepts, and Chapter Three and the Appendix for a detailed discussion regarding their operationalisation and category coding. The following independent variables are used in this study:

- Political Sophistication: This variable is operationalised using four distinct indicators, namely political interest, campaign attention, internal political efficacy, and level of education.
- Dissatisfaction with preferred party
- Institutional disaffection: This variable is operationalised using four distinct indicators, namely external efficacy, political trust and satisfaction with democracy.
- Party image evaluations
- Social network composition
- Control variables: Age, urban/rural split, gender and party identification.

1.6 **Significance of study**

The fact that a degree of electoral uncertainty and volatility is seen as crucial part in the optimal functioning of democracies, renders this study of individual-level change as highly important (Lipset, 1966; Strøm, 1992; Przeworski, 2003). As Schedler (2001) intimates, a lack of electoral competition breeds predictability in politics, which often leads to an unresponsive

government, where citizens feel as though they have no say in how they are governed. As such, understanding the antecedents to volatility, especially among ANC voters, is important in ensuring a healthy and competitive democracy in South Africa. Further adding to the significance of this study is the fact that party switchers are the crucial actors that hold “the critical balance of power” (Converse, 1962:578).

Thus, it is significant to understand what allows voters to switch their support and others not. Is it a reflection of “uninformed and capricious voters’ disinterest and lack of commitment” or are party switchers informed voters who have the requisite resources and mental competencies to understand the complexities of the political realm without relying on heuristics such as party-identification or social groups (Dalton, 2008:212)? Furthermore, assessing the extent to which switching and exiting is driven by a more generalised feeling of frustration and disaffection with the entire political system or the product of rational evaluations about past party performances, will shed light on the impact of switching on representative democracy, as well as how elites and political parties respond to growing volatility.

In addition, while there is a modest increase in vote switching, the South African electoral space is largely characterised by a growing cohort of exiters. There appear to be important factors that impede the movement of previously active voters from switching to a different party. This process of ‘dealignment without realignment’ is ominous for South Africa’s process of democratic consolidation, as it not only depresses turnout, but also stifles electoral competition because instead of switching their vote and giving a different party the opportunity to govern, many South African voters are simply abstaining. Accordingly, understanding the underlying mechanisms as to why some ANC supporters are able to switch their vote, while other previously active voters exit the party system and abstain, is crucial in arresting this trend of ‘dealignment without realignment.’ Since volatility is seen as crucial in the optimal functioning of democracies, understanding the local precursors and obstacles to vote switching will yield valuable insights into the actions required to stimulate electoral volatility and entrench effective multi-party competition in South Africa.

1.7 Chapter outline

This study is divided into several sections. The first chapter provides the background and rationale for the research as well as the problem statement. It also provides the research questions and hypotheses that guide this study, a summary of the literature review, as well as

its research design and method. Chapter Two conducts a more comprehensive review of the literature in order to situate this study within the broader international and South African literature on both vote switching and exiting, as the latter seems to be the preferred option for much of the electorate. Chapter Three presents a more detailed explanation of the chosen research design and methodologies, its strength and weakness, the rationale behind it, as well as the operationalisation of the variables used.

The next two chapters are empirical in nature and present the data results. Chapter Four presents a series of bivariate statistical analyses in order to provide a descriptive view of the impact of a variety of theoretically relevant factors in determining an individual's choice to switch, remain loyal or abstain. Then, Chapter Five advances the data analysis with a multinomial logistic regression that accounts for all three possible outcomes in order to provide a more sophisticated interpretation of the relative impact of each independent variable on switching, loyalty or exiting.

The final chapter will present the conclusions of the study and the results are used to answer the research questions. This chapter also provides a summary of the study, the implications of the findings for electoral politics more broadly and reflects on the actions required to stimulate electoral volatility and entrench effective multi-party competition in South Africa.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to understand why some ANC voters are able to switch their vote, while other previously active ANC voters exit the party system and abstain. As such, this chapter explores the international and South African literature on both vote switching and exiting, as the latter seems to be the preferred option for much of the electorate. Prior to this, however, the broad concept of electoral volatility is unpacked in the first section, by defining it and examining why volatility is such a crucial aspect of multi-party democracies as explicated in the literature. As this concept is further unravelled, the difference between aggregate- and individual-level volatility is examined, concluding with some explanations for the recent global upsurge in electoral volatility.

Accordingly, the second section explores the literature on electoral dealignment and unpacks the key sources and outcomes of this trend – two of which form the focus of this study namely, vote switching and increased exiting or abstentions. The third section follows with a detailed exposition of the international literature on vote switching and exiting. The final section contextualises the thesis by exploring the trends and patterns discussed in South African voter behaviour literature.

2.2 Unpacking the concept of electoral volatility

Despite its prominence in the field of political science and the important role it plays in the functioning of democracy, there is some uncertainty around the definition of electoral volatility. This is mainly attributable to commentators and scholars who use swing-voting, independents, vote-switching, volatility, and other related concepts interchangeably; even though they all have different definitions. Broadly speaking, electoral volatility refers to the degree of change in voting behaviour and electoral support received by parties between elections (McLean and McMillan, 2009). Electoral volatility is defined by Ascher and Tarrow (1975) as variations within an electoral system triggered by vote shifts at an individual level. Whereas Tavits (2008:538) defines electoral volatility as “the minimum shift in the vote based on aggregate election results.”

In a similar vein, electoral volatility has been described as the cumulative turnover of support between different parties between elections (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Birch, 2003:119). This

definition is echoed by Roberts and Wibbel (1999:576), who describe electoral volatility as the shifts in vote shares that each party obtains across successive election cycles. Here volatility is defined in terms of actual behaviour. However, electoral volatility has also been defined through an attitudinal lens; as variations in party attachments within the voting public from one election to the next (Crewe, 1985:8). Nevertheless, the golden thread running through all these definitions is the idea of change – changes in the distribution of political power across political parties over time, brought about by variations in the behaviour of voters.

Electoral volatility is widely believed to form a crucial aspect of a competitive and thriving democracy. The fact that parties can gain votes, but also potentially lose them is what gives democracy meaning; as it is this threat of a loss of power that is essential in ensuring accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent (Riker, 1982). As Przeworski (1986:57) states, in a democratic regime “no one can win once and for all: even if successful at one time, victors immediately face the prospect of having to struggle in the future.” Furthermore, electoral volatility ensures that the public’s concerns are accurately represented by their elected leaders and reflected in the policies that they pursue (Erikson *et al.*, 2002).

Indeed, if electoral competition was non-existent, political leaders and parties would have very little incentive to be responsive to the will of the population. Switching their vote from election to election is the most direct mechanism for citizens to hold their political leaders accountable, and to communicate their feelings regarding the strategies that the governing party has undertaken (Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson, 2002). Consequently, a reasonable level of electoral volatility can be a signal that accountability and good representation is present within a political system, leading to a healthier, more robust, democracy.

Despite its importance in promoting accountability and good representation, electoral volatility has also been identified as potentially problematic for governance as well as complicating the vote choice process. A stable party system with similar parties vying for political power imbues a degree of coherence and clarity in the minds of voters, making it easier for them to identify and vote for a party that reflects their concerns (Powell, 2004; Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006). However, extreme variability and unpredictability in a party system has a negative element in that it can obfuscate this clear-cut choice set, which can impede the accurate representation of the public’s views and make the process of deciding who to vote for all the more difficult

(Powell and Tucker, 2014). As Dalton (2016:14) explains, “a more fluid public, decoupled from habitual party cues, can also open the door to exploitation and demagoguery by political elites.”

Notwithstanding these potential drawbacks, electoral volatility remains an important cog in the optimal functioning of a democracy. The possibility of electoral change is essential in ensuring accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent (Riker, 1982). Furthermore, it ensures that the public's concerns are accurately represented by their elected leaders and reflected in the policies that they pursue (Erikson *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, the concept of electoral volatility can be further refined based on the level of analysis, namely individual-level volatility or aggregate-level volatility.

2.2.1 Macro- and micro-perspectives

2.2.1.1 Aggregate-level volatility

Aggregate-level volatility refers to “the net change within the electoral party system resulting from individual vote transfers” (Ascher and Tarrow, 1975:480; Pedersen, 1979). In other words, aggregate-level volatility views electoral change from a macro-perspective and is the aggregation of individual decisions. The Pedersen index is most often used to measure this kind of electoral volatility, which is “the sum of the absolute changes in vote shares divided by two” (Pedersen, 1979; 1983). The index produces a scale from 0 to 100, correlating with the net shift in the percentage of votes obtained by each party (Pedersen, 1979; 1983). By capturing top-level changes in vote shares and being obtainable for a wide variety of elections in different countries – which enables one to compare results from cross-country analyses – aggregate-level volatility has proven to be a crucial indicator of change within party systems. Despite the importance of aggregate-level volatility as an indicator of electoral change, it is not without its shortcomings.

Aggregate-level volatility, by definition, only records top-level variations in vote shares, which means that opposite changes cancel each other out. As such, while high aggregate-level volatility is indicative of high levels of vote switching, “low aggregate volatility does not automatically mean the reverse” (Fieldhouse, Green, Evans, Mellon, Prosser, Schmitt and van der Eijk, 2019:12). Furthermore, aggregate analyses of volatility cannot explicate the socio-psychological and short-term sources of said volatility (van der Meer, van Elsas, Lubbe and van der Brug, 2015). Fluctuations in the results of elections can be triggered by a transforming

demographic, voters who switch between different parties as well as individuals who go from voting in one election to abstaining in the next, or vice versa (Lachat, 2007). Aggregate-level calculations, however, have an inability to drill down into the significance of these factors. As such, this literature review now shifts its attention towards the focal point of this thesis namely, individual-level volatility.

2.2.1.2 Individual-level volatility

Individual-level volatility views electoral change from the micro-perspective and is defined as the proportion of voters who changed their vote between two elections (McLean and McMillan, 2009). Besides a voter switching their vote between elections, individual-level volatility also manifests in the form of split-ticket voting and late deciders (Lachat, 2007). Notwithstanding, the primary indicator of individual-level electoral volatility found in the literature is that of vote switching, which is explored later in this chapter.

Butler and Stokes (1974) identifies a further two avenues for individual-level volatility, namely overall volatility, and total volatility. When projecting overall volatility, not only vote switchers are considered, but also those voters who went “from voting in one election to abstaining in the next,” or vice versa (Butler and Stokes, 1974; Lane and Ersson, 1996:126). In contrast, total volatility entails the addition to overall volatility of “generational replacement,” which is engendered by the entry of newly eligible voters and the exit of deceased voters (Butler and Stokes, 1974; Lane and Ersson, 1996:126). Although vote switching, overall volatility and total volatility are distinct concepts, they are all aimed at assessing electoral change; which has resulted in scholars examining switching between different parties and switching between voting and abstaining simultaneously (see, for instance, Evans, 1999; Söderlund, 2008).

Studies focusing on individual-level volatility are not as common as aggregate-level studies but have proven to be much more useful at uncovering the socio-psychological and short-term sources of electoral volatility (Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Lachat, 2007; Söderlund, 2008; Kuhn, 2009; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville and Dejaeghere, 2014; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017).

Despite the usefulness of vote switching as an indicator for individual-level volatility, it has one drawback that aggregate-level volatility does not have. Vote switching is unable to be directly observed, which means scholars must make use of survey questions in order to isolate

and study this phenomenon. This results in a number of problems such as missing data and memory errors (Dassonneville, 2014). Furthermore, due to the dearth in panel data covering numerous election rounds, scholars often have to rely on recall questions. However, recall questions are considered by many to be inadequate for studying individual-level volatility. This is mainly because it is likely that many citizens could have forgotten which party they had voted for in the previous election, as well as the issue of cognitive dissonance, where an individual might “adjust their previous vote to be in line with their current preference” (Waldahl and Aardal, 2000; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017:112). Despite these methodological shortcomings, using recall data is currently the “only way out” for scholars – who do not have access to multi-election panel data – to investigate individual-level volatility (Waldahl and Aardal, 2000).

It is worth noting that neither aggregate- nor individual-level volatility should be considered superior to the other; as they provide different lenses through which to view electoral change, and both perspectives offer unique insights to its determinants and consequences. Nevertheless, this thesis focuses upon the individual-level determinants of volatility in South Africa among ANC supporters. Now that the concept of electoral volatility has been introduced, this literature review continues to unravel this concept by shifting its attention towards the underlying mechanisms of the global increase in electoral volatility in recent decades.

2.3 Electoral Dealignment

Electorates around the world are exhibiting an elevated level of volatility than they did in the past (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Mair, 2002). Less people are voting for the same party across consecutive elections, which has led to increasing levels of unpredictability in election results, bigger seat changes in parliament and the rise of new parties (Dassonneville, 2012:18). This upsurge in volatility over the past few decades – especially in established democracies – appears to challenge Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) notion of immutable societal cleavages being the primary driver of voter behaviour.

Scholars investigating the underlying causes of this upsurge electoral volatility have pointed to broader processes within society, such as the waning significance of traditional societal cleavages, generational patterns, as well as the decoupling of parties and voters (Dalton *et al.*, 1984; Franklin, Mackie and Valen, 1992; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). These trends have given rise to a phenomenon of electoral dealignment, “which refers

to fundamental changes in the relationship between parties and voters” (Dalton *et al.*, 1984; Lachat, 2004). As Russell Dalton (2000:22) states, “the dealignment thesis holds that party ties were generally eroding as a consequence of social and political modernization, and thus most advanced industrial societies should experience a dealignment trend” (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000: 22).

The literature focuses almost exclusively on the decline in party identification as the only factor contributing to voters’ dealignment. However, as Lachat (2004) argues – despite being one of the most important variables within the field of political behaviour – solely concentrating on this political predisposition is insufficient to explain the perceived increase in electoral volatility. Other socio-structural factors, such as the declining importance of traditional cleavages and generational patterns, are also crucial in determining which voters are more likely to be “dealigned” (Lachat, 2004).

Electoral dealignment therefore engenders a reassessment of traditional conceptualisations of voting behaviour that emphasised the image of a stable electorate. For decades, long-term factors such as an individual’s social position and their partisanship were understood to be the primary drivers a voter’s behaviour (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Lachat, 2004; Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). It had been argued that these early-socialised social group identities and affective party ties stabilised an individual’s voting behaviour by orientating voters to political issues, acting as a shortcut in making voting decisions and influencing patterns of political participation (Dalton, 2008; Dalton, 2014a). This is demonstrated in the traditional models of voter behaviour, with the Michigan model emphasising party identification and the sociological model highlighting the role of immutable societal cleavages in the vote choice process (Berelson *et al.*, 1954; Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

Due to electoral dealignment, however, voters have become more loosely attached to these traditional forms of allegiances, whereas issue voting, and the influence of short-term political factors have risen in prominence within the calculus of voting (Dalton 1984; Lachat, 2004; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006). Electoral dealignment has eroded the deep-seated psychosocial bonds that once provided structure to electoral competition in most democracies (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). As such, it becomes more likely for voters to switch their vote between elections or to exhibit alternative manifestations of volatility in their voter behaviour, such as

split ticket voting, exiting, or making their electoral choice later in the campaign (Lachat, 2004; Dalton, 2008; Huddy, 2013). Before delving into these consequences of electoral dealignment, this literature review will first briefly examine the sources of this phenomenon.

2.3.1 The sources of dealignment

The ‘sources’ of electoral dealignment mentioned in the literature include cognitive mobilisation, generational change and a decline in the importance of traditional cleavages. However, it is worth pointing out that all of these drivers of dealignment are linked processes and should not be considered in isolation from each other.

2.3.1.1 Cognitive mobilisation

The first major ‘source’ of electoral dealignment is a process of cognitive mobilisation. Cognitive mobilisation is described as a dual process. Firstly, due to the global proliferation of mass media and other sources of political news information, the costs of acquiring political knowledge have dramatically declined (Dalton, 1984; Dalton, 2007). Secondly, the spread of higher levels of education has augmented the electorate’s ability to understand and manage this influx of complex political information (Dalton, 1984; Dalton, 2007). As such, there is an elevated number of citizens who possess the necessary mental competencies to navigate the intricacies of the political realm and make independent choices without the need for low-cost cues, like partisanship or their social group (Dalton, 2008:212). Consequently, more and more people become “de-aligned” from their habitual cues, thereby generating the potential for increased uncertainty and greater electoral volatility (Dalton, 2002).

2.3.1.2 Generational patterns

Generational replacement is considered by many social science scholars to be another driver of political and social change (Franklin, 2004; Hooghe 2004: 331; Van der Brug and Franklin, 2018). The crucial mechanism that underlies these changes is the replacement of older generations of voters – who usually possess stronger partisan and group ties – with younger voters, who exhibit more tenuous connections to their parties and group identities (Fieldhouse *et al.*, 2019). This is because political ideals and voting habits are socialised during an individual’s formative years and then stay relatively constant as time progresses (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Butler and Stokes, 1969). As such, voters get more “set in their ways” as they become older, with their voting habits and attitudes becoming more and more impervious to short-term political developments (Hooghe, 2004; Franklin, 2004; van der Brug, 2010). Younger people,

however, are not yet as “set in their ways” and are therefore more likely to adjust their votes and attitudes in accordance with current political events, thereby producing increased levels of volatility and dealignment (Franklin, 2004; Hooghe, 2004; van der Brug, 2010).

2.3.1.3 Declining importance of traditional cleavages

Another factor contributing to electoral dealignment is the waning importance of societal strata – such as religion and class – that have structured electoral competition in most democracies for decades (Dalton *et al.*, 1984; Franklin *et al.*, 1992; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). Increased social and geographical mobility, economic growth as well as higher of education levels have resulted in a gradual homogenisation of lifestyles, thereby blurring traditional group-alignments (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Lachat, 2004). The erosion of these connections between citizens and their bounded communities – such a working-class milieu or church congregation – has dramatically reduced the portion of the electorate for whom traditional group identities are directly relevant, thereby spurring on the process of electoral dealignment (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000).

2.3.2 The consequences of dealignment: switching and exiting

There are crucial consequences associated with the process of electoral dealignment. The literature identifies vote switching, split-ticket voting, increased exiting (abstentions) and late vote decision-making as some of the ‘symptoms’ associated with electoral dealignment (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Lachat, 2004). However, this thesis focuses specifically upon on two consequences of dealignment, namely vote switching and exiting.

Electoral dealignment is intimately intertwined with switching and exiting. This is because traditional forms of allegiances – such as party identification or social group alignments – stabilise an individual’s voting behaviour, making them less likely to switch parties; and they act as mobilisers for citizens, making them less likely to exit (Dalton, 2000; Dalton, 2014b). Dalton (2000) uses the metaphor of supporting a sports team to elucidate the link between partisanship, switching and exiting. Just like loyalty to a football team might encourage a person to go out and actively support their team, attachment to a political party also stimulates involvement within the political process, encouraging an individual to demonstrate support for their ‘side’ by voting (Dalton, 2000; Dalton, 2014b). As such, those individuals with long-standing affective bonds with a political party are much easier to mobilise and “feel a stronger

sense of personal motivation to support their preferred parties and candidates at the polls” (Dalton, 2000:21).

Thus, when voters are firmly ensconced within these psychosocial groups, their outlook on politics will likely be congruent with their prior attachments, it increases the probability that they will vote, and there is a great chance that they will remain loyal to their preferred party (Finkel and Opp, 1991; Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg, 2000; Heath, 2007). However, due to the process of electoral dealignment, voters have become more loosely attached to these traditional forms of allegiances and are making political decisions independent of these partisan or social group ties. As such, short-term factors, such as the important political issues of the day and the perceived competence of the competing parties will play a bigger role in the decision making process (Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Dalton 1984; Lachat, 2004). The result of this is a greater openness to switching parties or exiting from election to election based on the ebb and flow of politics, as voters are no longer constrained by their traditional loyalties (Dalton *et al.*, 2000; Rattinger and Wiegand 2014).

2.4 Exploring vote switching and exiting

Following on from the previous section, this literature review proceeds by conducting an in-depth review of the determinants of the two consequences of electoral dealignment under scrutiny in this study, namely, switching and exiting.

2.4.1 Defining vote switching

Vote switchers are referred to by various terms in the literature, including moderates, election kings, political independents, undecided, movable middle, and persuadable voters (Adams and Agomor, 2018). The polyonymous nature of the term engenders some confusion regarding its exact definition. However, Lane and Ersson (1999:124) define vote switching as the “tendency of voters not to choose the same party as in the last election.” Similarly, Mayer (2007:367) describes vote switchers as those voters who are not only open to changing their vote, but who actually vote for different parties in consecutive elections. As such, vote switching can be understood as a disjuncture in the vote choice of an individual across two consecutive elections. It must be noted that some authors have employed the terms ‘gross volatility’ or ‘party switchers’ to refer to the number of voters who switch their vote between elections (e.g., Butler and Stokes, 1974; Lane and Ersson, 1996; Pedersen, 1997). However, to avoid confusion, this

thesis will use the term ‘vote switching’ or ‘switching’ to refer to the particular behaviour of voters that switch their party choice between elections.

The literature delineates two different forms of vote switching, namely campaign switching and inter-election switching (Dassonneville, 2012). Inter-election switching refers to a voter who changes their vote between elections, whereas campaign volatility describes the switching of party choices during an election campaign (Lachat, 2007; Dassonneville, 2012). Although this distinction was already brought to the fore by Berelson *et al.* (1954), it was Lachat (2007) who was among the first to empirically separate inter-election switching from campaign switching and investigate the dynamics behind the two phenomena.

While most scholars agree that these concepts are inherently different and should therefore be treated as such, the lack of panel data following the same voters over multiple election cycles often makes it difficult for scholars to distinguish between these two concepts (Dassonneville, 2014). Furthermore, despite the ostensible lack of a logical connection between inter-election switching and campaign switching, many scholars have found numerous similarities in the underlying mechanisms of these two forms of vote switching (Granberg and Holmberg, 1990; Lachat, 2007; Kuhn, 2009; Dassonneville, 2012; Van Der Meer *et al.*, 2015). Accordingly, data constraints, combined with the fact that the antecedents of campaign switching often do not vary greatly from the drivers of inter-election switching, mean that this thesis will restrict its focus to inter-election vote switching.

2.4.2 Global determinants of vote switching

This section explores the determinants of vote switching, which is gleaned from the global literature.

2.4.2.1 Political sophistication

The literature identifies political sophistication as an important factor in determining whether a voter shifts their vote between elections. At its most fundamental level, sophistication refers to an individual’s “accumulated knowledge in a domain” (Fiske, Lau and Smith 1990: 32). However, within the political sphere, the concept of sophistication is much broader and intricate, encompassing two major components, namely interest in politics and cognitive skills (Lachat, 2007). As Luskin (1990:332) writes, political sophistication refers to “the extent to

which political cognitions are numerous, cut a wide substantive swath, and are highly organized or ‘constrained.’”

Despite the importance of political sophistication in the study of electoral change, the last half century of studies exploring the impact of political sophistication on vote switching has led to number of different hypothesis and arguments on the form and direction of this relation (Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018). The first view was posited by the scholars at Columbia University and portrayed a party switcher as someone with low levels of sophistication, who was not all that interested in politics and had little access to information. This conclusion was based on the findings of their study which showed that vote switching was more prevalent among uninformed and indifferent voters, rather than highly sophisticated voters (Berelson *et al.*, 1963:20). As such, the Columbia School painted a negative image of vote switchers, viewing them as apathetic “floating voters” whose volatile electoral behaviour was indicative of a dearth of interest in politics and disengagement with the electoral process (Berelson *et al.*, 1963).

