Political leadership

With the recent signing of a National Peace Accord and the imminent convention of an all-party conference, the support base for the various leaders is becoming increasingly pertinent.

The results of the August survey are in line with trends which have been reported in Information Update throughout the year. A breakdown of the results per subgroup reveals some interesting patterns.

Whites

Of the 430 whites polled in this survey, 60% indicated that they would choose F.W. de Klerk as the person to lead SA today. What is interesting, is that no significant differences were recorded between Afrikaans and English speaking whites. Treurnicht's support declined to a new low of 8% of the white respondents, Buthelezi received 3% of the votes, and 20% of the respondents did not express a preference for any specific leader. Once again, Nelson Mandela received no significant support (2%) from white respondents.

Although the overall differences between Afrikaans and English speaking whites were not statistically significant, they remain noteworthy. As far as support for De Klerk is concerned, more English speaking respondents (64%) supported him than Afrikaans speaking respondents (59%). The difference between Afrikaans speakers' and English speakers' support for Treurnicht remains large at 12%/1%.

A comparison with the previous months’ results shows the consistency of white alliances very clearly.
Africans

When one looks at the African respondents (1214 in total) as a whole, support for Nelson Mandela remains fairly constant at 57%, De Klerk receives 10% of the "African vote", Buthelezi remains at a low 3% and the "don't know" responses are again a significant 23%. A more detailed analysis is provided in the CHAID tables.

Extending the poll sample to include urban Africans who do not own telephones proved important, and some interesting trends emerged as a result of this.

Mandela's strongest support (72%) is found amongst Sotho and English speaking Africans who do not own telephones. Similarly, Buthelezi's greatest support comes from the ranks of Nguni speaking Africans without telephones. A substantial 12% of the latter group would choose De Klerk as leader of the country today.

Amongst African telephone owners, support for Mandela varies from a low 36% amongst those who do not watch TV very often to a high 66% amongst regular male TV viewers. It is noteworthy that De Klerk received the highest support from within the African community from this group (14%). The group of regular TV viewers and regular newspaper readers is probably the most informed subgroup - if one regards TV and newspapers as unbiased. It is also important to note the high number of "don't know" responses. In general telephone owners are either less certain or more reluctant to commit themselves with very high degrees of uncertainty amongst those who are not regular TV viewers (30%) and amongst female TV viewers (41%). Non-telephone owners do not show such high levels of uncertainty