A more optimistic account of vote switching – put forward by the likes of Russell Dalton (1984) – challenges the “floating voter” hypothesis and argues that modern-day voters should not be equated with the voters analysed by the scholars at Columbia University. According to this view, vote switching and electoral instability is highest among highly sophisticated voters due to a process of cognitive mobilisation (Dalton *et al.*, 2000; Dalton, 2013). The cognitive mobilisation thesis posits that the global proliferation of mass media and higher levels of education has enabled more people to “comprehend the complexities of the political arena” which has resulted in the “growth of ‘apartisans’ who can navigate the intricacies of politics without the need for low-cost cues, like partisanship” (Dalton, 2008:212). This abrasion of the deep-seated connections between parties and voters generates the potential of increased uncertainty and greater electoral volatility, thereby resulting in more vote switching (Dalton, 2002). According to this view, vote switchers are not “uninformed and uninterested” – as suggested by Berelson *et al.* (1963) – but are sophisticated and exhibit higher levels of political knowledge and engagement with the political sphere (Dalton, 2008).

Some empirical findings support the theory of cognitive mobilisation, by showing that vote switching occurs more frequently among better educated and well-informed voters (Habert and Lancelot, 1988; Dalton, 2007, 2013). However, recent studies have called into question the

validity of the cognitive mobilisation thesis. Indeed, authors such as Albright (2009) and Marthaler (2008) have found that less knowledgeable and poorly informed voters are more prone to switch votes between two consecutive elections than sophisticated voters. Thus, work examining the impact of political sophistication on voters switching their vote is not final with regard to the debate between optimist and pessimists.

Nevertheless, the literature does exhibit more nuance than simply the two diametrically opposed views on the impact of political sophistication on vote switching. A third hypothesis, developed by Converse (1962), views both schools of thought as partially correct and argues that there is a curvilinear relationship between vote switching and political. Converse's argument is centred around the idea that lowly sophisticated voters – who are in theory highly susceptible to political information – are also unlikely to acquire information that is discordant with their existing views, which decreases their chances of switching (Converse, 1962). In addition, those who exhibit higher levels of sophistication have entrenched views, making them more impervious to volatility as well, which reflects the “floating voter” hypothesis (Converse, 1962; Berelson *et al.*, 1963). As a result, it is moderately sophisticated voters who are more susceptible to switching their vote, according to this theory (Converse, 1962; Lachat, 2007; Kuhn, 2009). Indeed, scholars such as Kuhn (2009), Lachat (2007), Dassonneville and Dejaeghere (2014) and Van Der Meer *et al.*, (2015) have found vote switching to be most prevalent among moderately sophisticated voters.

2.4.2.2 *Institutional disaffection*

The second major determinant of vote switching is political disaffection. Following Di Palma (1970:30), political disaffection can be defined as “the subjective feeling of powerlessness, cynicism and lack of confidence in the political process, politicians and democratic institutions, but with no questioning of the political regime.” This concept has two dimensions, namely institutional disaffection, which is investigated in this study, and political engagement, which is not examined in this study. Institutional disaffection refers to a perceived dearth of responsiveness from the political system, which, in turn, leads to a low level of trust and belief in political authorities and the institutions they run (Torcal and Montero, 2006).

The last two decades have witnessed an upsurge in studies pointing to a strong relationship between institutional disaffection and vote switching, leading many scholars to the view that institutional disaffection is a key determinant of vote switching. This bundle of work sees vote

switching as a manifestation of a “mood of protest” emanating from voters (Zelle, 1995:332; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017). This argument, known as Zelle’s ‘frustrated floating voter’ hypothesis, holds that vote switchers are disgruntled, distrustful, and frustrated with politics (Berelson et al., 1954; Zelle, 1995:350). According to Zelle (1995), a voter first grows distrustful towards, and dissatisfied with, their political party. If this feeling is not adequately quelled, then this discontent may engender a more generalised sentiment of frustration and disaffection with the entire electoral system (Zelle, 1995). Consequently, a voter shifts to another party in order to voice their displeasure and frustration with political institutions and actors (Zelle, 1995).

The ‘frustrated floating voter’ hypothesis therefore views vote switchers as being dissatisfied with democracy, exhibiting reduced levels of political trust and possessing less affection for their preferred party (Zelle, 1995:340). Switching, according to this view, is therefore primarily an expressive act – enabling an individual voter to give voice to their discontent. Several studies seemed to have confirmed this relationship between institutional disaffection and vote switching (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Muxel, 2009; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville, Hooghe, and Marien, 2014).

In trying to understand the floating vote in Germany, for instance, Zelle (1995) discovered that vote switchers exhibit lower levels of affection towards their preferred party, are more dissatisfied with the political system and possess lower levels of trust in parties than loyal voters. Similarly, distrust in parties was strongly associated with vote switching in numerous Western countries (Dalton and Weldon, 2005). In a study examining the antecedents of volatility during the French elections in 2007, Muxel (2009) observed that institutional disaffection constituted a primary driver of vote switching, with voters who were more distrustful of the French political system being more likely to switch their vote. Dassonneville (2012) and Dassonneville, Hooghe, and Marien (2014) have also corroborated these findings. However, recent studies have cast doubt on this link between institutional disaffection and vote switching, finding that vote switching is not a manifestation of frustration and disaffection, but rather the product of rational evaluations about past party performances (Söderlund, 2008; Blais, Dassonneville and Dejaeghere, 2015).

2.4.2.3 *Dissatisfaction with preferred party*

The retrospective theory of voting holds that a substantial chunk of voters act rationally when voting, and that the decisions of voters are driven by appraisals of the output of their preferred party (Key, 1966; Barro, 1973; Ferejohn, 1986; Söderlund, 2008). By voting for high-performing candidates and parties and eschewing poor performers, voters sensitise political agents to the needs of the electorate and promote good behaviour among politicians. As Key (1966) noted, it is precisely this threat of supporters abandoning their traditional homes or non-partisans switching between parties that induces accountability.

According to this view, electoral accountability is said to exist if voters are retrospectively holding their leaders accountable, by rewarding or punishing them with their vote, or lack thereof (Zelle 1995; Bélanger 2004; Söderlund, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015). If voters are happy with how the incumbent is performing, then there is a greater chance that they will reward the government with their vote. In contrast, voters will defect to another party if they are dissatisfied with the performance of the incumbent (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007). Empirical analyses have supported the retrospective theory of voting (Fiorina, 1978; Alvarez and Nagler, 1995; Hibbs, 2000; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007; Cummins, 2009; Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014).

Investigating the nexus between retrospective voting and vote switching, Söderlund (2008:234) demonstrated that retrospective evaluations of a voter's preferred party greatly influenced the chances that the individual would switch their vote. He showed that voters were more likely to remain loyal if they were of the view that their party had performed "well," whereas voters were inclined to switch their vote if they believed it had performed "poorly" between consecutive elections (Söderlund, 2008). Söderlund concludes that, based on these findings, vote switching is not a manifestation of frustration and disaffection, but rather the product of rational evaluations about past party performances (Söderlund, 2008).

Similarly, in their study examining the determinants of vote switching and abstaining in 22 advanced democracies, Blais, Dassonneville and Dejaeghere (2015:16) found that vote switchers were not disaffected by the entire party and political system, but were instead only frustrated with the political party for which they previously voted. They also found that a generalised sense of dissatisfaction with politics only influenced the chances that a voter will abstain, but did not significantly impact the likelihood of vote switching (Blais *et al.*, 2015:16).

In other words, recent studies have concluded that there should be clear delineation between dissatisfaction directed at an one's preferred party – which does indeed trigger vote switching – and a more generalised feeling of dissatisfaction with politics, which has been associated with individuals exiting the electoral system (Blais *et al.*, 2015; Söderlund, 2008).

2.4.3 Defining exiting

Abstention is a concept within election procedures that refers to instances “when an eligible voter refrains from casting a vote” (Hayden, 2010:588). As mentioned earlier however, this thesis doesn't aim to explain the reasons for abstention in and of itself – which would be within the domain of participation and turnout literature – but rather, aims to examine why some people who were previously electorally active, now choose to ‘exit’ the party system instead of switching their vote or remaining loyal to their previous party. This view of ‘exiting’ as one of three options alongside ‘loyalty’ and ‘switching’ stems from Albert Hirschman's (1970) general theory of individual behaviour vis-a-vis an organizational environment.

Hirschmann's theoretical framework argues that when faced with dissatisfaction towards a particular product or brand, an individual has three options: they may continue to support that product (loyalty), may advise them to address the problem (voice), or they may switch to a different product (exit) (Hirschman, 1970: 3-5). Although this framework cannot be directly applied to party competition, it has previously been adapted and applied in the field of political science (Bélanger, 2004; Kang, 2004; Kweit, 1986; Weber, 2011). While Hirschman (1970) conceived of ‘exiting’ as switching to a different product, exit by means of abstention gained notoriety within the field of voter behaviour through the works of Bélanger (2004) and Belanger and Nadeau (2005). Unlike switching to a different party, which is considered a ‘voice’ option for citizens to signal dissatisfaction with their preferred party, ‘exiting’ entails a complete withdrawal from the party system (Weber, 2011:907-908). “The potential consequences of exiting therefore extend to dealignment and declining turnout” (Weber, 2011:908).

As such, this thesis investigates why some ANC voters opt to ‘exit,’ while other ANC voters choose to ‘voice’ their disaffection by switching their vote to a different party. There are numerous theories and factors put forward by scholars to explain why people abstain or ‘exit’ the party system (Smets and Van Ham, 2013). The diversity in these theoretical explanations point to the prospect of a multiplicity of antecedents to voting or abstaining, and that “different

causal mechanisms may be relevant for different individuals in different parts of the world” (Arceneaux and Nickerson, 2009; Gallego, 2010; Smets and Van Ham, 2013:345). This range of explanations is probably best summed up by Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995:271) who state that people exit the electoral system and opt against voting “because they can't, because they don't want to, or because nobody asked.” Each of these three reasons can be related to a theoretical model which aims to explain why people opt to exit the electoral system.

2.4.4 Global determinants of exiting

2.4.4.1 Resource model

“They can't” is the first reason for not voting provided by Brady *et al.* (1995), which suggests that it is a difference in resources that separates voters from abstainers. This model, known as the resource model, posits that an important antecedent to a voter exiting is a lack of material and attitudinal resources available to the individual to cast a vote – more specifically, “money, time, and civic skills” (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Brady *et al.*, 1995; Blais, 2009:631). According to this perspective, factors such as level of education, how old a voter is, and how much they earn all shape the chances that an individual will to participate in elections because the more disposable income, free time, and civic skills one has, the more likely they are to vote (Verba *et al.*, 1995; Brady *et al.*, 1995; Blais, 2000; Blais, 2009:631).

However, many scholars have questioned the relevance of the resource model in explaining turnout since the act of voting is a relatively easy activity, which does not necessitate too much time or skills (Blais, 2009:631). Furthermore, evidence of the predictive capacity of the resource model has remained fragile. The authors have acknowledged this, concluding that “political interest is much more important than resources if our main project is to explain voting turnout” (Brady *et al.*, 1995:283). Nevertheless, certain variables within this model, like age (Blais, 2000; Franklin 2004; Melo and Stockemer 2014; Potgieter 2013) and education (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Powell, 1986:27; Verba *et al.*, 1995; Blais, 2000; Lewis-Beck *et al.*, 2008; Blais, 2009), have consistently been found to influence whether a voter exits or not.

2.4.4.2 Psychological engagement model

“Because they don't want to” is the second reason given by Brady *et al.* (1995) to explain exiting and refers to the psychological engagement model. This model argues that “it is not the

number of resources available to an individual that determines whether or not they vote; rather, what really matters is whether a person actually cares about politics i.e., their level of psychological engagement with the political realm” (Blais, 2009:631). As such, a person is more likely to vote if they are interested in politics, when compared to someone who exhibits low levels of political interest. In this model, explanatory factors include cognitive traits such as political knowledge, political efficacy, satisfaction with democracy, trust in institutions and others, as well as personal preferences related to expressive voting like ideology or partisanship (Norris 2000; Blais, 2009; Smets and van Ham, 2013).

It has been found that exiters are preponderant among those who exhibit reduced levels of political efficacy (Pollock III, 1983; Dassonneville, 2012:34). Furthermore, the likes of Zelle (1995) and Dalton and Weldon (2005) provide evidence of the fact that exiters are dissatisfied with the political system and possess lower levels of trust in parties than those who vote. Indeed, evidence suggests that distrust towards the political system engenders exiting (Pattie and Johnston, 2001; Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Grönlund and Setälä, 2007; Hooghe, Marien and Pauwels, 2011; Bäck and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2014). In relation to feelings directed at a specific party, Söderlund (2008) shows that abstainers – as well as switchers – are unhappy with their preferred party. Blais *et al.* (2015:16) concur, but found that a more generalised sense of disaffection with politics is associated with individuals abstaining from voting only and “did not significantly impact the likelihood of vote switching.”

2.4.4.3 *Mobilisation model*

“Because nobody asked” is the third reason put forward by Brady *et al.* (1995), which refers to the mobilisation model. This model posits that people vote because they are encouraged by the stakeholders around them (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Blais, 2009:632). These stakeholders include political parties, trade unions and churches, who urge uniformity in party identification and motivate individuals to vote (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Blais, 2009:632; Magalhães *et al.*, 2016:66). However, an individual’s informal social networks, family, group associations and even the media can also operate as mobilisation agents by reducing the costs of voting through sensitising voters the utility of voting, the policy stakes and the closeness of the election (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Blais, 2009:632; Magalhães *et al.*, 2016:66). The mobilisation model therefore views the individual’s decision to vote or exit the electoral system

as intrinsically linked to the social milieu of that individual (Franklin 2004; Magalhães *et al.*, 2016).

Empirical evidence regarding tenets of the mobilisation model show that watching the news, listening to the radio, and reading newspapers had a positive influence on turnout (Smets and van Ham, 2013:352). Similarly, Norris (2000:277) found evidence of higher turnout rates among individuals who closely followed the election campaign via television or newspapers. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) demonstrate that individuals who are directly contacted by a political party “are much more likely to vote than exit.” This finding has been confirmed by the likes of Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, and Whiteley (2004) and Rallings and Trasher (1990), with both partisan and non-partisan mobilisation efforts found to have increased the probability of an individual voting (Smets and van Ham, 2013:351). Some studies have also pointed out that the more a citizen discusses political matters with their social network, the less likely they are to exit (Leighley 1990; McClurg 2003; 2006).

A fourth school of thought, known as the rational choice model, posits that whether a voter turns out to vote is contingent upon the “costs and benefits” of voting. Accordingly, if a voter perceives the costs as outweighing the benefits, then they will in all likelihood exit the electoral system (Downs, 1957; Ricker and Ordershook, 1968; Blais 2009:632).

2.5 Situating the study: South African literature on voting behaviour

In light of the global literature discussed above, this section contextualises the thesis by unpacking the trends and patterns discussed in South African voter behaviour literature, with a particular focus on switching and abstention.

Scholars who analysed the results of the first few election cycles in South Africa emphasised the role of group identities, with many arguing that racial and ethnic loyalties, communal pressures, and group solidarity would determine vote choice (Horowitz, 1991; Lijphart, 1994; Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer, 2001). For instance, Donald Horowitz argued that in the context of a deeply divided country like South Africa, party support would be predicated on ethnic group voting (Horowitz, 1991). Schlemmer (1994) viewed South Africa’s early elections through a racial prism, arguing that party support was primarily based upon a desire of voters “to express collective solidarity with political parties that are seen to represent their racial or ethnic community.” According to this view, politics in South Africa would be characterised by

one-party dominance because the ANC would be perpetually bolstered by this “solidarity vote” and therefore never face a substantial threat to their power.

Similarly, Giliomee and Simkins (1999:341) believed that these primordial ties to political parties were so robust that they would constrain the potential for electoral volatility and realignment. As Susan Booysen (2012:2) opined, “election time in South Africa, for the bulk of the voters, remains the time of uniting ranks against a party-political enemy of choice.” Elections were therefore seen as a mechanism to express one’s identity as well as one’s allegiance to a group – “black people voted for ‘black parties’ and white people supported ‘white parties’” (Letsholo, 2005).

South Africa’s elections were thus seen by many as nothing more than a “racial census,” whereby party identification and vote choice are determined by supposedly strong and primordial cleavage identities linked to race. Racial identity, they contend, drives both partisanship and voting behaviour, resulting in voters who are unquestionably loyal to the parties representing their identity group (Horowitz, 1991; Lijphart, 1994; Schlemmer, 1994; Johnson, 1996; Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer, 2001). However, the weaknesses of the racial census thesis are glaring. Proponents of this approach fail to show how or why ascriptive identities such as race drive voting choice (Mattes, 1995; Eldridge and Seekings, 1996). As Achen (1992) states, the simple occurrence of “correlations between demographic variables and voting does not by itself explain voting; instead, they themselves need to be explained.”

As such, other authors have contested this limited view of voter behaviour in South Africa. For them, a mixture of psychological and rational choice factors, including economic interests and government evaluations, can better explain the ANC’s hitherto perceived impenetrable levels of partisanship and electoral domination (Eldridge and Seekings, 1995; Mattes and Gouws, 1998; Mattes and Piombo, 2001; Ferree, 2006). Indeed, Robert Mattes found, as early as 1994, that voters did not conform to their rigid racial or ethnic laagers and very little South Africans thought their chosen parties were ethnically or racially exclusive (Mattes, 1995). In their analysis, Mattes and Piombo (2001:103) demonstrate that “performance evaluations of government, political parties, political leaders, and socio-economic trends” are fundamental in determining vote choice and party allegiance among South African voters.

2.5.1 Government performance and declining partisanship

Mattes, Taylor and Africa (1999:245) find that voters' party choice in South Africa is shaped by government performance and service delivery, impactful campaigning and the impediments faced by the opposition bloc in persuading the electorate to view them as credible alternatives to the governing party. The literature indicates that issue-based voting and prospective evaluations of what voters "think government will do" played an increasingly important role in party support across the 2004 and 2009 elections, with opinion polls at the time showing that unemployment and poverty were some of the most important election issues (Kersting 2009; Schulz-Herzenberg 2009).

The role of rational choice-based factors in South Africans' electoral behaviour intensified in the most recent national elections due to rising levels of unemployment, an increasingly sluggish economy and growing perceptions of corruption and state capture (Southall 2014:206; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b). For instance, Schulz-Herzenberg (2019b:170) shows that short-term evaluations had a major impact upon the 2019 national election results, primarily due to weakened party loyalties. This is further demonstrated by the fact that "trust in the ANC plummeted from 62% in 2006 to 38% in 2018 and 59% of people said that corruption was increasing in April 2018, whereas 79% said it had increased in March 2019" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b:181)

These figures seem to predict that the ANC would fail dismally at the 2019 elections. However, as Schulz-Herzenberg (2019b:170) explicates, it was actually due to the growing salience of short-term factors that the ANC clung onto power. Although the ANC's performances leading up to the election were poor, "it was Ramaphosa's reputation as a trustworthy leader capable of turning the country around that played into their favour" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b:170). This strengthens the idea that rational considerations are playing a big part in the voting decisions of South African voters, despite the fact that these considerations tipped the election in favour of the ANC.

The increasing importance of rational considerations has contributed to another trend mentioned in the South African voter behaviour literature namely, decreasing levels of partisanship. Indeed, past studies by the likes of Ferree (2006), Bratton and Mattes (2003) and Schulz-Herzenberg (2009; 2011; 2012; 2019), among others, have consistently illustrated the dwindling rate of party identification in South Africa, mirroring the trends found in developed

nations (Dalton, 2002). The most notable outcome from this decline in partisanship is that it has engendered a burgeoning pool of “floating voters” who are not tied down to one party and whose voting choice is based on rational short-term factors, as opposed to their party identification (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011). Moreover, the data indicates that this swath of non-partisans – which now makes up more than half of the electorate – is not made up of only minorities, but come from across all racial groups (Schlemmer, 2002; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; 2012).

Furthermore, the deteriorating levels of partisanship, especially among ANC supporters, lend credence to the views of authors like Mattes (2014), Schulz-Herzenberg (2009a) and others who argue that ANC voters are not as unquestionably loyal as much of the earlier literature believed. To the contrary, they hold, voters are quite willing to punish the ANC for their increasingly poor political and economic performances, as is demonstrated by the reduction in the number of voters who identify as ANC partisans (Mattes, 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a). However, research also indicates that even if the voter grows disillusioned and distances themselves from the incumbent, this does not necessarily result in that voter shifting their vote to a different political party (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg, C and R. Mattes. 2022.). Instead, many potential voters seem to be exiting from the electoral process entirely, with a sharp increase in abstentions at recent elections. Certain factors appear to be impeding inter-party vote switching and it is to these issues that this literature review now turns.

2.5.2 Vote switching in South Africa

Before moving on to the obstacles to vote switching that the majority of South Africa’s ‘floating voters’ face, it is important to note that there is a growing – albeit small – number of voters who do switch their votes between elections (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019). One of the few studies to systematically investigate this segment of the electorate used “original survey data from an exit poll of the 2016 local government elections in Tshwane Municipality” (Harris, 2020). While the results of this study cannot be applied to the country as a whole, they nevertheless provide valuable insights into a group that has never been studied before in this manner.

Dividing the sample into the age categories identified as by Mattes (2012), Harris (2020:207) finds that vote switchers are more likely to be from the ‘born frees’ cohort, than from any other

cohort. It is also found that those voters “who do not primarily identify in racial terms are more likely to be switchers than those who identify primarily with their race” (Harris, 2020:207). Furthermore, a negative evaluation of the output of the ANC is correlated with vote switching, being seven per cent more likely to switch than those who have positive assessments of the ANC (Harris, 2020:207). Finally, in line with Schulz-Herzenberg’s (2013) work on the impact of a voter’s social context on their vote choice, Harris (2020:207) finds that voters whose party preference is incongruent with the preference of those in their immediate social context, are much more likely to switch their vote.

2.5.2.1 Political sophistication

Despite the growing number of switchers, the vast majority of South Africa’s ‘floating voters’ still face a number of obstacles in shifting their vote. The first obstacle to vote switching that the literature identifies is a low level of political sophistication and a preponderance of apoliticals among South Africa’s ‘floating’ or independent non-partisan electorate (Mattes, 2004; Schulz-herzenberg, 2009a; 2011). These observations stem from Dalton’s (2014b:215) typology of citizens that expresses the “multi-dimensional effects of cognitive mobilisation and partisanship.” The amalgamation of both characteristics generates a framework that classifies a voter according to whether they are cognitively mobilised or not on the one hand, as well as whether they identify with a party or not, on the other hand (Dalton, 2014b). This cross-classification produces the following four categories of voters, each representing its own pattern of mobilisation: Cognitive partisans, apartisans, ritual partisans and apoliticals.

Accordingly, when the South African electorate is segmented in line with Dalton’s four-fold typology, it is found that the vast majority of South Africa’s ‘floating voters’ are made up of apoliticals, who are typically less sophisticated, inactive, uninvolved, and detached from politics (Mattes, 2004; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Dalton, 2014b). Schulz-Herzenberg (2011), for instance, finds that only three per cent of the electorate are categorised as apartisans, who – similarly to apoliticals – do not identify with a political party, “but are cognitively mobilised with high levels of political interest and sophistication,” possessing the necessary mental competencies to navigate the complexity of politics and vote according to current issues (Dalton, 2014b). In contrast, forty per cent of the electorate are categorised as apoliticals, who do not possess these mental competencies and “will probably remain in the margins of electoral politics” (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:14).

The implication of this is that while South Africa possesses a burgeoning cohort of voters who are independent of party allegiances, most of these voters do not have the requisite cognitive abilities, resources and interest that would enable them to switch their votes based on short-term evaluative factors and party policy positions (Mattes, 2004). Furthermore, despite these non-partisans potentially being more susceptible to influence from different parties, it is also harder to mobilise them to vote, increasing their chances of abstaining from voting (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011). This phenomenon provides some insight into why many non-partisan South African voters opt to exit rather than switch their vote to a different party.

2.5.2.2 Social network composition

The next obstacle to vote switching covered in the literature is an individual's social network. As Schulz-Herzenberg (2009:38) explains, one's social network has a major impact upon voting choice and comprises of those individuals, such as family, friends, neighbours and spouses, with whom one discusses important matters. It has been demonstrated that voters who live within politically homogenous discussion networks are much more consistent and loyal in their behaviour and are therefore the least likely to shift their vote to another party (Schulz-Herzenberg (2013:32). In contrast, those individuals who live within more politically heterogeneous social contexts are more likely to "defect from their party identification when they vote; are more likely to defect from their previous vote choice in subsequent elections, have weaker partisan ties and are more likely to consider alternative political homes" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2013:32-33). As such, a voter's social network can be an inhibitor or a driver of vote switching, depending on its level of diversity. However, considering South Africa's legacy of segregation, where most voters live in racially homogenous social environments, social networks are likely to be an inhibitor of vote switching for the majority of the electorate (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2013:4-5).

2.5.2.3 Party image evaluations

Another obstacle to inter-party movement identified in the South African literature are racially exclusive party images. Richard Trilling (1976:2) defines party images as pictures of a mental or psychological nature that voters possess in relation to political parties. A party's image therefore reflects the inherent values and characteristics that voters associate with a particular party (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200). These party images are particularly useful when there is a dearth of political information at an individual's disposal, as party traits or

attributes can act as an essential low-cost cue for voters to determine which parties might align with their interests (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1991; Dalton, 2008). As Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg (2011:200) explain, party images can be imbued with “either positive or negative connotations” as voters utilise these images to determine if parties are racially inclusive or exclusive.

These images can therefore become an important heuristic for voters as racial inclusivity influences the perceived reliability and credibility of a party. Multiple South African studies have demonstrated that prior to evaluating a party’s track record, promises and policies, voters will first assess a party’s overall image and must be persuaded that the party does not exclude them or their ethnic and racial in-group (Mattes, 1995; Mattes, *et al.*, 1999; Mattes and Piombo, 2001; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Ferree, 2010). Indeed, polling shows that almost all voters are of the view that “their preferred party is inclusive of all South Africans, while ‘other’ parties are seen as exclusive and representing narrow interests” (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2012). Perhaps more noteworthy is the fact that these ideas of ‘exclusive’ and ‘inclusive’ are primarily race-based, with these racialised party images having a pervasive impact upon voter behaviour in South Africa (Mattes and Piombo, 2001; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Ferree, 2010).

Inclusive party images pulls a voter towards a party, whereas exclusive images push voters away from a party (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012). Inclusivity is therefore an essential trait for voters to look favourably upon a party, thereby calling into question the racial census approach. The evidence therefore seems to suggest that South African voters are primarily guided by “negative out-group (i.e., exclusivity) feelings” associated with party images (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a:37). The antecedents of these negative feelings lie in a voter’s perception of racial exclusivity when – based on traits and signals coming from a party’s image – the voter feels that they or their racial or ethnic group are not represented (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012). However, and most significantly, these views of party images play a restrictive role, severely constraining the choice of parties for both independents and partisans. As such, if a voter becomes disgruntled with the ANC, they often feel as though they cannot shift their support to a different party, which forms a major obstacle to inter-party vote switching (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012).

2.5.3 Exiting in South Africa

Despite a growing body of work on vote choice and turnout (Struwig, Roberts and Gordon, 2016; Roberts, Struwig, Gordon and Davids, 2019; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019d), there is still a surprising lack of research examining the determinants of exiting in South Africa. Nevertheless, some insights can be gleaned from the extant literature on turnout in South Africa. For instance, Schulz-Herzenberg (2019c) finds that – similarly to young people around the world – South Africa’s youth do not register and vote at the same rate as older South Africans. Roberts *et al.* (2019) echoes these findings by showing that exiters are more likely to be younger on average.

Hofmeyr (2004:14) furthermore argues that low electoral participation levels among South Africans, and young people especially, is a consequence of a deficiency of trust in the political authorities’ ability to ameliorate their immediate concerns, such as unemployment and crime. Similarly, qualitative studies carried out by the likes of Oyedemi and Mahlatji (2016) and Tracey (2016) have found that youth abstention should be regarded as a generational response to government’s failures in areas like poor public services, poverty, unemployment and economic opportunities. Other authors point to low levels of political efficacy and a dearth in civic virtue towards voting as the root of abstention among South African young people (Tracey, 2016; Malila, 2016).

Furthermore, South African research has demonstrated that voter turnout in South Africa is impacted by an individual’s social context and the people with whom they discuss politics. Schulz-Herzenberg (2019d:12), for instance, demonstrates how political discussions dramatically increase the chances of voting. It has also been shown that South Africans mirror their spouse’s voting behaviour, “being three times more likely to vote if their spouse did the same” (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019d:12). Thus, in South Africa the decision of whether to vote or exit seems to depend, in part, on the political behaviour of an individual’s social network

Citizens’ evaluation of government’s performance has also been shown to have an impact on whether a person votes or abstains. Interestingly, the 2019 data shows that negative evaluations of the governing party actually stimulate electoral participation, whereas positive evaluations were associated with abstaining (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020:27). In other words, the more dissatisfied an individual is with the governing party’s output, the more likely they are cast a vote.

Regarding psychological engagement, Roberts *et al.* (2019:493) also show how partisanship induces individuals to vote, whereas non-partisanship seems to sway citizens towards uncertainty or exiting. Indeed, numerous studies have shown that believing that one's vote will make a material difference to the results of the election increases a person's chances of voting (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019d:14; Roberts *et al.*, 2019:494), which aligns with the rational choice model discussed earlier. Furthermore, Roberts *et al.* (2019:493) indicate that exiters are found among those with low levels of interest in political matters and reduced internal and external efficacy. This finding is confirmed by Schulz-Herzenberg (2020:24).

2.6 Conclusion

This literature review started off by exploring the concept of electoral volatility, demonstrating its importance in ensuring a functioning and vibrant democracy (Przeworski, 2003; Lipset, 1966; Strom, 1992). This concept was further unravelled by examining the two approaches to studying electoral change, namely individual-level volatility, and aggregate-level volatility. The next section unpacked the structural societal processes present in most advanced democracies that the literature refers to as drivers for rising levels of instability. As such, the sources of electoral dealignment – which include cognitive mobilisation, generational patterns and the declining importance of traditional cleavages – as well as the consequences of dealignment – which include vote switching, abstentions, issue voting, late deciding and split-ticket voting – were examined. The third section reviewed the international literature on vote switching and abstention, exploring the determinants of both. The final section contextualised the thesis by exploring the trends and patterns discussed in South African voter behaviour literature.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to understand why some ANC voters are willing to switch parties, while other ANC voters choose to exit the party system and abstain rather than switching their vote, when they become disillusioned with their traditional political home. Accordingly, the research approach that is employed to investigate the perceived reasons for and obstacles to vote switching among ANC voters is explained in this chapter. It starts off by discussing the overall approach and the research design used in this study, including its benefits and drawbacks. The chapter then explains the secondary quantitative survey research methodology used as well as the background, sample and sampling techniques of this study's chosen dataset, the CNEP 2019 post-election survey. Subsequently, the chapter explicates the operationalisation of the independent and dependent variables used in this study. The statistical analyses carried out in this thesis are then explained, followed by a review of ethical matters and the limitations of this research.

3.2 Research design: A quantitative cross-sectional study using public opinion survey data

A research design is defined as the “plan or strategy” of the research inquiry that the researcher is engaged in, with the aim of adequately addressing the research problems or questions involved (Kerlinger, 1986; Jupp, 2006:265; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012:159). As Bryman and Bell (2019:28) explains, “a research design sets the framework for the collection and analysis of data according to the objectives determined by the researcher.”

A cross-sectional research design is employed in this study “since it analyses data from a population at a single point in time” (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:61; Pierce, 2011:10). A cross-sectional study entails “observations of a sample – or cross-section – of a population at one point in time, as a basis for inferring the characteristics of the population from which the sample comes” (Jupp, 2006:53; Burnham *et al.*, 2008:59; Pierce, 2011; Bryman and Bell, 2019:37; Babbie, 2020). Since the goal of this thesis is to explore associations between various variables, a cross-sectional research design is highly appropriate (Spector, 2019). This type of research design has been widely used in fields that rely on survey methods and provides a relatively cost-effective and efficient tool to adequately address many questions (Spector, 2019:133). Adding to the suitability of this research design is the fact that this study is among only a

handful of research that systematically investigates the reasons for, and obstacles to, vote switching in South Africa, using a quantitative methodology and survey research (exceptions include Paret, 2018; Runciman *et al.*, 2019; Harris 2020). And as Spector (2019:133) explains, cross-sectional studies provide a crucial point of departure for a systematic step-by-step approach to answering a research question that starts with “simple designs and builds design complexity as more information becomes available that can inform how subsequent study designs should be formulated.”

However, there are two key disadvantages to cross-sectional research designs. Firstly, this type of research design has an inability to draw causal conclusions because observations are made at only one time and, as such, there is no way to understand how variables influence each other over a period of time (Spector, 2019:125). Secondly, “common method variance might arise due to ephemeral occasion dynamics that could bias different measures” (Spector, 2019:125). Notwithstanding, cross sectional design has been very useful in a number of different fields of study to demonstrate associations among variables that can provide a foundation for understanding and theorizing about various phenomena (Spector, 2019:136). A cross-sectional design lends itself to quantitative research methods due to the “multitude of cases on which data is collected and the ease of carrying out statistical tests on these cases” (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:59).

3.2.1 A quantitative approach: survey research

This study will employ a quantitative research approach using cross-sectional public opinion data sourced from the CNEP 2019 post-election survey. Van der Merwe (1996) defines quantitative research as an approach that entails the collating and analysis of numerical data, with the aim of investigating the validity of theories, examining how variables are connected to each other and forecasting outcomes based on the information we have at our disposal. Whereas qualitative studies deal with “soft data” in the form of “words, photos, symbols and sentences,” quantitative methods involve “hard data” which relates to numbers (Neuman, 2014:167). In quantitative studies, there is a reliance upon positivist principles with the goal of trying to verify or falsify a relationship or hypothesis (Jupp, 2006: 53; Pierce, 2011; Neuman, 2014:167-168; Babbie, 2020). As such, quantitative studies are typically deductive in nature, where the focus is on using data to test theory (Saunders *et al.*, 2012:166).

Among numerous types of quantitative research methods used by scholars, survey research is a method that has been in use since the 1940's and has "proven to be very useful as a tool to gather data and assess causes and impacts of events;" which allows for researchers to provide insights into societal changes and events (Brady, 2000:47). The positives and negatives of the research approach and methodology used in this study are now discussed.

Survey research is defined as a method of data collection which entails administering a standardised questionnaire directly to individuals from a representative sample of a population as a source for making generalisations about the whole population (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:97; Rich, Brians, Manheim and Willnat, 2018:143; Babbie, 2020:250). A major benefit of this approach is that it enables researchers to make "generalisations about an entire population and generate evidence of how variables might be connected," which makes it highly appropriate for this study (Blaikie, 2010:23-24). Surveys enable researchers to obtain data about a range of topics "so that a few thousand randomly selected respondents can reliably represent populations with millions of members" (Brady, 2000:47). As such, as opposed to relying on anecdotes or opinions to understand a particular group, Brady (2000:47) explains that "survey research and random sampling" can be employed to guarantee an unbiased and representative depiction of a group.

Another benefit of quantitative survey questionnaires is the capacity to attribute a numerical value to the answers that respondents give to the survey questions, which means that data derived from a quantitative survey can be coded and analysed with statistical software (Hox and Boeije, 2005:594). This trait allows other researchers to check the statistical tests and assess the trustworthiness of the results, thereby augmenting the objectivity and reliability of quantitative survey questionnaires (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:51; Pierce, 2011:3). Furthermore, in quantitative survey questionnaires, each participating individual is asked the same questions in the same way, which enhances the reliability of quantitative methods such as survey research (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:51; Pierce, 2011:5). It is due to the reasons discussed above why this thesis opts for a quantitative research approach using cross-sectional survey data. However, a quantitative approach and survey research are not without its drawbacks.

It has been argued that quantitative research often eschews the complexities of the political sphere and respondents' answers (Babbie, 2020). This is due to the fact that, unlike qualitative studies, quantitative studies are unable to provide an in-depth analysis of its subjects, with

many criticising this approach as being superficial in dealing with issues that necessitate detailed attention and context (Burnham *et al.*, 2008; Pierce, 2011; Babbie, 2020). Another downside in relation to quantitative survey questionnaires involves the participants themselves. The validity of the survey could be adversely impacted by discrepancies in the interpretation of survey questions by different participants (Brady, 2000; Pierce, 2011). For instance, ‘agree’ and ‘strong agree’ could mean different things to different people. Finally, quantitative surveys with large sample sizes are often carried out by many different people across a variety of locations, which means the researcher often does not have control over each stage of the data collection process (Burnham *et al.*, 2008:166; Pierce, 2011:5).

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, quantitative survey research remains “one of the most widely used social science data-gathering techniques” (Neuman, 2014:316). Sample surveys provide researchers with accurate, valid and reliable data and have become an important aspect of social and political life (Neuman, 2014:317; Rich *et al.*, 2018:143). Indeed, quantitative research “has contributed a great deal to our understanding of South African society, politics and democracy” (Mattes, 2013:479). Furthermore, although there is an extensive number of South African studies of a quantitative nature in the fields of psychology and sociology, there seems to be a dearth of quantitative studies among South African political scientists (Mattes, 2013). Accordingly, this study aims to contribute to filling this lacunae of quantitative research in South African Political Science through analysing secondary data sourced from the Comparative National Election Project (CNEP).

3.2.2 Secondary data analysis

This study makes use of existing, publicly available public opinion data to investigate both the motivations for vote switching, in order to understand why some voters are willing to switch parties, and the reasons for voters exiting the party system and abstaining, rather than switching their vote when they become disillusioned with their traditional political homes. More specifically, it uses cross-sectional secondary data produced by CNEP 2019 post-election survey. Secondary data analysis is defined as the analysis of existing data, which was originally collected for a different purpose, and generating novel interpretations and conclusions (Dale, Arbor, and Protector, 1988; Jupp, 2006: 274).

Secondary data is used in this study because utilising data that have been gathered by a specialist team of experts, like the CNEP, is not only time and cost efficient, but also maximises

the quality of data used (Jupp, 2006: 274; Rich *et al.*, 2018:161). Furthermore, because of the massive size of the datasets usually available, the use of secondary data allow researchers to analyse datasets and populations that they might not be able to collect or have access to on their own (Procter, 1993; Dale *et al.*, 2008:520). Some drawbacks of secondary data analysis include the fact that researchers are unable to exert control over the way that data is collected, especially regarding the design and operationalisation of variables and theoretical constructs (Jupp, 2006: 275). In addition, using secondary data also opens up the possibility of using data which is out of step with the research questions and hypotheses under consideration (Neuman, 2006:169; 333).

Notwithstanding, the utilisation of secondary data along with large-scale survey data and statistical analysis is very common and well documented (Jupp, 2006: 274; Dale, Wathan, and Higgins, 2008:520). Furthermore, the use of CNEP survey data minimises these drawbacks as it is a trusted data collection institution with questions specifically designed to explore questions relating to voter behaviour, such as this study (Gunther, Montero and Puhle, 2007). In addition, this secondary dataset affords this study a sufficiently large sample to be able to generalise its findings to the wider South African population.

3.3 The Comparative National Elections Project

The CNEP is an international multi-year project that primarily focuses upon elections and voter behaviour in democracies around the world (<https://u.osu.edu/cnep/>). The original motivation of this project was to understand the “intermediation processes” via which respondents obtain knowledge about politics, parties, candidates and policies (Gunther *et al.*, 2007:15). The South African version of the CNEP has been conducted directly after all of the national elections since 2004 (Gunther, 2021). The CNEP data is obtained from in-person interviews with a nationally representative sample of South African citizens over the age of 18 in the respondent’s home (Citizen Surveys, 2019:7). For the 2019 post-election survey, which is the survey used in this study, a nationally-representative multistage, stratified complex probability sample of 1,625 South African adults was used (Citizen Surveys, 2019:7). This means that, in order to make sure that the best coverage and precision per stratum is attained, variables such as province, geographic area and dominant race group were used as the explicit stratification variables (Citizen Surveys, 2019:7). In order to augment representation with the sample,

variables such as enumeration area type, main place and sub-place were used as implicit stratification variables (Citizen Surveys, 2019:7).

3.4 Operationalisation of variables

The operationalisation of concepts or ideas is an important aspect of systematic research and “refers to the process of converting abstract concepts into tangible indicators of their existence that can be measured” (Saunders *et al.*, 2012:722; Neuman, 2014). The variables used in this study are all based on regularly used, well-established and internationally accepted indicators. Refer to chapter 2 for the conceptualisation of these key concepts, and the appendix for details regarding their operationalisation and category coding.

3.4.1 Dependent variable

This thesis aims to understand why some ANC voters are able to switch their vote, while other previously active ANC voters exit the party system and abstain. Accordingly, the dependent variable is the respondent’s self-reported voting behaviour as it relates to switching between parties, remaining loyal or going from voting to abstaining in consecutive elections. This approach is well-established globally and has been applied in numerous previous studies (see Pierce, 2003; Söderlund, 2008; Tillman 2008; Hobolt and Spoon, 2012; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Voogd and Dassonneville, 2020). Furthermore, this study’s dependent variable is consistent with international scholars who highlight the need for “unified models” that test for both vote choice and abstention at the same time (Sanders, 1998; Thurner and Eymann, 2000; Pierce, 2003; Söderlund, 2008; Tillman, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015).

There are numerous studies that investigate the determinants of inter-election vote switching (see Zelle, 1995; Lachat, 2004; Söderlund, 2008; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville, 2014; Blais *et al.*, 2015; van der Meer *et al.*, 2015; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017; Geers and Bos, 2017; Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018; Voogd and Dassonneville, 2020), but only a few examine switching in relation to exiting and remaining loyal, which is the aim of this thesis. One study that specifically investigates why citizens decide to switch parties, stay loyal or exit was conducted by Söderlund (2008). This study relied on individual-level post-election Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module II survey data and introduced a new trichotomous dependent variable representing three different groups of voters, namely those who switched parties, remained loyal or abstained in the second election (Söderlund,

2008:223). Respondents' self-reported voting choice was used to operationalise voting behaviour in this analysis.

Another study employs the same trichotomous dependent variable to investigate the impact that dissatisfaction has on both inter-election vote switching and abstentions across consecutive elections (Blais *et al.*, 2015). Using the first and second module of the CSES, Blais *et al.* (2015) focused on the likelihood of voters choosing the voice (switching), exit (abstention) or loyalty options in relation to their preferred party. Similarly to Söderlund (2008:223), vote choice is operationalised by asking respondents which party they voted for most recently and asking them to "recall their vote choice in the previous election" (Blais *et al.*, 2015:9). Abstention from the most recent election was also operationalised by asking the respondent if they voted in the current election (Blais *et al.*, 2015:9).

This trichotomous dependent variable was employed in another study by Hobolt and Spoon (2012) in their investigation of the antecedents of vote switching between first- and second-order elections. Similarly to Söderlund (2008:223) and Blais *et al.* (2015:9) voters in this study were categorised as either loyalists, switchers or abstainers (Hobolt and Spoon, 2012:710). Voogd and Dassonneville (2020) also deploy this same dependent variable in their study that investigates "how the stability of voting patterns across consecutive elections is impacted by political dissatisfaction and populist party voting." Tillman (2008) too employs a trichotomous dependent variable in his study examining the impact of both short- and long-term factors on vote choice and abstention in sixteen advanced democracies.

In light of the studies discussed above, it is clear that the dependent variable used in this thesis – a three-way variable with loyalty, switching and exiting as the possible outcomes – is well-established, globally recognised and consistent with the approach utilised in numerous previous studies that investigate vote switching and abstention. However, it must be noted that not all studies on this topic examine vote switching in relation to exiting, with many authors excluding those voters who switch from voting to abstaining in consecutive elections. As such, these studies operationalise vote switching in a strict sense and examine switching between parties only. Here a dichotomous dependent variable is used, capturing two possible outcomes, namely vote stability and vote switching (see Zelle, 1995; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville, 2014; van der Meer *et al.*, 2015; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017; Geers and Bos, 2017; Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018; Harris, 2020).

Neither the dichotomous nor the trichotomous approach to the dependent variable in vote switching studies is better than the other. However, there are several analytical advantages to a unified model that treats exiting as an electoral alternative alongside switching and loyalty (Sanders, 1998; Lacy and Burden, 1999; Thurner and Eymann 2000; Pierce, 2003; Söderlund, 2008; Tillman, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015). Omitting abstention from models of voting behaviour increases the chances of yielding biased results, with Lacy and Burden (1999) arguing that this is akin to “selecting on the dependent variable.” As Tillman (2008:1292) elucidates, by not including abstention in a model of voting behaviour, the author, at the very least, denudes the explanatory power of that model.

Furthermore, studying party choice (switching) separately from voter participation (abstention) assumes that the decision-making process guiding each choice is separate. However, “if the decision of whether to vote is conditional on some aspect of the party (or candidate) choices, then this assumption is not warranted” (Tillman, 2008:1292). In other words, a trichotomous dependent variable with loyalty, switching and exiting as the possible outcomes recognises that some “factors that motivate individuals to switch their vote, may also lead others not to vote at all” (Tillman, 2008:1292). As mentioned earlier, this approach is also congruent with that of a growing cohort of authors who highlight the importance of introducing “unified models” that test for both vote choice and abstention at the same time (Sanders, 1998; Thurner and Eymann, 2000; Pierce, 2003; Söderlund, 2008; Tillman, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015).

In light of the discussion above, this study creates a new trichotomous dependent variable from existing variables in the CNEP 2019 dataset. The new dependent variable will draw on the following existing items:

- *2019 election participation*: Abstention (or exiting) from the 2019 elections is operationalised using the following item: “We also know that even when people are registered, many people were not able to vote because they were sick, unable to get to the polling place, or did not have time? Which of the following statements best describes you?”
- *2019 election vote choice*: A respondent’s 2019 election vote choice is operationalised through an item which asks, “For which party did you vote for national government in the 2019 elections?”

- *2014 election vote choice:* In order to tap whether a respondent remained loyal or switched parties between the 2014 and 2019 national elections, the study uses an item which asks, “Do you recall which party you voted for national government in the previous general election, held in 2014?”

The variable specification and coding can be found in the appendix. Logically, since this study investigates why some ANC voters are willing to switch parties, while other ANC voters choose to exit the party system, this study’s sample is restricted to 2014 ANC voters only. Accordingly, only those ANC supporters who indicated that they voted in the 2014 elections and who revealed their vote choice in both elections are included in the analysis. As such, this study excludes respondents who either abstained from the 2014 election, abstained in both the 2014 and 2019 elections, or answered “Don’t know,” “Refused to answer” or “Cannot remember” to the two questions asking their 2014 and 2019 vote choice. Regarding respondents’ 2019 election participation, those who selected the fourth response category on the CNEP question item are considered as having voted, whereas those who selected the first three categories (0, 1 and 2) are regarded as having not voted. As with the vote choice variables, the “Prefer not to say” and “Don’t know” answers are excluded from the 2019 election participation variable. Thus, the newly computed dependent variable is a trichotomous categorical variable with the following categories:

- (1) Loyal voter - voting for the ANC in both the 2014 and 2019 elections
- (2) Switcher - voting for the ANC in 2014 and voting for a different party in 2019.
- (3) Exiter - voting for the ANC in 2014 and abstaining in 2019.

The table below compares this study’s operationalisation of vote switching with that of other studies:

Table 3.1: Global comparison of the operationalisation of vote switching

This study
1. “Which of the following statements best describes you? (0) I did not vote in this election, (1) I thought about voting, but did not, (2) I usually vote, but did not this time, (3) I am sure I voted in the election, (8) Prefer not to say, and (9) Don’t know.”
2. “For which party did you vote for national government in the 2019 elections?”
3. “Do you recall which party you voted for national government in the previous general election, held in 2014?”

Söderlund (2008) – Norway 2001 survey wording

1. “Did you vote in the election this fall?”
2. “Which party or list did you vote for?”
3. “If we turn to the previous Storting election. Who did you vote for in the Storting election in 1997?”

Tillman (2008) – Canada 1997 survey wording

1. “In a democracy, citizens have the right to vote. They also have the right not to. And some people who intend to vote end up not voting for one reason or another. What about you, did you vote in the election or not?”
2. “Which party did you vote for: the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, Reform Party of Canada, Bloc Québécois or another party?”
3. “Did you vote in the last election held in 1993? Which party did you vote for?”

Hobolt and Spoon (2012) – United Kingdom 2009 survey wording

1. “A lot of people abstained in the European Parliament elections of 4 June, while others voted. Did you cast your vote?”
2. “Which party did you vote for?”
3. “Which party did you vote for at the general election of 2005?”

Blais, Dejaeghere, and Dassonneville (2015) – Poland 2001 survey wording

1. “As it often happens during the parliamentary elections, many people – due to different considerations – did not participate in the elections of September 23, 2001. Please tell me, did you vote?”
2. “Candidate of which party or coalition did you vote for in the parliamentary elections?”
3. “Did you vote in the parliamentary election in September 1997? Candidate of which party or coalition did you vote for?”

Voogt and Dassonneville (2020) – United Kingdom 2015 survey wording

1. “Talking with people about the general election on May 7th, we have found that a lot of people didn't manage to vote. How about you, did you manage to vote in the general election?”
2. “Which party did you vote for in the general election?”
3. “Thinking back to the previous general election held on 6th May 2010, do you remember which party you voted for then - or perhaps you didn't vote?”

3.4.2 Independent variables

In line with other studies, this thesis will assess the relative impact of numerous independent variables that are theoretically relevant in determining an individual’s choice to either switch parties, exit the party system, or remain loyal.

3.4.2.1 *Political sophistication*

Political sophistication is widely regarded to be an important factor in determining whether a voter shifts their vote choice or abstains between elections. The literature reflects several different approaches to measuring political sophistication among voters, which is understood to signify to “the extent to which political cognitions are numerous, cut a wide substantive swath, and are highly organized or ‘constrained’” (Luskin, 1990:332). As such, studies have made use of numerous of indicators to measure political sophistication, including exposure to political information, internal political efficacy, political knowledge, participation, interest in politics, and political schemas (Luskin 1990; Lachat, 2007; Dassonneville, 2012).

In his seminal paper, *Explaining political sophistication*, Robert Luskin (1990) offers the following five indicators for political sophistication: “interest in politics, education, exposure to political information in the print media, intelligence and occupation” (Luskin, 1990:335-336). This set of factors has proven to be very influential in the operationalisation of political sophistication, with many studies since then utilising all, some or a combination of Luskin’s (1990) “sophistication equation.” Notwithstanding, there remains some variation in the manner in which political sophistication is measured in the literature.

For instance, many authors are of the view that a single indicator is sufficient to measure political sophistication (Kinder and Sears, 1985; Lachat, 2007; van der Meer *et al.*, 2015; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017). Whereas other studies such as those carried out by Fiske, Lau and Smith (1990), Krosnick and Milburn (1990), Judd and Downing (1990), McGraw and Pinney (1990) and Dassonneville (2014) amalgamate several indicators of political sophistication into a single factor. However, many studies also keep the various indicators separate in order to more clearly ascertain the disparities between them (Fiske, Lau, and Smith, 1990; Krosnick and Milburn, 1990; Zaller, 1992; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018). The last approach is the one followed by this study because, as Krosnick (1990:5) explains, keeping the indicators separate allows researchers to more precisely isolate and identify the effect of each separate component, which a single political sophistication index does not allow.

Most scholars thus promote a broader operationalisation of political sophistication, arguing that it is “best thought of as a latent construct, with traits such as attention, interest, and knowledge as indicators” (Miller, 2011: 578). Accordingly, many authors include indicators such as

political interest and campaign attention within their operationalisation of political sophistication. This is because those with elevated levels of interest in politics are considered more sensitive to the political inputs to which they are exposed (Chaiken, 1980; Luskin, 1990:335). Furthermore, Luskin (1990:348) found “interest in politics to be the most influential variable for political sophistication,” arguing that in addition to the cognitive component of sophistication – measured by political knowledge – there is a motivational aspect as well, measured by interest in politics. As such, many studies include interest in politics within their operationalisation of political sophistication. It is most often measured by means of a self-reporting scale of interest in politics, usually on a 10-point scale where 0 means ‘not at all interested’ and 10 means ‘very much interested’ (Lachat, 2004; Dassonneville, 2012; 2014; Willocq, 2016; Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017).

Level of education is another factor included in many measures of political sophistication (Macdonals, Rabinowitz and Listhaug, 1995; Lachat, 2004; Marthaler, 2008; Weisberg and Nawara, 2010; Dassonneville, 2012; 2014; van der Meer *et al.*, 2015; Willocq, 2016; Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018). This is because education is believed to augment a person’s cognitive abilities and expose citizens to larger quantities of political information, making them better informed and more independent (Dalton, 1984; Luskin, 1990:335). Level of education is used in numerous studies that operationalise political sophistication. Dalton (2012:38) for instance, relies on an additive index of interest in politics and level of education to operationalise his concept of ‘cognitive mobilisation.’ Furthermore, in the absence of knowledge questions, authors have often amalgamated measures of interest in politics and level of education (Lachat, 2004; Dassonneville, 2014).

Some studies have also included, within their operationalisation of political sophistication, indicators such political participation, internal political efficacy (Zelle, 1995; Dassonneville, 2012; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Rapeli and von Schoultz, 2021; Spruyt, Rooduijn and Zaslove, 2021) and frequency of political discussion (Marthaler, 2008; Dassonneville, 2012). Internal political efficacy, also known as subjective political sophistication, has been highlighted as an important component of political sophistication as it refers to the “personal belief about one’s own ability to understand and to participate effectively in politics” which aligns with Luskin’s (1990) definition of political sophistication (Craig, Niemi, and Silver, 1990:290; Dassonneville, 2012; Rapeli and von Schoultz, 2021).

In light of the discussion above, it is clear that there is no final consensus in the literature on a standard measurement for political sophistication. As such, this study uses the indicators of political sophistication most widely used in the global literature namely, political interest, campaign attention, internal political efficacy, and level of education (Marthaler, 2008; Dassonneville, 2012; 2014; Willocq, 2016; Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018). These indicators also closely align with Luskin’s (1990) original “sophistication equation.” The following question items from the CNEP 2019 survey is used to operationalise political sophistication in this study:

- *Political interest*: “More generally, would you say that you are very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested or not at all interested in politics?”
- *Campaign attention*: “Now I would like to speak with you about how South Africa’s media covers election campaigns. Again, thinking back to the May 2019 election, how closely did you follow this election campaign?”
- *Internal political efficacy*: Two question items ask respondents to place themselves on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’: “(A) people like me do not have any influence over what government does” and “(B) generally, politics seems so complicated that people like me cannot understand what is happening.”
- *Level of education*: “What is the highest level of education you have completed?”

The variable specification and coding can be found in the appendix. The table below compares this study’s operationalisation of political sophistication with that of other studies:

Table 3.2: Global comparison of the operationalisation of political sophistication

	This Study	Global comparison
Political interest	“More generally, would you say that you are very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested or not at all interested in politics”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Quite generally, how interested are you in politics: very interested, somewhat interested, in between, not very interested, or, not at all interested?” (Dassonneville, 2014). • “Do you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there’s an election going on or not?” (Luskin, 1990). • “Now a question dealing with political interest. Would you say that you generally are...very interested in politics, fairly

		interested, not very interested or not interested at all?” (Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017)
Campaign attention	“Now I would like to speak with you about how South Africa’s media covers election campaigns. Again, thinking back to the May 2019 election, how closely did you follow this election campaign?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How often did you pay attention to political information in the media (newspapers, radio and TV) during the election campaign?” (Willocq, 2016).
Internal political efficacy	“(A) people like me do not have any influence over what government does” and “(B) generally, politics seems so complicated that people like me cannot understand what is happening.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sometimes politics is too complicated for people like me to understand what is going on” (Zelle, 1995). • “Sometimes politics seems so complicated that I can’t really understand what’s going on” (Rapeli and von Schoultz, 2021).
Level of education	“What is the highest level of education you have completed?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What’s your highest level of general education?” (Dassonneville, 2014). • “What is the highest qualification you have earned?” (Söderlund, 2008; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017).

3.4.2.2 Dissatisfaction with preferred party

Dissatisfaction with one’s preferred party – which is distinct from a generalised sentiment of disaffection with politics (operationalised below) – is considered in the literature to be a major trigger for vote switching or abstention between elections (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Söderlund, 2008; Muxel, 2009; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Willocq, 2016). In Zelle’s (1995) examination of the ‘frustrated floating voter,’ he measures dissatisfaction with a respondent’s favoured party through an 11-point “Sympathieskalen,” which is the same as the ‘feeling thermometers’ used in other surveys.

Blais *et al.* (2015) replicates this operationalisation of dissatisfaction with the respondent’s preferred party, by using a like-dislike rating on a 10-point scale of the respondent’s preferred

party. Söderlund (2008:224) employed a similar operationalisation by asking respondents, “How well did the party you voted for then perform over the past four years? Has it done a very good job? A good job? A bad job? A very bad job?” Similarly, Shah, Rehman, and Mehmood (2019) use the following item to tap a respondent’s dissatisfaction with their preferred party: “Are you satisfied from the party which you voted in 2013 general elections?” Since this thesis is focused upon respondents who voted for the governing ANC party in 2014, it makes use of an item from the 2019 CNEP survey which taps disaffection with ANC performance directly. The following question item is used:

- *Dissatisfaction with preferred party*: “Thinking about the overall performance of the national government in general, how good or bad a job do you think the national government had done in the PAST five years (that is, between 2014 and 2019) Has it done a...?”

The table below compares this study’s operationalisation of dissatisfaction with preferred party with that of other studies:

Table 3.3: Global comparison of the operationalisation of dissatisfaction with preferred party

	This Study	Global comparison
Dissatisfaction with preferred party	“Thinking about the overall performance of the national government in general, how good or bad a job do you think the national government had done in the PAST five years (that is, between 2014 and 2019) Has it done a ...?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are you satisfied from the party which you voted in 2013 general elections?” (Shah, Rehman, and Mehmood, 2019). • “How well did the party you voted for then perform over the past four years? Has it done a very good job? A good job? A bad job? A very bad job?” (Söderlund, 2008). • “In the past year or so would you say that things in general have been going along better than they were before, not as well as before, or have they stayed about the same?” (Fiorina, 1981)

3.4.2.3 Institutional disaffection

Institutional disaffection has been shown to be associated with vote switching and abstention (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Söderlund, 2008; Dassonneville, 2012; 2014; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017; Voogt and Dassonneville, 2020). The most

influential work regarding the operationalisation of institutional disaffection is Torcal and Montero's (2006) framework, which proposed the following two subdimensions through which to measure the concept: First, institutional confidence, measured by political trust; and second, judgements of the responsiveness of democratic institutions via the indicator of external political efficacy (Torcal and Montero, 2006:16). Despite some additions and adjustments, this framework has been the primary method used by authors to measure institutional disaffection.

Studies conducted by Dassonneville (2012) and Pešić, Birešev and Petrović-Trifunović (2021), for instance, operationalise institutional disaffection by using both political trust and external political efficacy. Here political trust was assessed through respondents' mean scores of their levels of trust in a variety of political institutions and actors (Dassonneville, 2012; Pešić *et al.*, 2021). External political efficacy was measured via a battery of questions relating to the responsiveness of governmental authorities to a respondent's demands (Dassonneville, 2012; Pešić *et al.*, 2021).

However, due to issues around data availability, some authors measure institutional disaffection by means of a single item assessing respondents' satisfaction with the democratic process (Blais *et al.*, 2015; Voogt and Dassonneville, 2020). Those using this item in isolation have been criticised by the likes of Canache, Mondak and Selegson (2001) and Linde and Ekman (2003), with Anderson (2002:10) dubbing it "a reasonable (albeit imperfect) indicator that we can use to test our theories." Accordingly, other authors have used this satisfaction with democracy indicator in tandem with Torcal and Montero's (2006) framework in order to operationalise institutional disaffection.

Authors such as Zelle (1995), Dassonneville (2014) and Willocq (2016) combine the variables of political trust, external political efficacy and satisfaction with democracy to assess levels of institutional disaffection. Other authors exclude political trust and use a combination of political efficacy and satisfaction with democracy (Söderlund, 2008; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017). As such, although the literature reflects some variation in the operationalisation of institutional disaffection, this thesis follows Zelle (1995), Dassonneville (2014) and Willocq (2016) and uses political trust, satisfaction with democracy and external efficacy to operationalise institutional disaffection. It makes use of the following question items from the CNEP 2019 survey:

- *Political trust*: “How much do you trust each of the following, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?”
- *Satisfaction with democracy*: “How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in South Africa?”
- *External political efficacy*: Respondents to place themselves on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The following item measures external political efficacy, “Politicians do not care much about what people like me think.”

The variable specification and coding can be found in the appendix. The political trust question item in the CNEP survey taps respondents’ level of trust in the South African government, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), traditional media, social media, the ANC as well as opposition parties which include, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Freedom Front Plus (FF+), the DA and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Besides traditional and social media, all of the other trust items are used in this study. However, instead of assessing respondents’ level of trust in each opposition party individually, the four opposition parties are combined into an index which tests respondents’ level of trust in the opposition bloc as a whole. To ensure that all of the items comprising the trust in opposition parties index are compatible, requisite statistical analyses are first undertaken.

All nine trust items underwent a principal component analysis (PCA) with orthogonal rotation (varimax). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), used to determine sampling adequacy, .802, which “is above the recommended value of 0.5” (Field, 2009:647). The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically significant with a p-value of .000, “indicating that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA” (Field, 2009:647). Two components had eigenvalues over Kaiser’s criterion of 1 and in combination explained 56.74% of the variance (Field, 2009:640). The items that cluster on the same components suggest that component 1 represents trust in the governing party and the state institutions that they lead, since the items measuring trust in the South African government, the IEC and the ANC all load onto this component. Whereas the items that cluster on component 2 seem to measure trust in opposition parties. The rotated component matrix revealed the following factor loadings for component 2:

- Trust in the DA: .706
- Trust in the EFF: .666

- Trust in the IFP: .789
- Trust in the FF+: .849

The closer the factor loading is to 1, the stronger the correlation. As such, all of the factor loadings are relatively strong. Following the factor analysis, the reliability measure of Cronbach's alpha was tested and the proposed trust in opposition parties index yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .745, which means this index is 74.5% reliable and exceeds Kline's (1999) suggested value of 0.7. After performing the above statistical analysis on the questions that test a respondent's level of trust in opposition parties, it was concluded that the four question item variables are related and allowed for the formation of a trust in opposition parties index.

During the multivariate analysis, the three indicators used to operationalise institutional disaffection, namely political trust, satisfaction with democracy and external efficacy, will be kept separate – as opposed to creating one index – which allows the analysis to more easily isolate and identify the effect of each individual component (Krosnick, 1990). The table below compares this study's operationalisation of institutional disaffection with that of other studies:

Table 3.4: Global comparison of the operationalisation of institutional disaffection

	This Study	Global comparison
Political trust	“How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? The Government of South Africa, Independent Electoral Commission, African National Congress (ANC), Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Freedom Front Plus (FF+).”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Average score of self-reported trust in six political institutions (political parties, the regional government, the regional parliament, the federal government, the federal parliament and politicians)” (Dassonneville, 2012). • “Let's talk about the following public institutions. Please state if you trust these institutions or not. How about the Bundestag? The Federal Constitutional Court? Federal government? The courts? The police? The administration? The churches? The parties? The German armed forces? The trade unions? The trade and employers' associations? The environmental groups? The members of the German parliament?” (Dassonneville, 2014).
Satisfaction with democracy	“How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in South Africa?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Generally, how satisfied are you with democracy in the Federal Republic and our whole political system?” (Zelle, 1995).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with democracy in Germany?” (Dassonneville, 2014). • “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?” (Blais <i>et al.</i>, 2015).
External political efficacy	“Politicians do not care much about what people like me think.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “People like me have no say in what government does” (Zelle, 1995). • “Who in power can make a difference?” and “Who people vote for makes a difference?” (Söderlund, 2008). • “Politicians care about what people like me think” and “Citizens can hardly influence politics” (Dassonneville, 2014).

3.4.2.4 Party image evaluations

Public images of political parties have been operationalised in a variety of ways in the literature, with varying levels of precision. As Dalton and Weldon (2005:933) opine, public party images are often examined through “indirect measures such as the rise of volatility or fluctuating levels of participation or partisanship.” For instance, in their discussion about anti-party sentiments in Europe, Poguntke and Scarrow (1996) used turnout, party membership and political experts’ opinions as indicators of the party images held by the European population. Although these factors provide useful information, “what is needed is more direct attitudinal evidence on what contemporary publics actually think about political parties as actors in the process of representative government” (Dalton and Weldon, 2005:933).

A more precise measurement of party images was employed by Rose and McAllister (1990:133) who used an item that asked respondents to choose between pairs of terms to describe a number of parties. In their influential study on electoral volatility in Britain, Butler and Stokes (1974: 341-347) developed a number of straightforward party image properties, such as “old or young,” “dull or exciting” or “out of date or modern,” and tasked respondents with placing political parties on this scale in order to tap the images and ideas people held about these parties.

Using the CSES module 1, Dalton and Weldon (2005:933) make use of two items to assess public images of political parties: the first one asks whether the respondents think that parties are necessary to democracy and the second one asks whether they think parties care about what the citizens think. Open questions have also been used to operationalise party images, where respondents were asked to list their likes and dislikes regarding political parties (Matthews and Prothro, 1966; Trilling, 1976; Wattenberg, 1982). However, the operationalisation used most often, especially in South Africa, asks respondents whether they think “political parties represent the interests of all citizens or only one specific group” (Mattes, 2005; Ferree, 2006; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2012; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Justesen and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018; Sadie and Patel, 2020). This thesis follows these authors in operationalising party images and makes use of the following question item:

- *Party image evaluations*: “Do you think that [party x] looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa, or after the interests of ONE GROUP ONLY, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?”

The variable specification and coding can be found in the appendix. The table below compares this study’s operationalisation of party images with that of other studies:

Table 3.5: Global comparison of the operationalisation of party image evaluations

	This Study	Global comparison
Party image evaluations	“Do you think that [party x] looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa, or after the interests of ONE GROUP ONLY, or haven’t you heard enough about them to say?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are parties necessary to democracy?” and “Do parties care what people think?” (Dalton and Weldon, 2005). • “I’d like to ask you what you think are the good and bad points about the two national parties: Is there anything in particular that you like about the Democratic Party? (If yes,) What is that? Anything else? Is there anything in particular that you don’t like about the Democratic Party? (If yes,) What is that? Anything else? Is there anything in particular that you like about the Republican Party? (If yes,) What is that? Anything else? Is there anything in particular that you don’t like about the Republican Party? (If yes,) What is that? Anything else?” (Trilling, 1976).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Is this political party is good for only one class or for all classes? Does this political party divide or unite the nation?” (Rose and McAllister, 1990:133).
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3.4.2.5 *Social network composition*

The operationalisation of social network compositions finds its roots in Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet’s (1944) *People’s Choice*, in which they highlighted the impact of social networks on voters’ political behaviour: “face-to-face contacts turned out to be the most important influences stimulating opinion change” (Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1944:xiii). However, it was the inclusion of questions relating to a respondent’s personal network in the 1985 and 1987 General Social Surveys (GSS) in the United States of America (USA) that set the stage for the measurement of this concept (Burt, 1984; Nieuwbeerta and Flap, 2000).

For instance, Nieuwbeerta and Flap (2000) used the exact wording of the GSS to operationalise social network compositions, by asking respondents to provide the names of the people in their core network. Following this, the respondent’s social network was scrutinised via a few questions, including how often they spoke about politics, how well they knew each other as well as the which parties the members of their social network belonged to (Nieuwbeerta and Flap, 2000). In line with this operationalisation, Beck (2002) asked respondents to identify the names of their personal discussants as well as important details and political leanings of each discussant, including “Which candidate do you think (discussant name) supported in the presidential election this year?” (Beck, 2002:334). Similarly, Nir (2011:679) used the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2000 data set and operationalised social networks by asking respondents to report up to four of the people with whom they discussed the election campaign and provide a guess of each of these discussants’ vote choice. A cross-tabulation of this information yielded four categories: no discussion network, supportive, oppositional, and mixed.

The CNEP 2019 survey, which this thesis uses, broadly aligns with the aforementioned measurements of social networks and comprises of a list questions that operationalise respondent’s social networks by asking them about the political affiliations of those people who make up their network, including their family, friends, neighbours and co-workers. This exact operationalisation has been used in numerous South African studies (Schulz-Herzenberg,

2013; 2014; 2019d). As such, this thesis uses the following question from the CNEP 2019 to operationalise a respondent's social network composition:

- *Social network composition*: “Do you think that each of these groups supported the same party as you, supported another party, or is their support divided among different parties, or don't support any party, or don't you know enough about their views to say? A. Family; B. Friends; C. Neighbours.”

In order to assess voters' social network composition, each respondent is placed in a category which relates to the extent of congruence within their social network. A respondent will be placed in the 'homogenous social network' category if a respondent perceives that their family, friends and neighbours all supported the same party as they do. Those placed in the 'mixed social network' category are respondents who perceive that party support among their family, friends and neighbours are divided among different parties. Finally, a respondent will be placed in the 'heterogenous social network' category if they perceive that their family, friends and neighbours all supported a different party to theirs. The variable specification and coding can be found in the appendix. The table below compares this study's operationalisation of social network composition with that of other studies:

Table 3.6: Global comparison of the operationalisation of social network composition

	This Study	Global comparison
Social network composition	“Do you think that each of these groups supported the same party as you, supported another party, or is their support divided among different parties, or don't support any party, or don't you know enough about their views to say?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “(1) Now let's shift our attention to another area. From time to time, people discuss government, elections and politics with other people. I'd like to ask you about the people with whom you discuss these matters. These people might or might not be relatives. Can you think of anyone? (2) What is this person's first name? (3) I have another question about the first person you have named. How do you think [fill name 1] voted in the election? Do you think he/she voted for Al Gore, George Bush, some other candidate, or do you think [fill name] didn't vote?” (Nieuwbeerta and Flap, 2000; Beck, 2002; Huckfeldt, Mendez and Osborn, 2004; Nir, 2011).

3.4.3 Control variables

A number of control variables, that are frequently linked with switching and exiting, are included during the multivariate analysis. To begin with, this study controls for the effects of age, which is seen as an important predictor of electoral volatility. This is because as voters get older, they are more likely to be party identifiers, their voting habits become more engrained, political attitudes more stable and they become less responsive to short-term factors (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960; Dalton, 2002). As such, older voters tend to be more loyal, while younger voters are more likely to be switchers or exiters (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Dalton, 2002). The following question is used to measure age: “How old were you at the time of your last birthday?”

This study also controls for whether a respondent lives in an urban or rural area. This is because it has been shown before that urban voters are more likely to switch as it is within these areas where opposition parties are most visible and able to persuade dissatisfied ANC voters to switch their vote (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016:511). Urban/rural split is measured by asking respondents whether they live in an urban or rural area. Gender is another control variable as it has been found previously that that women register to vote and turnout to vote at a far higher proportion than men (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020:19). Gender is measured by asking each respondent whether they are male or female.

This study also controls for party identification. This is because partisanship has been shown to have a stabilising impact upon electoral behaviour, with partisans almost invariably remaining loyal to the same party from election to election. In contrast, non-partisans are seen as more ‘open’ to switching parties (Campbell *et al.*, 1960). Party identification is operationalised through the following question item, “Many people feel close to a particular political party over a long period of time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. What about you? Do you usually think of yourself as close to a particular party?”

3.5 Statistical Techniques

In order to examine the relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable, this study utilises the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). This is a computer programme that enables researchers to conduct a wide range of statistical analyses in order to test hypotheses. This study will examine the survey data in two phases. First, a series of bivariate statistical analyses will be conducted to investigate the impact of a variety of

theoretically relevant factors in determining an ANC supporter's decision to switch their vote, remain loyal or exit. Second, a multivariate analysis is conducted using a multinomial logistic regression. Although not the primary focus of this thesis, the construction of dependent variable also permits a discussion of voter loyalty in relation to abstention and switching.

The bivariate results are presented in the form of contingency tables in order to explore "whether the distribution on one of the variables is related to the other" (Bryman and Cramer, 2011). Cross-tabulations are widely used to demonstrate bivariate analyses and provide the researcher with a suitable statistical measure to summarise the association or relationships between two variables in terms of both strength and direction. The benefit of cross-tabulations is that they can be used both descriptively – by comparing the frequencies for each category – and inferentially, by showing the relationship between two variables via a range of statistical tests (Bryman and Cramer, 2011). When deciding on which correlation coefficient to use, a researcher should consider the level at which the variables are measured.

As De Vaus (2002: 262) explains, "when one variable is nominal and the other is ordinal and neither are dichotomous, both variables should be treated as though they both are at the same level of measurement of the variable measured at the lowest level. Thus if one variable is nominal and the other is ordinal, treat both as though they are both nominal." (De Vaus, 2002: 262). Since this study's dependent variable is nominal, all the independent variables are ordinal and none of the variables are dichotomous, all the variables in this study should be treated as nominal variables, since this is the lower level of measurement (De Vaus, 2002: 262). Accordingly, Cramer's V is the measure of association used in this study.

To assess whether the results are statistically significant, a significance test (p-value) is conducted. Tests of significance produce a p-values between zero and one, and the closer the p-value is to zero, "the greater the chance that the association, determined by the measure of association, did not occur by chance" (De Vaus, 2002:264). The guideline is that a p-value of 5% or lower ($p < 0.05$) is considered to be statistically significant (De Vaus, 2002:264).

Although bivariate analyses are useful in determining the existence, strength and direction of the relationship between various variables, multivariate analyses provide a more nuanced interpretation of the relative impact of each predictor variable on the dependent variable, while controlling for other significant predictors of switching or abstention. Since this study's

dependent variable comprises of three categories, a multinomial regression model is deemed appropriate (De Vaus, 2002:334; Field, 2009:300). A multinomial logistic regression is used to “predict category membership on a dependent variable, based on one or more independent variables” (Field, 2009:300). It is essentially an “extension of a binary logistic regression that allows for more than just two categories in the dependent variable” (Field, 2009:300). As such, this thesis presents the results of a multinomial logistic regression that test for vote switching, exiting (abstention) and loyalty. This approach is consistent with that of international scholars investigating vote switching (Söderlund, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015).

3.6 Ethical considerations

This research project was carried out in accordance with Stellenbosch University’s Ethical Code. The research ethics application process starts within the Political Science department via the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) and students are required to provide details of their study’s research design, method and data collection as well the approved title and research proposal (Stellenbosch University, 2022:8). Furthermore, a prospective study is scrutinised by means of several screening questions to assess whether or not ethics clearance is required (Stellenbosch University, 2022:8).

Based on the ethics screening questions, this research study is exempt from ethical clearance as it makes use of publicly available secondary data from the CNEP 2019 post-election survey “dataset that is anonymous and is not linked to linked to individuals or any personal accounts (or information)” (Stellenbosch University, 2022:10). Accordingly, this study complied with the Stellenbosch university’s procedure and submitted a Provisional Ethics Exemption to the DESC as soon as the research proposal was complete and has included the Ethics Exemption Declaration as part of this study’s supporting documentation. This study is therefore in line with fundamental ethical considerations.

3.7 Limitations

Although some of the limitations of this study has been mentioned before, it is important to note the following. This study is cross-sectional in design, which means causal conclusions cannot be drawn because observations are made at only one time and, as such, there is no way to understand how variables influence each other over a period of time (Spector, 2019:125). In addition, “common method variance might arise due to ephemeral occasion dynamics that could bias different measures” (Spector, 2019:125). Since this study uses cross-sectional data,

as opposed to panel data, it has had to rely on recall questions to assess vote switching and abstention. This is not ideal as many people might not remember their actions from a few years ago, as well as the issue of cognitive dissonance, “where an individual might – consciously or subconsciously – adjust their previous vote to be in line with their current preference” (van der Eijk and Niemöller, 1983; Waldahl and Aardal, 2000). As a result, the literature reflects an overall consensus that panel data should be used when investigating vote switching (van der Meer *et al.*, 2015). Despite these methodological shortcomings, earlier works have demonstrated that inferences derived from panel data is not too dissimilar to inferences made from recall data (Dassonneville, and Hooghe, 2017). In addition, panel data is often difficult and expensive to obtain, which means relying on recall data is currently the “only way out” for scholars – who do not have access to multi-election panel data – to investigate individual-level volatility (Waldahl and Aardal, 2000).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the overall approach and research design guiding this study namely, a quantitative research approach using cross-sectional public opinion data sourced from the CNEP 2019 post-election survey. The advantages and disadvantages of this approach were examined. Subsequently, this study’s use of secondary data was discussed. In addition, a background of this study’s chosen dataset, CNEP 2019, was provided, including the sample and sampling techniques used by the project.

A comprehensive discussion about the operationalisation of this study’s dependent variable and various independent variables was presented, including a global comparison in which this study’s measures were compared with that of international studies focusing on the same topic. Finally, the statistical tests conducted in this study were explained as well as the ethical considerations and limitations of this study. The following chapters provide the quantitative data analysis obtained from the CNEP 2019 post-election survey to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4: Bivariate Results

4.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates the motivations for both vote switching – in order to understand why some ANC voters are willing to switch parties – and why other ANC voters choose to exit the party system and abstain rather than switching their vote when they become disillusioned with their traditional political home. As indicated earlier, the research questions that will guide the data analysis are as follows:

Research question 1 (RQ1): Switchers: What are the individual-level factors that motivate a voter to switch from the ANC to another party in two consecutive elections?

Research question 2 (RQ2): Exiters: What are the individual-level factors that cause an ANC voter to vote in one election and abstain rather than switch in a subsequent election?

This study will examine the survey data in two phases. Accordingly, the next two chapters deal with the statistical analysis and the interpretation of the results. Firstly, this chapter presents a series of bivariate statistical tests to investigate the impact of a variety of theoretically relevant factors in determining an individual's decision to switch their vote or exit. Secondly, Chapter Five presents a multinomial logistic regression that provides a more sophisticated interpretation of the association between the various variables, while controlling for other significant predictors of switching or exiting.

4.2 Bivariate analysis

This section explores the bivariate relationships between a variety of theoretically relevant factors and a 2014 ANC voter's decision to switch their vote or abstain in the 2019 election. Although not the primary focus of this thesis, the construction of dependent variable also permits a discussion of voter loyalty in relation to abstention and switching. The bivariate results are presented in the form of contingency tables in order to explore “whether the distribution on one of the variables is related to the other” (Bryman and Cramer, 2011). Regarding the choice of correlation coefficients, De Vaus (2002:262) explains that when a non-dichotomous nominal variable is cross tabulated with a non-dichotomous ordinal variable, the researcher ought to treat both variables as though they are nominal because this is the lower level of measurement. None of the variables used in this study are dichotomous and all of them

are either nominal or ordinal, which means all the variables in this study will be treated as nominal variables. Accordingly, Cramer's V is the measure of association used in this study. The Cramer's V coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1, with a value near 0 "indicating a very weak relationship" while a figure nearer to 1 "indicates a very strong relationship" (De Vaus, 2002) (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Guideline for interpreting the strength of association

Measure of association	Strength
0.00	No association
0.01 – 0.09	Trivial relationship
0.10 – 0.29	Low to moderate relationship
0.30–0.49	Moderate to substantial relationship
0.50–0.69	Substantial to very strong relationship
0.70–0.89	Very strong relationship
0.90+	Near perfect

Source: De Vaus (2002:259)

Before moving on to presenting the cross-tabulations, it might be worth examining the distribution of the dependent variable in this study, which is a trichotomous variable capturing 2014 ANC supporters' self-reported voting behaviour as it relates to switching parties, remaining loyal or exiting. As table 4.2 indicates, the vast majority (68%) of 2014 ANC voters remained loyal in 2019. In contrast, only 7% of 2014 ANC supporters switched to a different party, while 25% opted to exit the electoral system entirely. This suggests that although the ANC continues to retain a relatively large loyal voting base, a process of 'dealignment without realignment' is underway; where instead of disgruntled ANC supporters switching their vote and giving a different party the opportunity to govern, many are simply abstaining (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; Mattes, 2014:184; Schulz-Herzenberg and Mattes, 2022).

Table 4.2: Frequency table: Dependent variable, 2014 ANC supporters who remained loyal, switched or exited in 2019.

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election		
	Frequency	Percentage
Loyalist	468	67.8
Switcher	49	7.1
Exiter	173	25.1
Total	n=691	100

4.2.1 Political sophistication

To review, this study's hypotheses in relation to political sophistication are as follows:

H¹: High levels of political sophistication increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H²: Low levels of political sophistication increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019 (changing from voting in one election to abstaining in a consecutive election).

As mentioned in Chapter Three, political sophistication is considered a latent construct and is therefore operationalised by means of four globally recognised and widely used indicators namely, political interest, campaign attention, internal political efficacy, and level of education (Marthaler, 2008; Miller, 2011; Dassonneville, 2012; 2014; Willocq, 2016; Dassonneville and Stiers, 2018). As such, the bivariate results of each indicator are presented one after another.

4.2.1.1 Political interest

Table 4.3 displays the relationship between level of interest in politics and the decision of 2014 ANC voters at the 2019 elections – if they remained loyal, switched to a different party or exited the party system. Overall, the data suggests that high levels of interest are associated with loyalty, while less engagement is associated with exiting. Switchers are preponderant among those who are moderately interested in politics. As the results show, only 20% of those who were very interested in politics exited, while 30% of those who were not at all interested

exited. This compared to 78% of those who are very interested and 63% of those who are not at all interested in politics who remained loyal to the ANC. Switching occurs frequently among those in the middle categories, as 10% of those who are not very interested and 10% of those who are somewhat interested in politics switched parties between 2014 and 2019. This compared to 7% of those who are not at all interested and 2% of those who are very interested who switched. The Cramer's V (.115) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between political interest and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. The p-value is .006, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.3: Level of interest in politics by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	More generally, would you say that you are very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested or not at all interested in politics?			
	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested
Loyalist	63	69.2	61.7	78.1
Switcher	7.2	9.6	9.9	2.4
Exiter	29.8	21.2	28.4	19.5
Total	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .115; p-value = .006; n = 685

4.2.1.2 Campaign attention

Table 4.4 shows the relationship between campaign attention and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections. On the whole, the data indicates that of those who followed the campaign closely, the vast majority were loyalists. Exiters tended to be less interested in the campaign, while switchers appear in all row categories – fairly evenly distributed across campaign interest. As the results show, 37% of those who did not follow the campaign closely at all exited, while only 13% of those who followed the campaign very closely exited. This in comparison to 83% of those who followed the election very closely who stayed loyal in 2019. Although switching is evenly distributed, a fair amount of switching takes place among those with a moderate level of campaign interest. For instance, 6% of those who did not follow the

campaign very closely and 10% of those who followed the campaign fairly closely switched parties between 2014 and 2019. This compared to 9% of those who did not follow the campaign closely at all and 4% of those who followed the campaign very closely who switched. The Cramer's V (.178) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between campaign attention and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. The p-value is $<.001$, which shows that the association is highly statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.4: Campaign attention by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	Again, thinking back to the May 2019 election, how closely did you follow this election campaign?			
	Not closely at all	Not very closely	Fairly closely	Very closely
Loyalist	54	70.7	65.9	82.7
Switcher	9	5.7	10.1	4.3
Exiter	37	23.6	23.9	13
Total	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .178; p-value = $<.001$; n = 680

4.2.1.3 Level of education

Table 4.5 shows the relationship between level of education and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections. Overall, the data suggests that higher levels of education drive both switching and abstention, whereas lower levels of education induce loyalty. For instance, only 2% of 2014 ANC supporters have completed primary school or less switched to a different party in 2019. Conversely, 16% of 2014 ANC supporters who have embarked on post-secondary education switched parties in 2019. This indicates that education appears to matter in the decision to switch away from the ANC: the more educated one is the more likely they are to switch parties in 2019.

Similarly, education also appears to drive abstentions. For example, 33% of those 2014 ANC supporters who completed secondary school exited, in comparison to only 21% of those who

have completed primary school or less. This indicates that, among 2014 ANC supporters, the more educated one is, the more likely they are to exit the electoral system in 2019, and vice versa. By contrast, education appears to work in the opposite direction among loyalists with less educated people more likely to remain loyal again in 2019. For example, of those completed primary school or less 77% remained loyal, while only 61% with a post-secondary education remained loyal. The Cramer's V (.135) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between level of education and the decision to remain loyal, switch or exit in 2019. The p-value is highly statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.5: Level of education by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	What is the highest level of education you have completed?			
	Primary School or less	Secondary school incomplete	Secondary school completed	Post-secondary
Loyalist	76.8	70.2	58.9	61
Switcher	2.4	6.2	8.3	15.9
Exiter	20.7	23.6	32.7	23.2
Total	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .135; p-value = <.001; n = 689

4.2.1.4 Internal political efficacy

Table 4.6 displays the relationship between respondents' perceived ability to influence politics (internal efficacy) and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections. This table shows that a low sense of internal political efficacy is associated with switching, and to a lesser extent with exiting. Conversely those who feel that they do have influence over what government does are more likely to remain loyal to the governing party, as we might expect. The results show that 12% of 2014 ANC supporters with a low level of internal efficacy switched parties in the 2019 elections, while only 2% of those with a high level of internal efficacy switched parties. 27% of those with low levels of internal efficacy exited, while 21% of those with high

levels of internal efficacy exited. The results regarding loyalty run in the opposite direction, with 77% exhibiting high levels of internal efficacy and 60% possessing low internal efficacy. The Cramer's V (.118) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between perceived ability to influence politics and the decision of 2014 ANC voters to either stay loyal, switch or exit in 2019. The p-value is .018, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.6: Perceived ability to influence politics (internal political efficacy) by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	People like me do not have any influence over what the government does				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Loyalist	60.4	68	82.9	67.5	77.1
Switcher	12.4	7.8	2.9	4.5	2.4
Exiter	27.2	24.2	14.3	28	20.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .118; p-value = .018; n = 663

Table 4.7 shows the relationship between perceived ability to understand politics, which is the second indicator of internal political efficacy, and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections. The Cramer's V is .086 and the p-value is .268, which indicates a trivial and statistically insignificant relationship between the two variables.

Table 4.7: Perceived ability to understand politics by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	Generally, politics seem so complicated that people like me cannot understand what is happening				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Loyalist	66.5	71.7	55.9	68.3	62.5
Switcher	9.5	5.5	8.5	5.6	12.5
Exiter	24	22.8	35.6	26.2	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .086; p-value = .268; n = 666

4.2.2 Dissatisfaction with preferred party

To review, this study's hypotheses in relation to the dissatisfaction with preferred party variable are as follows:

H³: Dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H⁴: Dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

Table 4.8 shows the relationship between dissatisfaction with ANC performance and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections. This explanatory variable is clearly associated with switching, as expected: while 15% of those who thought the ANC has done a very bad job in the past five years switched parties, only 1% of those who thought the ANC has done a good job switched parties. Regarding exiters, a similar but less pronounced pattern appears in the table: 28% of 2014 ANC supporters who thought the ANC has done a bad job over the past five years exited in 2019; while only 24% of those who thought the ANC has done a good job exited.

Thus, dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance increases the probability of both vote switching and exiting. Conversely, the results move in the opposite direction for loyalty; 77% of those who thought the ANC has done a very good job remained loyal to the party in 2019 while only 60% of those who thought the ANC has done a very bad job remained loyal. The Cramer's V (.168) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between dissatisfaction with ANC performance and the decision of 2014 ANC voters to either stay loyal, switch or exit in 2019. The p-value is <.001, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.8: Dissatisfaction with preferred party by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	Thinking about the overall performance of the national government in general, how good or bad a job do you think the national government had done in the PAST five years (that is, between 2014 and 2019) Has it done a				
	Very bad job	Bad job	Neither good nor bad	Good job	Very good job
Loyalist	59.8	59.8	70.6	75.9	76.7
Switcher	15	12.1	4.4	0.6	0
Exiter	25.2	28.2	25	23.6	23.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .168; p-value = <.001; n = 678

4.2.3 Institutional disaffection

To review, this study's hypotheses in relation to the institutional disaffection are as follows:

H⁵: Institutional disaffection increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H⁶: Institutional disaffection increases the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

As mentioned in chapter three, institutional disaffection is considered a latent construct and is therefore operationalised by means of three globally recognised indicators namely, political trust, satisfaction with democracy and external political efficacy (Zelle, 1995; Dassonneville, 2014; Willocq, 2016). As such, the bivariate results of each indicator are presented, starting with disaffection with political actors and institutions – which includes trust in the South African Government, the IEC, the ANC and opposition parties – and ending with regime disaffection, which includes satisfaction with democracy and external political efficacy.

4.2.3.1 Disaffection with political actors and institutions

This section presents the bivariate results for trust in the South African Government, the IEC, the ANC and opposition parties.

4.2.3.1.1 Political trust

Table 4.9 displays the relationship between trust in the government of South Africa and the decision of 2014 ANC voters at the 2019 elections. The table shows that low levels of trust in the South African government are clearly associated with both switching and exiting elections, while higher levels of trust are associated with loyalty to the governing party in 2019. As the data indicates, 16% of those who do not trust the government at all switched parties at the 2019 elections, while only 5% of those who have a great deal of trust in the government switched parties. This in comparison with 38% of those who do not trust the government at all and 15% of those who possess a great deal of trust in government who exited the ANC in 2019. Regarding loyalists, 46% of those who are distrustful of government and 80% of those who have a great deal of trust in the government remained loyal. The Cramer's V (.168) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between trust in the government and the decision of 2014 ANC voters to either stay loyal, switch or exit in 2019. The p-value is <.001, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.9: Trust in the government of South Africa by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? <u>The Government of South Africa</u>			
	Not at all	Not very much	Quite a lot	A great deal
Loyalist	45.8	68.9	69.7	79.8
Switcher	15.9	5.7	6.2	4.9
Exiter	38.3	25.5	24.1	15.3
Total	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .168; p-value = <.001; n = 677

We now turn to examining levels of trust in a key state institutional role-player, the IEC. Lower levels of trust in this institution are clearly associated with exiting and then switching. As Table 4.10 shows, 34% of those who do not trust the IEC at all exited in 2019, while only 19% of those who have a great deal of trust in the IEC exited. Furthermore, 11% of 2014 ANC supporters who do not trust the IEC at all switched their vote in 2019, while only 5% of those who have a great deal of trust in the IEC switched parties. This is in contrast to loyalists; whereas only 55% of those who were distrustful of the IEC exited, 75% of those who expressed a great deal of trust in the IEC exited in 2019. Accordingly, a higher level of trust in the IEC increases the likelihood of a 2014 ANC voter remaining loyal in 2019. The Cramer's V (.123) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between trust in the IEC and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. The p-value is .003, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.10: Trust in the IEC by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? <u>Independent Electoral Commission</u>			
	Not at all	Not very much	Quite a lot	A great deal
Loyalist	54.5	63.5	74.3	75.3
Switcher	11.4	7.6	6.4	5.3
Exiter	34.1	28.8	19.3	19.3
Total	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .123; p-value = .003; n = 645

Staying with political trust, this thesis now examines 2014 ANC voters' level of trust in political parties, starting with the ANC and then moving onto opposition parties as whole. Table 4.11 shows relationship between vote switching and trust in the ANC. Lower levels of trust in the ANC is evidently associated with both switching and exiting, whereas a higher level of trust in the ANC increases the likelihood of a 2014 ANC voter remaining loyal in 2019. As the data shows, 16% of 2014 ANC voters who do not trust the ANC at all opted to switch their

vote in 2019. Whereas only 1% of those who have a great deal of trust in the ANC switched their vote in 2019. Regarding exiters, a similar pattern appears in the table: 39% of those who do not trust the ANC at all exited, while 21% of those who possess a great deal of trust in the ANC exited. In contrast, 45% of those who are distrustful of the ANC remained loyal, while 77% of those who have a great deal of trust in the ANC remained loyal in 2019. The Cramer's V (.216) indicates that this relationship is on the cusp of being moderate to substantial in strength. The p-value is $<.001$, which shows that the association is highly statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.11: Trust in the ANC by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? ANC			
	Not at all	Not very much	Quite a lot	A great deal
Loyalist	44.9	54.1	78.6	77.1
Switcher	15.7	11.3	5.9	1.4
Exiter	39.3	34.6	15.5	21.4
Total	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .216; p-value = $<.001$; n = 678

The final indicator for disaffection with political actors and institutions is trust in opposition parties. An examination of Table 4.12 shows the first and an important divergence between the behaviour of switchers and exiters. Higher levels of trust in opposition parties are associated with switching while distrust in opposition parties is associated with exiting. As the data indicates regarding vote switchers, while 29% of 2014 ANC voters who have a great deal of trust in opposition parties switched their vote in 2019, only 5% of those who have no trust at all in the opposition switched their vote. This in contrast to 22% of those who have no trust at all in opposition parties and 14% of those who possess a great deal of trust in the opposition who exited the ANC in 2019. The results regarding loyalty are expected: 72% of those who have no trust at all in the opposition and 57% of those who have a great deal of trust in opposition parties remained loyal to the ANC. This means that the lower a 2014 ANC voter's

level of trust in the opposition, the more likely they are to remain loyal to the ANC or exit in 2019. The Cramer's V (.123) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between trust in the opposition and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. The p-value is .007, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.12: Trust in opposition parties by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? <u>Opposition Parties</u>			
	Not at all	Not very much	Quite a lot	A great deal
Loyalist	72.3	64	55.9	57.1
Switcher	5.4	7.3	8.8	28.6
Exiter	22.3	28.7	35.3	14.3
Total	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .123; p-value = .007; n = 584

4.2.3.2 Regime disaffection

Now that the results for disaffection with political actors and institutions has been examined, the following section presents the bivariate results for regime disaffection, which includes satisfaction with democracy and external political efficacy.

4.2.3.2.1 Satisfaction with democracy

Table 4.13 shows the relationship between satisfaction with democracy and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. Overall, the table shows that dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in South Africa is clearly associated with both switching and exiting elections, whereas satisfaction with democracy is associated with remaining loyal to the ANC. As the data indicates, 9% of 2014 ANC supporters who are not at all satisfied with the way democracy works switched parties in 2019, while only 2% of those who are very satisfied with democracy switched parties. Regarding exiters, a similar pattern is found: 32% of those who are not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in South Africa exited, while only 18% of those who are very satisfied exited in 2019. The opposite is found for loyalists: 60% of those

who are dissatisfied with the way democracy works in South Africa and 80% of those who are very satisfied remained loyal to the ANC in 2019. The Cramer's V (.172) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between satisfaction with democracy and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. The p-value is <.001, which shows that the association is highly statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.13: Satisfaction with democracy by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	In general, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in South Africa? Are you?				
	South Africa is not a democracy	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Loyalist	60	59.7	57.1	71.3	80.3
Switcher	40	8.7	10.9	8	2
Exiter	0	31.5	32	20.7	17.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .172; p-value = <.001; n = 677

4.2.3.2.2 External political efficacy

Table 4.14 shows the relationship between external political efficacy and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. Overall the table shows that lower levels of external political efficacy is associated with switching, and to a lesser extent with exiting. Conversely, those who feel that politicians do care about what people think are more likely to remain loyal to the governing party. As the data indicates, 11% of 2014 ANC voters who possess low levels of external political efficacy switched parties in 2019, while only 6% of those with high external political efficacy switched. Regarding exiters, a similar but less pronounced pattern appears in the table: 26% of 2014 ANC voters who have low levels of external political efficacy exited in 2019, while 25% of those with high external political efficacy exited. This is in contrast with loyalists: 64% of those with low external efficacy and 70% with high external efficacy remained loyal to the ANC in 2019. The Cramer's V (.115) indicates that there is a

low to moderate relationship between internal political efficacy and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. The p-value is .027, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.14: Government responsiveness (external political efficacy) by loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	Politicians do not care much about what people like me think				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Loyalist	63.5	64	81.4	80	69.4
Switcher	10.6	6.9	4.7	3	5.6
Exiter	26	29.1	14	17	25
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .115; p-value = .027; n = 662

4.2.4 Party image evaluations

To review, this study's hypotheses in relation to party image evaluations are as follows:

H⁷: Holding positive party images of opposition political parties increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

H⁸: Holding negative party images of opposition political parties increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

Table 4.15 shows the relationship between the party image evaluations of the DA and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections. Overall, the table indicates that positive DA party images is associated with switching, and to a lesser extent with exiting. As expected, uncertain and negative images about the DA are both associated with loyalty to the ANC. As the data shows, 12% of those who believe that opposition parties look after the interests of all people switched parties in 2019, while only 3% of those who believe that opposition parties look after the interests of one group only switched. Regarding exiters, a similar but less

pronounced pattern appears in the table: 29% of 2014 ANC voters who possess positive opposition party images exited in 2019, while 26% of those who have negative opposition party images exited. The data also underscores how uncertain exiters are about opposition parties, since 20% of those who are uncertain about opposition parties exited the ANC in 2019

Regarding loyalty, 71% of those who possess negative or uncertain DA party images remained loyal to the ANC, while only 60% of those who have positive DA party images remained loyal. The Cramer's V (.123) indicates that there is a low to moderate relationship between DA party images and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. The p-value is <.001, which shows that the association is statistically significant indicating that these findings are representative of the South African population.

Table 4.15: 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election by perception of the Democratic Alliance's inclusivity and exclusivity, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	Do you think that <u>The Democratic Alliance</u> looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa, or after the interests of ONE GROUP ONLY, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?		
	Looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa	Haven't heard enough about them to say	Looks after the interests of one group only
Loyalist	59.5	71.4	71.1
Switcher	11.7	8.7	2.7
Exiter	28.8	19.9	26.1
Total	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .123; p-value = <.001; n = 692

Table 4.16 shows the relationship between the party image evaluations of the EFF and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections. Although there is a trivial relationship between EFF party images and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election (Cramer's V = .089; p-value = .026); overall, the table indicates that, similarly to DA images, positive EFF party images are also associated with switching. Exiters, however, are fairly evenly distributed across

positive and negative EFF images. Furthermore, uncertain images about the EFF are associated with ANC loyalty. As the data shows, 10% of those who believe that opposition parties look after the interests of all people switched parties in 2019, while only 7% of those who believe that opposition parties look after the interests of one group only switched. While EFF party images seem to have little effect on exiters, when it comes to loyalty, 76% of those who possess uncertain EFF party images remained loyal to the ANC, compared to only 63% who have positive and 65% who possess negative EFF images who remained loyal to the ANC.

Table 4.16: 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election by perception of the Economic Freedom Fighters' inclusivity and exclusivity, in percentages

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	Do you think that <u>The Economic Freedom Fighters</u> looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa, or after the interests of ONE GROUP ONLY, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?		
	Looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa	Haven't heard enough about them to say	Looks after the interests of one group only
Loyalist	63.1	75.7	65.3
Switcher	9.5	4.9	6.6
Exiter	27.4	19.5	28.2
Total	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .089; p-value = .026; n = 691

4.2.5 Social network composition

Table 4.17 shows the relationship between the perceived partisan congruence within respondents' social networks and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election. This relationship has a Cramer's V of .095 and a p-value of .325. Accordingly, this relationship is statistically insignificant.

Table 4.17: 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election by perceived partisan congruence between respondent and discussants (scale includes family, friends, neighbours and co-workers)

2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election	Do you think that each of these groups supported the same party as you, supported another party, or is their support divided among different parties, or don't support any party, or don't you know enough about their views to say?		
	Homogenous social network	Mixed social network	Heterogenous social network
Loyalist	66.5	69.4	51.2
Switcher	7.3	2.8	9.8
Exiter	26.3	27.8	39
Total	100	100	100

Cramer's V = .095; p-value = .325; n = 256

4.3 Interpretation of bivariate results

This section summarises the analyses conducted above by collating all the bivariate relationships in summary form in Table 4.18. The table shows the correlations (Cramer's V) between each independent variable and the dependent variable. All the independent variables – with the exception of perceived ability to understand politics and social network composition – are statistically significant and exhibit a low to moderate correlation with the dependent variable. However, trust in the ANC (.216***), which is an indicator of institutional disaffection, exhibits the strongest correlation with the dependent variable and is highly statistically significant. The next most powerful predictors of voter behaviour in 2019 are campaign attention (.178***), satisfaction with democracy (.172***), trust in the government of South Africa (.168***) and dissatisfaction with preferred party (.168***).

The fact that three out of the five strongest correlations are indicators of institutional disaffection suggests that this variable plays a large role in determining whether 2014 ANC supporters remained loyal, switched or exited in 2019. These results are consistent with previous studies which have shown institutional disaffection to be associated with both vote switching and abstention (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Söderlund, 2008;

Dassonneville, 2012; 2014; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017; Voogd and Dassonneville, 2020). The results regarding campaign attention and dissatisfaction with one's preferred party also support the empirical findings of previous studies which have found these variables to be a major trigger for vote switching or exiting between elections (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Söderlund, 2008; Muxel, 2009; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Willocq, 2016).

Table 4.18: Correlation coefficients – 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election and independent variables.

Independent variables	Correlation coefficient: Cramer's V
Political interest [<i>political sophistication indicator</i>]	.115**
Campaign attention [<i>political sophistication indicator</i>]	.178***
Level of education [<i>political sophistication indicator</i>]	.135***
Ability to influence politics [<i>political sophistication indicator</i>]	.118*
Ability to understand politics [<i>political sophistication indicator</i>]	.086
Dissatisfaction with preferred party	.168***
Trust in the government of South Africa [<i>institutional disaffection indicator</i>]	.168***
Trust in the IEC [<i>institutional disaffection indicator</i>]	.123**
Trust in the ANC [<i>institutional disaffection indicator</i>]	.216***
Trust in opposition parties [<i>institutional disaffection indicator</i>]	.123**
Satisfaction with democracy [<i>institutional disaffection indicator</i>]	.172***
Government responsiveness [<i>institutional disaffection indicator</i>]	.115*
DA party image evaluations	.123**
EFF party image evaluations	.089*
Social network composition	.095

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Notwithstanding, since Cramer's V is a non-directional correlation coefficient, it is important to examine the distribution of the percentages in the cross-tabulations to ascertain the direction and nature of the statistically significant relationships, which the following section discusses.

4.3.1 Political sophistication

This section will focus on interpreting the results from the bivariate analysis as it relates to the indicators of political sophistication.

4.3.1.1 Research question 1: Switchers

Campaign attention (.178***) and political interest (.115**) were both associated with vote switching in an unexpected manner. Higher levels of campaign and political interest were associated with loyalty, as opposed to switching. Instead, switchers are predominately found among those with a moderate level of attention to campaigns and politics. This suggests that, in relation to campaign and political interest, moderate levels of political sophistication increase the probability of vote switching. This finding lends no support to H¹, which posits that high levels of political sophistication should increase the probability vote switching. The fact that switching occurs quite frequently among those with a moderate level of attention to campaigns and interest in politics aligns, to an extent, with the views of Converse (1962). He argues that it is moderately sophisticated voters who are most susceptible to switching their vote between elections.

The results for the relationship between respondents' perceived ability to influence politics (internal political efficacy) and 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 elections (.118*) indicate that those who exhibit low internal political efficacy are more likely to switch parties. This finding also contradicts H¹. Although surprising, this result makes sense if one considers that the sample is restricted to ANC supporters. Accordingly, if a 2014 ANC supporter feels as though they do not have any influence over what the government does, which is led by their preferred party, they are likely to make their voice heard by punishing the ANC and voting for a different party (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007).

In contrast to the three indicators discussed above, level of education (.135***) – which is a key indicator of political sophistication – lends credence to H¹. This is because the results indicate that the more educated a 2014 ANC supporter is, the more likely they are to switch

parties in 2019. This finding is in line with the cognitive mobilisation thesis, which posits that “the rise in levels of education and increased access to media has enabled more people to comprehend the complexities of the political arena without the need for low-cost cues, like partisanship;” thereby resulting in more vote switching (Dalton, 2008:212).

In light of the discussion above, H¹ is largely rejected since only one out of the five indicators of political sophistication – level of education – aligns with the expectation that “higher levels of sophistication will increase the probability of vote switching” (Dalton, 1984). In contrast, the results for three out of the four statistically significant indicators – namely, political interest, internal political efficacy and campaign attention – indicate that those with a low to moderate level of political sophistication are more likely to switch parties at the 2019 election. There are a number of explanations for these unexpected findings.

The first explanation could lie with the traditional ‘floating voters’ thesis, which expects switchers to be found among the less sophisticated segment of the electorate (Berelson *et al.*, 1963:20). This pessimistic view of volatility sees these switchers as apathetic ‘floating voters’ whose volatile electoral behaviour is indicative of a lack of interest in politics and ambivalence about the electoral process (Berelson *et al.*, 1963). According to this interpretation, “switchers are not cognitively mobilised with high levels of political interest and sophistication” (Berelson *et al.*, 1963). Rather, voters switching from the ANC are mostly apoliticals; who – with the exception of possessing higher levels of education – are less politically sophisticated and exhibit low interest in politics, low attention to election campaigns and low levels of internal efficacy. This interpretation reflects previous South African research which has found that the vast majority of South Africa’s ‘floating voters’ are made up of apoliticals, who are typically less sophisticated, inactive, uninvolved, and detached from politics (Mattes, 2004; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Dalton, 2014b).

An alternative interpretation contends that these unexpected bivariate results are less to do with the traditional ‘floating voter’ hypotheses and more to do with context of the question items and the sample under investigation. This line of thinking is based on the fact that internal efficacy, campaign attention and political interest are all closely linked to partisanship (Dalton 1985:265; 2014). And since this study’s sample is restricted to ANC 2014 supporters, it comes as no surprise that those voters who exhibit high levels of political attention, interest and internal efficacy are mostly loyalists, rather than switchers. Indeed, it has been shown that

partisans are more likely to be mobilised into paying attention to politics and party-related activities, such as elections campaigns (Dalton, 1985:270). Furthermore, it has been found that partisanship increases levels of internal efficacy (Stenner-Day and Fischle, 1992: 301). This is because “partisanship plays a role in integrating the individual into the political system” and structuring a person’s political outlook (Dalton, 1985:265; 2014:134). As such, someone who strongly identifies with a party is more likely to feel as though they have influence over government, especially if their preferred party is the governing party, as the data in this study reflects (Karp and Banducci, 2008).

As such, although ANC switchers – on the face of it – align with the traditional ‘floating voters’ thesis; the conventional literature may not capture the nuance of the South African context, which is characterised by a dominant party system and deep-seated loyalties, where attitudes such as political interest, campaign attention and internal political efficacy are so intrinsically linked to ANC partisanship. This could be why H^1 is largely contradicted. However, an indicator that does not suffer from these contextual deficiencies is level of education, which runs in the expected direction. The data suggests that higher levels of education drive switching, whereas lower levels of education increases the chances of loyalty. This finding affirms Dalton’s (2008) thesis and is a strong signal that the process of cognitive mobilisation may indeed be underway among 2014 ANC voters and could simply be masked by the contextual deficiencies of the other indicators (Dalton, 2008).

Indeed, research has consistently shown that “an individual’s level of education is one of the best indicators of political sophistication and is closely linked to a person’s level of political knowledge and interest” (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). As such, despite H^1 being rejected, ANC switchers might be more sophisticated than the results regarding political interest, campaign attention and internal efficacy lead us to believe.

4.3.1.2 Research question 2: Exiters

Campaign attention (.178***) and political interest (.115**) were both associated with exiting in the expected manner. The bivariate results indicate that the less closely a 2014 ANC supporter follows the campaign and politics, the more likely they are to exit the electoral system and abstain from voting in 2019. This finding aligns with H^2 , which posits that low levels of political sophistication should increase the chances of exiting. It also aligns with the psychological engagement model of turnout, which argues that those individuals who are less

attentive and interested in politics are more likely to exit than those who are more attentive and interested in politics (Blais, 2009:631). The results regarding the loyalty of 2014 ANC supporters indicate that high levels of political and campaign interest increase the chances of remaining loyal. This result seems logical if one considers that the sample is restricted to ANC supporters and that partisans are more likely to be politically engaged and pay attention to party-related activities, such as elections campaigns (Dalton, 1985:270; Blais, 2009:631).

The bivariate results for the relationship between 2014 ANC supporters' perceived ability to influence politics (internal political efficacy) and exiting (.118*) indicate that those with low levels of internal political efficacy are more likely to exit the electoral system and abstain. This finding is unsurprising and, similarly to campaign attention and political interest, align with H² and the psychological engagement model of turnout (Blais, 2009:631). The opposite is true for the relationship between internal efficacy and loyalty, with a higher level of internal political efficacy increasing the chances of 2014 ANC supporters remaining loyal in 2019. This could be because "partisanship plays a role in integrating the individual into the political system by mobilising them to vote" (Dalton, 1985:270). As such, individuals who are loyal to a party are more likely to feel as though they have influence over government, and vice versa (Karp and Banducci, 2008).

Finally, the bivariate results for the relationship between level of education and exiting (.135***) are quite unexpected. It indicates that the more educated one is, the more likely they are to exit the electoral system in 2019. Therefore, as it relates to education, higher levels of political sophistication increase the probability of exiting, which contradicts H². The opposite is true for the relationship between level of education and loyalty, with a lower level of education increasing the chances 2014 ANC supporters remaining loyal in 2019. These results go against the resource model of turnout, which posits that an individual is more likely to exit if they lack the requisite material and attitudinal resources (Verba and Nie, 1972; Blais, 2009).

A reason for these surprising findings could be the fact that educated people are usually more knowledgeable and better informed than their less educated counterparts, which means they are less reliant upon party identification to guide and stabilise their voting behaviour. As such, "they are less likely to be anchored to a certain party over consecutive elections;" thereby increasing their chances of going from voting in one election to exiting in the next, as the results in this thesis indicate (Dalton 2000; Norris 2004:139–41; Schmitt-Beck *et al.* 2006: 592).

Furthermore, it has been shown in the past that 50 percent of the South African electorate are ritual partisans, who are mobilised by their strong party attachments, but have low levels of sophistication. This could provide a reason why loyal 2014 ANC voters are found among the lowest educated segments of the electorate (Mattes, 2004; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Dalton, 2014b).

In light of the discussion above, H² is largely accepted since all of the indicators of political sophistication, apart from levels of education, support the expectation that low levels of political sophistication will increase the probability of exiting. These findings support the psychological engagement model, which argues that those who are less interested and possess a lower level of psychological engagement with the political realm are more likely to exit the electoral system and abstain (Blais, 2009:631). It also reflects the views of Pollock III (1983), Lazarsfeld *et al.*, (1965), Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980), Verba *et al.* (1995), Norris (2000) and Dassonneville (2012:34) who demonstrated that factors such as a low level of political interest and internal political efficacy increase the likelihood of an individual abstaining from voting.

4.3.2 Dissatisfaction with preferred party

This section focuses on interpreting the results from the bivariate analysis in relating to dissatisfaction with respondents' preferred party.

4.3.2.1 Research question 1: Switchers

In terms of the relationship between satisfaction with ANC performance and vote switching (.168***), the results indicate that the more dissatisfied a 2014 ANC supporter is with the ANC's performance, the more likely they are to switch parties at the 2019 election. This finding is in line with H³, which states that dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance will increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019. This result is expected and makes logical sense because if voters are happy with how the incumbent is performing, then there is a greater chance that they will reward the government with their vote. In contrast, voters will defect to another party if they are dissatisfied with the performance of the incumbent (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007). This finding aligns with both international and South African studies (Mattes *et al.*, 1999:245; Söderlund, 2008:234; Southall 2014:206; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Justesen and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b).

4.3.2.2 *Research question 2: Exiters*

In terms of the relationship between satisfaction with ANC performance and exiting (.168***), the results indicate that dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance increases the probability of exiting. This finding is in line with H⁴, which states that dissatisfaction with the ANC's performance will increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019. The findings regarding loyalty run in the opposite direction, with 2014 ANC supporters who thought that their party had done a good job over the past five years being more likely to stay loyal in 2019.

These results make intuitive and logical sense for the same reasons discussed above regarding switching. If 2014 ANC voters are satisfied with the performance of their preferred party, there is a greater chance that they will reward the ANC with their vote and thus remain loyal. However, if they are dissatisfied, they can punish the incumbent by either voting for a different party or, alternatively, they can opt to withdraw from the political system entirely and abstain (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007; Blais, *et al.*, 2015:3; Plescia and Kritzing, 2017; Williams *et al.*, 2017).

4.3.3 **Institutional disaffection**

This section will focus on interpreting the results from the bivariate analysis as it relates to the indicators of institutional disaffection, including trust in government, the electoral commission, the ANC as a political party, and opposition parties.

4.3.3.1 *Research question 1: Switching*

The results between political trust and vote switching are as expected. Lower levels of trust in the government of South Africa (.168), the IEC (.123**) and the ANC party (.216***) all increased the probability of switching. By contrast, however, is the relationship between trust in opposition parties and vote switching (.123**): 2014 ANC voters with higher levels of trust in the opposition were more likely to switch parties in 2019. This could be because an ANC voter needs to see the opposition as viable and trustworthy options in order to actually switch their vote to an opposition party, otherwise their rising ANC dissatisfaction will likely result in exiting (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg and Mattes, 2022).

These findings largely align with H⁵, which posits that institutional disaffection should increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019. It also makes logical sense

for distrustful 2014 ANC voters to be more likely to switch parties. This could be because, as the literature indicates, switching is viewed as an effective mechanism for voters to hold their preferred party to account (Zelle, 1995). This thesis' findings also corresponds with both local and international authors who found that switchers have low levels of political trust (Zelle, 1995; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville *et al.*, 2014; Gouws and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016; Justesen and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018).

The relationship between the second indicator of institutional disaffection – satisfaction with democracy – and vote switching (.172***) runs in the expected direction. The more dissatisfied a 2014 ANC voter is with the way democracy works in South Africa, the more likely they are to switch parties. This finding aligns with H⁵ and reflects numerous international studies that have found switchers to be less satisfied with the way democracy works (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville, *et al.* 2014). This finding also makes sense because other research has shown that South African citizens conceive of democracy “in an instrumental – rather than procedural – manner,” in that they expect democracy to augment their immediate social and economic circumstances (Bratton and Mattes, 2001; Bratton *et al.*, 2005). Accordingly, if these economic and social benefits are not delivered, as is the case for the majority of South African citizens, it is no surprise that 2014 ANC voters become frustrated and use vote switching as a means to convey their disaffection.

Finally, the relationship between external political efficacy, measured via perceived government responsiveness, and vote switching (.115*) also aligns with expectations (H⁵). The lower a 2014 ANC voter's level of perceived government responsiveness, the more likely they are to switch parties in 2019. It comes as no surprise that switchers exhibit low levels of external political efficacy. This is because if 2014 ANC voters believe that the ANC-led government does not listen to them, they are likely to retaliate by switching their vote to an alternative party (Zelle, 1995; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville *et al.*, 2014).

These findings suggest that institutional disaffection contributes to vote switching among 2014 ANC voters, which aligns with several studies (Zelle, 1995; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Muxel, 2009; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville *et al.*, 2014).

4.3.3.2 Research question 2: Exiters

The relationship between the first indicator of institutional disaffection, political trust, and exiting runs in the expected direction. Lower levels of trust in the government of South Africa (.168), the IEC (.123**), the ANC itself (.216***) and opposition parties (.123**) all increased the probability of exiting. The results for the relationship between political trust and loyalty run in the opposite direction, with a higher level of trust in the government, the ANC and the IEC, and a lower level of trust in opposition parties, all increasing the chances of a 2014 ANC voter remaining loyal in 2019.

These findings largely align with H⁶, which posits that institutional disaffection should increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019. It also makes logical sense to expect that low levels of trust could function as an alienating factor which, in turn, causes politically distrustful voters to exit the electoral system and abstain from elections (Bélanger, 2017). Indeed, evidence suggests that distrust towards the political system engenders exiting (Zelle, 1995; Pattie and Johnston, 2001; Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Grönlund and Setälä, 2007; Hooghe *et al.*, 2011; Bäck and Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2014). Furthermore, it is understandable for voters with a lower level of trust in opposition parties to exit, because research shows that distrust and disaffection toward the ANC-led government is not enough for a voter to switch to a different party. Rather, voters also need to be convinced of the trustworthiness, credibility and inclusiveness of opposition parties, in order to switch their vote (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014; Schulz-Herzenberg and Mattes, 2022).

The relationship between satisfaction with democracy and exiting (.172***) also runs in the expected direction. The more dissatisfied a 2014 ANC voter is with the way democracy works in South Africa, the more likely they are to exit in 2019. The results regarding loyalty run in the opposite direction. These findings align with H⁶ and support international studies that have found exiters to be less satisfied with the way democracy works overall (Söderlund, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015). This could be because a person who is disillusioned with a political system is less likely to participate in that system by switching their vote, and will instead opt to exit the electoral system entirely and abstain (Söderlund, 2008; Blais *et al.*, 2015). In contrast, a 2014 ANC supporter who is satisfied with the way democracy works is likely to turnout and remain loyal to their party, since they are happy with the regime's performance.

The final indicator of institutional disaffection, external political efficacy, is measured via perceived government responsiveness and is associated with exiting (.115*) in the expected manner. The lower a 2014 ANC voter's level of external political efficacy, the more likely they are to exit and vice versa. This finding supports H⁶ and reflects other studies that have found exiters to exhibit low levels of external political efficacy (Pollock III, 1983; Blais, 2000; Grönlund and Setälä, 2007; Karp and Banducci, 2008). This makes logical sense because if a 2014 ANC voter believes that the government is unresponsive, they are likely to feel alienated, apathetic, and indifferent to politics. As a result, these voters are more likely to exit the political system. In contrast, if a 2014 ANC supporter feels as though the ANC-led government is responsive to their needs and desires, they are likely to reward the party by remaining loyal in 2019.

These findings suggest that institutional disaffection contributes to exiting among 2014 ANC voters, which aligns with the psychological engagement model of turnout, as well as numerous previous studies (Norris 2000; Blais, 2009; Smets and van Ham, 2013).

4.3.4 Party image evaluations

This section will focus on interpreting the results from the bivariate analysis as it relates to party image evaluations.

4.3.4.1 Research question 1

The relationship between opposition party image evaluations and vote switching runs in the expected direction. 2014 ANC supporters who possess positive party images about the DA (.123***) and the EFF (.089*) are more likely to switch, when compared to those who have negative or uncertain images of the opposition. This finding supports H⁷, which posits that positive party images of opposition political parties should increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters switching their vote in 2019.

It also makes sense that potentially disgruntled 2014 ANC supporters who possess positive images of the opposition are more likely to switch in 2019 than those who hold negative opposition party images. Indeed, a number South African studies have found that positive party images pulls a voter towards a party, whereas negative images push voters away from a party (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012). Research question 2

The relationship between DA (.123***) images and the EFF (.089*) images and exiting is not as clear cut as expected. Although those who possess positive DA party images are slightly more likely to exit, while those who possess negative EFF images are slightly more likely to exit; the differences in the percentages are too small to draw any definitive conclusion. This contradicts H⁸, which posits that negative party images of opposition political parties should definitively increase the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019.

4.4 Conclusion: The differences between switchers and exiters

The bivariate findings show that ANC voters do think retrospectively about the party's performance, as is demonstrated by the fact that both switchers and exiters are institutionally disaffected and dissatisfied with the performance of the ANC. ANC voters are therefore willing to withdraw their support from the incumbent once they become disillusioned with their traditional political home. However, when faced with the option of either exiting or switching their vote, why do some 2014 ANC voters channel their disillusionment towards switching parties, while others choose to exit the party system and abstain?

One difference lies in their level of interest in politics. The results show that switchers are slightly more interested in politics, as they exhibit a moderate level of interest in politics, while exiters are mostly found among the less politically interested. Although the differences between switchers and exiters – in relation to political interest – are relatively small, an increased level of interest in politics nevertheless seems to matter in the decision to switch parties instead of exiting. However, the most glaring and crucial divergence between switchers and exiters is found in their levels of trust in opposition parties. 2014 ANC voters with high levels of trust in the opposition are likely to switch parties, while distrust in opposition parties induces exiting.

As such, for 2014 ANC voters, the decision to either switch parties or exit the electoral system pivots around trust in opposition parties. Although both exiters and switchers are politically disaffected and disillusioned by the ANC, only those who possess high levels of trust in opposition parties are able to make the more positive decision of switching parties – the rest exit the electoral system entirely. Negative trust-based perceptions of opposition parties are therefore forming an obstacle to vote switching among 2014 ANC voters. This is because it seems as though distrust of opposition parties overshadow the effects of rational performance-based evaluations of the ANC-led government, leading many to exit as they simply do not trust opposition parties enough to move their support to them.

This finding aligns with past South African research which shows that dissatisfaction with the ANC could trigger exiting if a voter is unconvinced about the trustworthiness, credibility and inclusiveness of opposition parties (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg and Mattes, 2022). Interestingly, many previous South African studies have emphasised restrictive race-based party images as the main obstacle to vote switching (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200). However, the results in this study indicate that party images seem to have little effect on exiters, which are those voters who opt against switching and rather abstain. Accordingly, it seems that trust in opposition parties needs to be given more attention when examining the unwillingness of ANC voters to switch to opposition parties. But since “inclusive and exclusive party images shape the credibility and trustworthiness of a party,” these images remain important in the decision matrix of an ANC voter (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012). Nevertheless, the bivariate results in this study show that the potential for inter-party movement resulting from dissatisfaction with the incumbent is nullified primarily by negative trust-based perceptions of opposition parties, as opposed to restrictive race-based party images.

While the bivariate results have crystalised the attitudinal profile of switchers and exiters separately, the next chapter conducts a multinomial logistic regression that provides a more sophisticated interpretation of the relative impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable, while controlling for other significant predictors of switching or exiting.

Chapter 5: Multivariate Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the bivariate analyses conducted in the previous chapter, by presenting a multinomial logistic regression that provides a more sophisticated interpretation of the relative impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable, while controlling for other significant predictors of switching and exiting. A multinomial logistic regression is used to “predict category membership on a dependent variable, based on one or more independent variables” (Field, 2009:300). It is essentially an “extension of a binary logistic regression that allows for more than just two categories in the dependent variable” (Field, 2009:300). Only the statistically significant independent variables from the bivariate analysis are used in this multivariate analysis, with the addition of the following control variables: age, gender, urban/rural split and party identification.

5.2 Multivariate analysis: multinomial logistic regression

Table 5.1 shows the results for the multinomial logistic regression model in which the dependent variable comprises of three outcome categories namely, loyalists (reference group), switchers, and exiters. As such, the model produces two sets of estimates, each of them assessing the effect of the independent variables on the probability of switching or exiting relative to the base category, which is remaining loyal to the ANC in consecutive elections. The cumulative Nagelkerke R^2 suggests that this model in its entirety explains a notable 38% of the variance in the dependent variable.

5.2.1 Switchers

Regarding switchers, the model indicates that dissatisfaction with the ANC, trust in the ANC, trust in opposition parties, and DA inclusivity all provide considerable explanatory leverage; while perceived ability to influence government (internal efficacy) and whether a respondent lives in an urban or rural area are also of some importance. These findings align with expectations (Zelle, 1995; Söderlund, 2008; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Blais *et al.*, 2015; Plescia and Kritzing, 2017) and strengthen the results from the bivariate analysis by showing the significance of a collection of factors such as dissatisfaction with preferred party, trust in the ANC and party images in predicting vote switching, even after controlling for other crucial variables associated with of switching.

As table 5.1 shows, dissatisfaction with the ANC is a significant negative predictor of vote switching. Accordingly, a higher level of satisfaction with the ANC decreases the probability of switching parties, compared to remaining loyal to the ANC. The odds ratio of .411 tells us that with every one unit increase in levels of satisfaction with the ANC, the odds of a 2014 ANC voter switching their vote decreases by 59%. Trust in the ANC also moves in the same direction, as the odds ratio indicates that with every one unit increase in levels of trust in the ANC, the odds of being a switcher decreases by a factor of .301 or 70%, compared to remaining loyalists. As such, ANC switchers are less satisfied with the ANC and less trusting of the ANC, than are loyalists. This aligns with H³ and H⁵ and reflects the bivariate results, which found lower levels of ANC satisfaction and trust to increase the probability of switching.

DA exclusivity is also a significant negative predictor of vote switching. The odds ratio tells us that as 2014 ANC voters move each unit, from perceived DA inclusivity to exclusivity, the odds of switching decreases by a factor of .451 or 55%, when compared to remaining loyal to the ANC. Accordingly, ANC voters are more likely to switch parties if they perceive the DA as inclusive, which aligns with H⁷ as well as the findings from the bivariate analysis. Importantly, trust in opposition parties also matters a great deal in deciding to switch parties, and runs in the expected direction. The odds ratio indicates that with every one unit increase in levels of trust in opposition parties, the odds of a 2014 ANC voter switching their vote increases by a factor of 2.752 or a substantial 175%, when compared to remaining loyal to the ANC. Although it contradicts H⁵, this finding reflects the bivariate results which found higher levels of trust in opposition parties to be associated with vote switching.

Table 5.1 shows that perceived ability to influence government (internal efficacy) also plays a role in the decision to switch or remain loyal. The odds ratio tells us that with every one unit increase in levels of perceived influence over government, from less influence to more influence, the odds of a 2014 ANC voter switching their vote decreases by a factor of .671 or 33%. Despite contradicting H¹, this finding aligns with the bivariate results, which indicate that those with low levels of internal efficacy are more likely to switch parties. The only control variable that is statistically significant is whether a respondent lives in an urban or rural area. The odds of urban ANC voters opting to switch, rather than remaining loyal, are 21 times higher than the odds for rural ANC voters, which also aligns with both expectations and previous studies.

5.2.2 Exiters

The model shows that the statistically significant predictors for exiters are: gender, age, party identification, campaign interest and trust in opposition parties. These findings largely align with expectations (Dalton, 1984; Blais, 2009) and lend support for the results from the previous bivariate analyses. As table 5.1 shows, a higher level of campaign attention decreases the probability of exiting, when compared to remaining loyal to the ANC. The odds ratio tells us that with every one unit increase in levels of campaign attention, the odds of a 2014 ANC voter exiting in 2019 decreases by a factor of .739 or 26%, controlling for other factors in the model. This finding aligns with H² and the bivariate analysis, which found that high levels of campaign interest increase the chances of remaining loyal and decrease the chances of exiting.

Interestingly, trust in opposition parties runs in the opposite direction. The results show that a higher level of trust in the opposition increases the probability of a 2014 ANC voter exiting, as opposed to remaining loyal to the ANC. As the odds ratio indicates, with every one unit increase in levels of trust in opposition parties, the odds of a 2014 ANC voter exiting in 2019 increases by a factor of 1.432 or 43%, when compared to remaining loyal to the ANC. This finding contradicts H⁶, but supports the bivariate analysis as it relates to loyalty – a lower level of trust in the opposition is associated with remaining loyal. However, as it relates to exiting, the bivariate analysis – which found that lower levels of trust in the opposition also increased the probability of exiting – is contradicted, since the multivariate analysis indicates that exiters have higher levels of trust in opposition parties, when compared to loyalists.

Regarding the control variables, the model indicates that the odds of male 2014 ANC voters opting to exit, rather than remain loyal, are 2.187 times higher than the odds for female 2014 ANC voters. Thus, men are more likely to exit than women. As anticipated, the age of a 2014 ANC voter also predicts whether or not they exited during the 2019 elections. The odds ratio tells us that as age increases, the likelihood of exiting decreases by a factor of .971 or 3%. Finally, being a partisan decreases the probability of 2014 ANC voters exiting in 2019. The odds of partisan 2014 ANC voters opting to exit, rather than remain loyal, are .551 times or 45% lower than the odds for non-partisan ANC voters.

Table 5.1: Multivariate model: 2014 ANC supporters: loyalty, switching and exiting in 2019

DV: 2014 ANC supporters' decision at the 2019 election ^a			95% CI for Odds ratio (Exp B)		
Variables	Beta (Standard error)	Sig.	Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Switcher					
Intercept	-.355 (1.941)	.855			
Gender – Male (1)	.758 (.448)	.091	.886	2.134	5.140
Gender – Female (2) <i>ref</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Urban-Rural – Urban (1)	3.045 (1.413)	.031	1.317	21.009	335.109
Urban-Rural – Rural (2) <i>ref</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Age	-.026 (.018)	.157	.940	.975	1.010
Party identification – Yes (1)	-.472 (.484)	.330	.241	.624	1.612
Party identification – No (2) <i>ref</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Level of education	.278 (.244)	.253	.819	1.321	2.130
Political interest	-.215 (.226)	.342	.518	.807	1.256
Campaign attention	.159 (.212)	.454	.774	1.172	1.775
Ability to influence what the government does [internal political efficacy]	-.399 (.190)	.036	.462	.671	.974
Satisfaction with the ANC	-.889 (.249)	<.001	.252	.411	.669
Trust in The Government of South Africa	.393 (.260)	.131	.889	1.481	2.467
Trust in The Independent Electoral Commission	-.029 (.249)	.908	.597	.972	1.582
Trust in ANC	-1.200 (.318)	<.001	.161	.301	.562
Trust in opposition parties	1.012 (.292)	<.001	1.551	2.752	4.881
DA Inclusivity	-.797 (.263)	.002	.269	.451	.754
EFF Inclusivity	.426 (.259)	.100	.921	1.532	2.546
Satisfaction with democracy	-.025 (.211)	.907	.646	.976	1.474
Government responsiveness (external political efficacy)	-.022 (.202)	.914	.658	.979	1.454
Exiter					
Intercept	1.484 (.789)	.060			
Gender – Male (1)	.782 (.249)	.002	1.342	2.187	3.562

Gender – Female (2) <i>ref</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Urban-Rural – Urban (1)	.308 (.282)	.276	.782	1.360	2.366
Urban-Rural – Rural (2) <i>ref</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Age	-.030 (.010)	.003	.952	.971	.990
Party identification – Yes (1)	-.596 (.270)	.027	.325	.551	.935
Party identification – No (2) <i>ref</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Level of education	.150 (.140)	.284	.883	1.162	1.529
Political interest	.078 (.126)	.535	.844	1.082	1.385
Campaign attention	-.302 (.122)	.013	.582	.739	.939
Ability to influence what the government does [internal political efficacy]	-.017 (.094)	.857	.818	.983	1.182
Satisfaction with the ANC	-.117 (.108)	.279	.720	.890	1.100
Trust in The Government of South Africa	-.032 (.161)	.845	.706	.969	1.329
Trust in The Independent Electoral Commission	-.043 (.130)	.738	.742	.957	1.235
Trust in ANC	-.218 (.153)	.153	.596	.804	1.084
Trust in opposition parties	.359 (.172)	.037	1.023	1.432	2.006
DA Inclusivity	-.202 (.145)	.164	.615	.817	1.086
EFF Inclusivity	.042 (.149)	.778	.778	1.043	1.398
Satisfaction with democracy	-.189 (.120)	.114	.655	.828	1.046
Government responsiveness [external political efficacy]	-.052 (.105)	.619	.772	.949	1.167

a. Remained loyal is the reference category for the dependent variable. Cases: 481. $R^2 = .297$ (Cox and Snell). $.378$ (Nagelkerke). Model $\chi^2(34) = 181.455$. $p < .000^{***}$.

5.3 Interpretation of multivariate results

This following section interprets the findings from the above multivariate analysis, with a focus on elucidating the differences between switchers and exiters.

5.3.1 Dissatisfaction with preferred party

Similar to the bivariate results, the multivariate results show that performance evaluations of the ANC are highly significant in the decision of whether to switch parties or remain loyal. The results presented in table 5.1 show that even after controlling for other theoretically important predictors of switching, 2014 ANC voters who were dissatisfied with the performance of the

ANC were still more likely to switch parties in 2019. Conversely, 2014 ANC supporters who thought that their party had done a good job over the inter-election period were more likely to stay loyal in 2019. Interestingly, and contrary to the bivariate results, satisfaction with the ANC has no influence upon whether or not voters exit and abstain from voting.

Accordingly, the data shows that ANC voters are not as unquestionably loyal as much of the earlier South African literature believed (Lijphart, 1994; Schlemmer, 1994; Friedman, 1999; Letsholo, 2005; Booysen, 2012:2). To the contrary, voters are acting rationally and are quite willing to punish the ANC for their increasingly poor political and economic performances by switching their vote to another party. Electoral accountability therefore seems to exist among 2014 ANC voters. This finding supports studies carried out by Söderlund (2008:234) and Blais *et al.* (2015) who demonstrated that performance assessments of an individual's preferred party greatly influenced the chances that the individual would switch their vote, rather than remain loyal.

Furthermore, it also aligns with the views of South African authors who have highlighted the increasing role that retrospective evaluations have been playing in elections (Mattes *et al.*, 1999:245; Southall 2014:206; Justesen and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b). Schulz-Herzenberg (2019b:170), for instance, shows how performance evaluations had a major impact upon the 2019 national election results, primarily due to weakened party loyalties, rising levels of unemployment, an increasingly sluggish economy and growing perceptions of corruption and state capture.

These findings also provide crucial insights into Zelle's (1995) "frustrated floating voter" hypothesis, which characterises switchers as politically disaffected individuals who are disgruntled, distrustful, and frustrated with politics (Berelson *et al.*, 1954; Zelle, 1995:350). This view was also reflected in the bivariate results. However, the multivariate analysis shows that vote switching among 2014 ANC supporters is not a manifestation of frustration and political disaffection, but rather the product of rational evaluations about past party performances.

5.3.2 Institutional disaffection

Regarding the indicators of institutional disaffection, only two variables, namely trust in the ANC and trust in opposition parties, are significant in the decision to switch, rather than remain

loyal. Whereas only trust in opposition parties is relevant to the decision of whether to exit or remain loyal to the ANC. Contrary to the bivariate results which showed that high levels of trust in the opposition is associated with switching, while distrust in opposition parties induces exiting; the multivariate analysis shows that both exiters and switchers have higher levels of trust in opposition parties compared to loyalists. However, as table 5.1 indicates, the extent to which a 2014 ANC voter trusts the opposition increases the probability of switching more strongly than the probability of exiting. In other words, the more a voter trusts the opposition, the more likely she is to switch rather than to exit.

Although this finding differs slightly from the bivariate results, the fact remains that ANC switchers possess higher levels of trust in opposition parties than do exiters. Accordingly, the multivariate results strengthen the bivariate analysis by showing that trust in opposition parties remains crucial in the decision to either switch parties or exit the electoral system. However, although trust in opposition parties is necessary for a 2014 ANC voter to abandon their preferred party, either through switching or exiting; whether that voter opts for the more engaged decision to remain in the political system by switching parties largely depends on if they exhibit a sufficiently strong level of trust in opposition parties. This finding supports previous South African research which shows that the willingness of ANC voters to switch to opposition parties largely hinges on the trustworthiness, credibility and inclusiveness of opposition parties (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011).

Staying with the indicators of institutional disaffection, table 5.1 shows that a low level of trust in the ANC increases the chances of switching, when compared with loyalists. This finding reflects the bivariate results and aligns with the view that the mounting trust deficit in South Africa has particularly affected the ruling party (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b:181). Indeed, trust in the ANC has been shaped by numerous factors over the inter-election period, including poor economic performance, high unemployment rates, grand corruption in the government, a sluggish economy and unequal and inefficient service delivery (Mattes, 2004; Gouws and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016; Justesen and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b:181; Kotze and Bohler-Muller, 2019). It therefore makes sense that low levels of trust in the ANC increases the likelihood of 2014 ANC voters switching to another party in 2019, perhaps as a way of voicing their discontent with their party's performance.

As Hetherington (1999:318) explains, when trust declines, so too do the chances of a vote for the incumbent. “Put differently, distrust would act as a motivating factor drawing people towards new party alternatives and away from traditional old-line parties” (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005:127). This thesis’ findings also corresponds with both local and international authors (Zelle, 1995; Dassonneville, 2012; Dassonneville *et al.*, 2014; Gouws and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016; Justesen and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2018). Justesen and Schulz-Herzenberg (2018:1147), for instance, show that trust in the ANC is the most important variable in determining ANC vote choice in their study on the 2016 municipal election and “therefore appears to be crucial for understanding why some South Africans maintain their support for the ANC while others (increasingly) cast their vote for other parties.” However, while a low level of trust in the ANC significantly increases the probability of switching, the results show that it does not significantly affect the probability of exiting. Furthermore, contrary to the bivariate analysis, the explanatory strength of the certain indicators of institutional disaffection – such trust in the South African Government, the IEC, satisfaction with democracy and external political efficacy – are diminished when other significant predictors of switching or abstention are controlled for.

5.3.3 Party image evaluations

Moving on to party images, table 5.1 shows that ANC voters are more likely to switch parties, rather than remain loyal, if they perceive the DA as inclusive. This finding reflects the bivariate results and numerous previous studies which have found party images to be an important heuristic for South African voters to assess whom and what parties stand for (Mattes, 1995; Mattes, *et al.*, 1999; Mattes and Piombo, 2001; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; Ferree, 2010; Schulz-Herzenberg and Mattes, 2022). It therefore appears that when ANC voters perceive the official opposition as racially inclusive, it increases the probability of them shifting their support and, ultimately, casting a vote for a party other than the ANC. Indeed, a number South African studies have found that favourable evaluations of (especially racial) inclusiveness attract voters to a party, whereas exclusive images push voters away from a party (Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:200; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2011; 2012). Contrary to the bivariate results, however, opposition party images do not significantly influence the probability of exiting.

5.3.4 Political sophistication

Of the political sophistication variables, only internal political efficacy has a significant impact on switching, while campaign attention is significant for exiting. As the results show, low levels of internal political efficacy increase the probability of switching, which aligns with findings from the bivariate analysis. Although surprising, this result makes sense if one considers that the sample is restricted to ANC supporters. Accordingly, if a 2014 ANC supporter feels as though they do not have any influence over what the government does, which is led by their preferred party, they are likely to make their voice heard by punishing the ANC and voting for a different party (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007). It also comes as no surprise that those voters who exhibit high levels of internal efficacy are mostly loyalists, rather than switchers, as it has been found that partisanship increases levels of internal efficacy (Stenner-Day and Fischle, 1992: 301). This is because “partisanship plays a role in integrating the individual into the political system” and structuring a person’s political outlook (Dalton, 1984:265; 2014a:134).

Although internal efficacy has no significant impact on exiting, low levels of campaign interest do increase the chances of exiting and decrease the chances of remaining loyal. This finding supports the bivariate results. It also aligns with the psychological engagement model of turnout, which argues that those individuals who are less attentive and interested in politics are more likely to exit than those who are more attentive and interested in politics (Blais, 2009:631). However, the multivariate model shows that campaign attention has no influence on the likelihood of switching. Furthermore, in contrast to the bivariate analysis, the explanatory power of the other indicators of political sophistication, like political interest and level of education, are irrelevant when theoretically relevant predictors of switching or abstention are controlled for.

5.3.5 Control variables

Regarding the control variables, living in an urban area increases the probability of a 2014 ANC voter switching to a different party in 2019, while rural voters are more likely to remain loyal to the ANC. This finding aligns with expectations, when one considers the disproportionate exposure of urban voters to opposition party campaigns. As Schulz-Herzenberg (2016:510) explains, due to constrained resources, opposition parties often focus their elections campaigns mostly on urban areas using social and traditional media, posters,

and door-to-door campaigning. Accordingly, it is within urban areas where opposition parties are most visible, most able to alter voter perceptions of parties and persuade dissatisfied ANC voters to switch their vote (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016:511).

As it relates to exiters, the model indicates that the younger a 2014 ANC supporter is, the more likely they are to exit than remain loyal to the ANC. This findings aligns with expectations since it mimics the global phenomenon of “older people being more likely to vote than their younger counterparts” (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a). As expected, partisanship also influences exiting, with non-partisans being more likely to exit than remain loyal to the ANC. This is because partisanship serves as a ‘standing decision’ for people to make sense of the range of options and complexities in politics (Dalton 2014, 186). Partisans are thus more likely to vote and will, in all likelihood, vote for their preferred party, as the data in this study shows (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:465). Finally, the data also shows that male 2014 ANC voters are more likely to be exiters than female 2014 ANC voters. This reflects previous findings that women register to vote and turnout to vote at a far higher proportion than men (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020:19), which, according to Gouws (2019:154), suggests a stronger commitment and intention among women to vote. This is certainly reflected in this study’s data.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter extends the bivariate analysis conducted in the previous chapter by presenting a multinomial logistic regression that provides a more sophisticated model of the relative impact of each independent variable on the probability of switching or exiting, while controlling for other theoretically significant predictors. Doing so led to a number of interesting findings, uncovering crucial variances in the profiles of switchers and exiters.

Exiters are motivated by variables that typically drive turnout, such as age, partisanship, gender and campaign attention. Accordingly, 2014 ANC voters who exited in 2019 tend to be younger, male, non-partisan and less interested in the 2019 election campaign. On the other hand, switchers are dissatisfied with the ANC, distrustful of the ANC, perceive the DA as inclusive, possess low levels of internal political efficacy and are overwhelmingly urban. The factors that drive switching and exiting among 2014 ANC voters are thus vastly dissimilar. Interestingly though, the one similarity between these two groups is that both exiters and switchers have

higher levels of trust in opposition parties, when compared with loyalists. However, the extent to which a 2014 ANC voter trusts the opposition increases the probability of switching more strongly than the probability of exiting. In other words, the more a voter trusts the opposition, the more likely she is to switch rather than to exit.

Thus, the multivariate analysis points to a very important dynamic for multiparty competition in South Africa by showing that the decision to either switch parties or exit the electoral system pivots around trust in opposition parties. This is an important finding as it indicates that although trust in opposition parties is necessary for a 2014 ANC voter to abandon their preferred party, either through switching or exiting; whether that voter opts for the more engaged decision of switching parties largely hinges upon if they possess a level of trust in opposition parties that is sufficiently strong enough for that voter to see the opposition as a credible alternatives to the ANC. Alternatively, those who do not trust opposition parties enough will end up exiting the electoral system altogether. This suggests that the transition to opposition parties is, in part, marred by an inability to identify a trustworthy political alternative to the ANC.

Finally, an important point to note is that both dissatisfaction with, and distrust of, the ANC are both highly significant indicators of vote switching. Being dissatisfied and distrustful of the ANC is therefore inciting its supporters to switch parties. This is a clear indication that vote switching is being used as a positive tool to hold ANC leaders accountable, not as a way to voice a generalised feeling of frustration and disaffection with the entire party and political system, as Zelle (1995) posited. This bodes well for the future of South Africa's democracy as it is this threat of a loss of power that is essential in ensuring accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent (Riker, 1982).

Although the study is focussed on the ANC voter, the findings of this thesis also provide some crucial insights for the opposition party landscape. In order to convince disgruntled ANC supporters to switch their vote, opposition parties ought to work towards presenting themselves as trustworthy, legitimate and inclusive options to the electorate. This can be done by capitalising on the discontent with the performance of the incumbent, since this appears to be a key trigger for vote switching among ANC supporters. In addition, opposition parties should aim to develop increased organisational and financial capabilities in order to engage voters – particularly disaffected and distrustful urban ANC supporters – consistently and not only

during election campaigns. This voter engagement will go a long way in helping to project an image of competence and trustworthiness to those searching for a legitimate alternative to the ANC.

Furthermore, opposition parties should strive to represent and speak to the particular needs and interests of disgruntled ANC voters in their messaging, policies and selection of leaders in order to cultivate a level of trust among the electorate that is sufficiently strong for them to switch their vote. As Eusebius McKaiser states in relation to how black middle-class voters perceive the DA,

“Do you, as a politician, get the heart of the voter? Do you feel them? Do you recognise the history that explains why they see the world as they do? Do you even know, let alone care, how they see the world? ... It’s simple really. Speak an inclusive language when it comes to ideology and values, and mean it” (McKaiser, 2014:11; 2014:43).

Until opposition parties can position themselves as credible, trustworthy and viable governing alternatives, many dissatisfied ANC supporters will continue to abstain from voting, perceiving few alternatives across the political spectrum.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The goal of this thesis was to understand why some ANC voters are willing to switch parties, while other ANC voters choose to exit the party system and abstain rather than switching their vote, when they become disillusioned with their traditional political home. It began with the argument that certain factors appear to be impeding more voters from switching to a different party. This results in a process of ‘dealignment without realignment’ where voters who are dissatisfied with the incumbent are increasingly retreating to the abstentions category, instead of moving their support to an alternative party. By elucidating the attitudes that are associated with switching and exiting, we are able to understand the actions required to stimulate electoral volatility, uncertainty and meaningful multiparty competition, which are essential in ensuring a healthy democracy, accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent (Riker, 1982).

To address the research questions and objectives, this study employed a quantitative research design using cross-sectional public opinion data sourced from the CNEP 2019 post-election survey. Therefore, this chapter concludes this study by providing a summary of its key findings, highlighting important research implications and ending off with shortcomings and recommendations for future research.

6.2 Summary of findings

To answer the two secondary research questions guiding this study, the bivariate analysis indicated that the factors that cause a 2014 ANC voter to switch parties in 2019 are: a moderate interest in politics and the election campaign, a high level of education, a low level of internal and external efficacy, dissatisfaction with the ANC, a low level of trust in government institutions as well the ANC itself, a high level of trust in opposition parties, dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in South Africa and positive opposition party image evaluations. The bivariate results show that the drivers of exiting are largely similar to the factors associated with switching. However, there are two important differences between switchers and exiters.

One difference lies in their level of interest in politics. The bivariate results show that switchers are slightly more interested in politics, as they exhibit a moderate level of interest in politics,

while exiters are mostly found among the less politically interested. However, the most glaring and crucial bivariate divergence between switchers and exiters is found in their levels of trust in opposition parties. 2014 ANC voters with high levels of trust in the opposition are likely to switch parties, while distrust in opposition parties induces exiting. As such, the bivariate results show that for 2014 ANC voters, the decision to either switch parties or exit the electoral system pivots around trust in opposition parties. Although both exiters and switchers are politically disaffected and disillusioned by the ANC, only those who possess high levels of trust in opposition parties are able to make the more positive decision of switching parties – the rest exit the electoral system entirely.

While the bivariate results crystalised the attitudinal profile of switchers and exiters separately, the multinomial logistic regression provided a more sophisticated model of the relative impact of each independent variable on the probability of switching or exiting, while controlling for other theoretically significant predictors. Doing so led to a number of interesting findings, uncovering crucial variances in the profiles of switchers and exiters.

In answering the two secondary research questions, the multivariate analysis showed that exiters are motivated by variables that typically drive turnout, such as age, partisanship, gender and campaign attention. On the other hand, switchers are dissatisfied with the ANC, distrustful of the ANC, perceive the DA as inclusive, possess low levels of internal political efficacy and are overwhelmingly urban. Contrary to the bivariate analysis, the factors that drive switching and exiting among 2014 ANC voters are thus vastly dissimilar. Interestingly though, the one similarity between these two groups is that both exiters and switchers have higher levels of trust in opposition parties, when compared with loyalists. However, the results show that the more a voter trusts the opposition, the more likely she is to switch rather than to exit.

Thus, the multivariate analysis strengthens the bivariate results by showing that the decision to either switch parties or exit the electoral system pivots around trust in opposition parties. This is an important finding as it indicates that although trust in opposition parties is necessary for a 2014 ANC voter to abandon their preferred party, either through switching or exiting; whether that voter opts for the more engaged decision of switching parties largely hinges upon if they possess a level of trust in opposition parties that is sufficiently strong enough for that voter to see the opposition as a credible alternatives to the ANC. This suggests that the transition to opposition parties is, in part, marred by an inability to identify a trustworthy political alternative

to the ANC, which aligns with past South African research (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; 2014; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011; Schulz-Herzenberg and Mattes, 2022).

Finally, it was noted that vote switching is being used as a positive tool to hold ANC leaders accountable, not as a way to voice a generalised feeling of frustration and disaffection with the entire party and political system, as Zelle (1995) posited. This bodes well for the future of South Africa's democracy as it is this threat of a loss of power that is essential in ensuring accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent (Riker, 1982).

6.3 Research implications

This study's findings lead to some important implications for the health and optimal functioning of democracy in South Africa. This study found that, even after controlling for other significant predictors of switching and exiting, the decision to either switch parties or exit the electoral system pivots around trust in opposition parties. Accordingly, the more a voter trusts the opposition, the more likely she is to switch rather than to exit.

This points to a very important implication for multiparty competition in South Africa – the key to stimulating electoral volatility and uncertainty, which is considered a vital component in the optimal functioning of a democracy (Lipset, 1966; Strøm, 1992; Przeworski, 2003), seems to lie in augmenting the public's perception of the trustworthiness of opposition parties. This is an especially important finding in an electoral context which has been characterised by the ongoing dominance of one political party, and the lack of meaningful multiparty competition brought about by seemingly inevitable voting outcomes since 1994 (Lijphart, 1991; Schlemmer, 1994; Giliomee and Simkins, 1999; Friedman 1999; Letsholo, 2005).

Indeed, switching one's vote between parties is arguably the most direct mechanism for citizens to hold their political leaders accountable, and imbue within the political system a higher degree of electoral volatility (Erikson, Mackuen, and Stimson, 2002). The fact that parties can win or lose votes is what gives democracy meaning; as it is this threat of a loss of power that is essential in ensuring accountability and warding off complacency on the part of the incumbent (Riker, 1982). Consequently, a reasonable level of electoral volatility and uncertainty can be a signal that accountability and good representation is present within a political system, leading to a healthier, more robust, democracy.

However, electoral change is only possible if there is a genuine likelihood that a portion of the electorate, particularly supporters of the incumbent, will switch their vote between parties. What this study shows is that increasing the public's level of trust in opposition parties will help dissatisfied ANC voters make the journey from the incumbent to an opposition party, and go a long way in ensuring that South Africa's elections function as an accountability mechanism for political parties and leaders, which is an important aspect of a healthy and thriving democracy. Alternatively, a situation where voters are increasingly unable to identify a trustworthy political alternative to the ANC could be disastrous for South Africa's multiparty democracy as this would lead to a continuation of the current upsurge in exiting, which "decreases the chances for electoral competition and consolidates the support given to existing parties" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a:478).

Another important implication of this study's findings is that switchers are not frustrated and disaffected with the entire electoral system, as Zelle (1995) posited in his "frustrated floating voter" hypothesis. Rather, ANC switchers are only dissatisfied with their party's performances, but are still utilising the electoral system to voice their concerns. This bodes well for the future of South Africa's democracy as it indicates that switching is being used as a positive tool to hold ANC leaders accountable and not as a mechanism to call into question the tenets of the entire multiparty democratic system. The implication of this is that, if these retrospective party evaluations are paired with a sufficiently high level of trust in the opposition, vote switching and electoral volatility will likely follow. Therefore, in principle the fact that ANC voters switch parties to hold their party accountable should engender a sense of being watched among incumbents, which can foster a healthy and competitive democracy (Franklin, Soroka, and Wlezien, 2014; Manin *et al.*, 1999). However, this willingness to hold their leaders accountable has to function within an electoral marketplace that provides trustworthy alternatives to the ANC, so that dissatisfaction with the output of the incumbent does not result in a complete withdrawal from the electoral system.

This subsequently leads to a significant implication for opposition parties in South Africa – the problem of a lack of electoral volatility, uncertainty and meaningful multi-party competition does not seem to lie with the voters, as previously hypothesised (Horowitz, 1991; Lijphart, 1994; Giliomee and Simkins, 1999; Giliomee *et al.*, 2001; Booysen, 2012), but with opposition parties. As the analysis conducted in this thesis has shown, ANC voters are open to voting for

a party other than the ANC, yet their unwillingness to actually switch their vote stems, in part, from an assessment that opposition parties are untrustworthy. The establishment of a competitive democracy with a viable opposition is thus not as impossible as it is commonly assumed. However, a competitive electoral system is unlikely to emerge only from the failures of the ANC, but will hinge on the ability of opposition parties to cultivate an inclusive, believable and trustworthy perception among the electorate (Mattes and Piombo, 2001:123; Habib and Taylor, 2001; Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2011:208). Otherwise a substantial chunk of dissatisfied ANC voters will either continue to vote for the ANC or exit the electoral system entirely. This process of ‘dealignment without realignment’ will therefore persist unless a political force arises that is viewed by voters as trustworthy and inclusive enough to attract disaffected ANC voters and thereby bring about a competitive democratic order. Indeed, South Africans are crying out for the emergence of just such a political force

In sum, the fact that this study found switchers to be dissatisfied with the ANC, distrustful of the ANC, perceive the DA as inclusive, and possess low levels of internal efficacy indicate that, as Mattes and Piombo (2001:124) assert, the ‘demand’ side of a competitive multiparty democracy certainly exists in South Africa. However, the ‘supply’ side of a competitive electoral system – in the form of believable and trustworthy alternatives to the ANC – is constricted. At a fundamental level then, the process of ‘dealignment without realignment’ which is currently underway in South Africa may have a lot to do with opposition parties. Indeed, a consolidated and thriving democracy necessitates viable opposition parties to offer voters trustworthy alternatives to the incumbent so that dissatisfaction with the output of government does not result in a complete withdrawal from the electoral process. If opposition parties fail to present themselves as trustworthy, legitimate and inclusive to the electorate, it will be they who have reneged on their part of the democratic bargain, not the ANC.

6.4 Shortcomings and recommendations

Notwithstanding the importance of this study’s findings, this thesis has some important limitations, the impact of which warrants further investigation. First, this study employs a cross-sectional research design, which is highly appropriate for a study of this nature (Spector, 2019). However, this type of research design can only provide insights into the motivating factors of switchers and exiters between 2014 and 2019. Accordingly, the ability to use these observations to generalise the determinants of all ANC switchers and exiters is limited, since

those who switch parties can be stable at the next election or vice versa. As Key (1966:18) explained, “it would be an error to suppose that switchers are eternally volatile and the standpatters [loyalists] forever stable.”

Another limitation of using cross-sectional data is the attendant reliance on recall data to measure individual-level volatility. However, recall questions are considered by many to be inadequate for studying individual-level volatility. This is mainly because it is likely that many citizens could have forgotten which party they had voted for in the previous election, as well as the issue of cognitive dissonance, where an individual might “adjust their previous vote to be in line with their current preference” (Waldahl and Aardal, 2000; Dejaeghere and Dassonneville, 2017:112). It is therefore recommended that future studies on this topic make use of long-term panel data, “which will provide the most accurate accounts of voting choices and shifts in voting behaviour over a longer period of time” (Dassonneville, 2012:20).

Another limitation is that this thesis only focuses on inter-election vote switching. However, the literature distinguishes between the two different forms of vote switching, namely campaign switching – switching one’s vote choice during a campaign – and inter-election switching, which entails switching one’s vote between elections (Lachat, 2007; Dassonneville, 2012). Although many scholars have found numerous similarities in the underlying mechanisms of these two forms of vote switching, it is nevertheless recommended that future studies on volatility make this distinction.

Furthermore, although this study is able to point out that negative trust-based perceptions of opposition parties are forming an obstacle to vote switching among 2014 ANC voters. It must be noted that, in light of the quantitative nature of this study, we cannot explain why this is the case. This is a limitation because despite the fact that quantitative research allows one to “make generalisations about an entire population and generate evidence of how variables might be connected” (Blaikie, 2010:23-24); it has been argued that quantitative research often eschews the complexities of the political sphere and respondents’ answers (Babbie, 2020).

It is therefore recommended that future studies on this topic add a qualitative component because purely quantitative studies are unable to provide an in-depth analysis of its subjects, with many criticising this approach as being superficial in dealing with issues that necessitate detailed attention and context (Burnham *et al.*, 2008; Pierce, 2011; Babbie, 2020). A qualitative

study might therefore be able to provide insights into exactly why ANC voters perceive opposition parties as untrustworthy and what could be done by these parties to improve their trustworthiness. It thus might be useful for future research on volatility and multi-party democracy in South Africa to focus on mechanisms that can be employed by opposition parties to present themselves as trustworthy, legitimate and inclusive alternatives to the ANC.

6.5 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to elucidate the individual-level factors that motivate an ANC voter to either switch from the ANC to another party in two consecutive elections or vote in one election and exit in a subsequent election. This analysis was conducted in order to understand why some ANC voters are willing to switch parties, while other ANC voters choose to exit the party system and abstain rather than switching their vote, when they become disillusioned with their traditional political home.

This study found that, when controlling for theoretically significant predictors of switching and exiting, exiters tend to be younger, male, non-partisan and less interested in the 2019 election campaign. On the other hand, switchers are dissatisfied with the ANC, distrustful of the ANC, perceive the DA as inclusive, possess low levels of internal political efficacy and are overwhelmingly urban. Although the profiles of exiters and switchers are vastly dissimilar, the results show that both exiters and switchers have higher levels of trust in opposition parties, when compared with loyalists. However, the extent to which a 2014 ANC voter trusts the opposition increases the probability of switching more strongly than the probability of exiting. In other words, the more a voter trusts the opposition, the more likely she is to switch rather than to exit.

Accordingly, the main thrust of this analysis is that switching is being used as a positive tool to hold ANC leaders accountable, which means ANC voters are open to voting for a party other than the ANC. However, the transition to opposition parties is, in part, marred by an inability to identify a trustworthy, inclusive and believable political alternative to the ANC. As such, in order to stem the current tide of ‘dealignment without realignment,’ the electorate’s perception of trust and inclusivity relating to opposition parties ought to be augmented. It is thus incumbent upon opposition parties to work towards presenting themselves as trustworthy, legitimate and inclusive options to the electorate. This will go a long way in ensuring that

former President Jacob Zuma's predication that "the ANC will rule until Jesus comes back" does not come to pass (van Onselen, 2012).

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Appendix: coding of variables

Dependent variable

2019 election participation:

*We also know that even when people are registered, many people were not able to vote because they were sick, unable to get to the polling place, or did not have time? Which of the following statements best describes you? (0) I did not vote in this election (1) I thought about voting, but did not (2) I usually vote, but did not this time (3) **I am sure I voted in the election.** ('Prefer not to say' and 'Don't know' are removed from the analysis.)*

2019 election vote choice:

For which party did you vote for national government in the 2019 elections? (2) African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), (3) African Muslim Party, (4) African National Congress (ANC), (5) Afrikaner Unity Movement, (6) Agang, (7) Al-Jamiah, (8) Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), (9) Congress of the People (COPE), (10) Democratic Alliance (DA), (11) Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), (12) Federal Alliance, (13) Freedom Front Plus (FF+), (14) Independent Democrats (ID), (15) Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), (16) Minority Front, (17) National Freedom Party, (18) New National Party / Nuwe Nasionale Party (NNP), (19) Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), (20) United Democratic Party (UCDP), (21) United Democratic Movement, (22) Workers and Socialist Party (WASP), (23) Other. ('Don't know' and 'Refused to answer' are removed from the analysis.)

2014 election vote choice:

Do you recall which party you voted for national government in the previous general election, held in 2014? (2) African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), (3) African Muslim Party, (4) African National Congress (ANC), (5) Afrikaner Unity Movement, (6) Agang, (7) Al-Jamiah, (8) Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), (9) Congress of the People (COPE), (10) Democratic Alliance (DA), (11) Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), (12) Federal Alliance, (13) Freedom Front Plus (FF+), (14) Independent Democrats (ID), (15) Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), (16) Minority Front, (17) National Freedom Party, (18) New National Party / Nuwe Nasionale Party (NNP), (19) Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), (20) United Democratic Party (UCDP), (21) United Democratic Movement, (22) Workers and Socialist Party (WASP), (23) Other. ('Don't know' and 'Refused to answer' are removed from the analysis.)

Independent variables

Political Sophistication:

Political interest:

More generally, would you say that you are very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested or not at all interested in politics? (0) not at all interested, (1) not very interested, (2) somewhat interested, (3) very interested ('Don't know' is removed from the analysis.)

Campaign attention:

Again, thinking back to the May 2019 election, how closely did you follow this election campaign? (0) not closely at all, (1) not very closely, (2) fairly closely, (3) very closely ('Don't know' is removed from the analysis.)

Level of education [recoded]¹:

What is the highest level of education you have completed? (0) no formal schooling, (1) primary school, (2) secondary school incomplete, (3) secondary school complete, (4) Post-secondary ('Don't know' is removed from the analysis.)

Internal political efficacy:

The following statements are about your role in the political system. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. A – People like me do not have any influence over what the government does; B – Generally, politics seems so complicated that people like me cannot understand what is happening. (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree ('Don't know' is removed from the analysis.)

Dissatisfaction with preferred party:

Thinking about the overall performance of the national government in general, how good or bad a job do you think the national government had done in the PAST five years (that is, between 2014 and 2019) Has it done a ...? (1) Very bad job, (2) Bad job, (3) Neither good nor bad, (4) Good job, (5) Very good job ('Don't know' is removed from the analysis.)

Institutional disaffection:Political trust:

How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (a) The Government of South Africa, (b) Independent Electoral Commission, (e) African National Congress (ANC), (f) Democratic Alliance (DA), (g) Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), (h) Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), (i) Freedom Front Plus (FF+). (0) not at all, (1) not very much, (2) quite a lot, (3) a great deal. ('Don't know/Haven't heard' is removed from the analysis.)

Satisfaction with democracy:

In general, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in South Africa? Are you? (1) not at all satisfied, (2) not very satisfied, (3) somewhat satisfied, (4) very satisfied, (0) South Africa is not a democracy ('Don't know' is removed from the analysis.)

¹ Original coding: (00) no formal schooling (cannot read or write), (01) some primary schooling, (02) primary school completed, (03) some secondary school/high school, (04) secondary school completed (vocational or commercial school), (05) secondary school completed / high school (educational track), (06) incomplete university education / Other post-secondary qualifications (e.g. diploma / degree from a technikon or college), (07) university completed, (08) post-graduate.

External political efficacy:

The following statements are about your role in the political system. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement: C – Politicians do not care much about what people like me think. (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree ('Don't know' is removed from the analysis.)

Party images:

Do you think that [party x] looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa, or after the interests of ONE GROUP ONLY, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (1) looks after the interests of ALL people in South Africa, (2) haven't heard enough about them to say. (3) looks after the interests of one group only.

Social network composition:

Do you think that each of these groups supported the same party as you, supported another party, or is their support divided among different parties, or don't support any party, or don't you know enough about their views to say? A. Family; B. Friends; C. Neighbours. (1) supported the same party as you, (2) supported another party, (3) support is divided among different parties, (4) did not support a party ('Don't know' and 'Not applicable' are removed from the analysis.)

Control variables

Partisanship:

Many people feel close to a particular political party over a long period of time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. What about you? Do you usually think of yourself as close to a particular party? (1) Yes (feels close to a party), (2) No (does NOT think of themselves as supporter of ANY party) ('Refused to answer' and 'Don't know' are removed from the analysis.)

Age:

How old were you at the time of your last birthday?

Gender:

(1) Male (2) Female

Urban/rural split:

(1) Urban (2) Rural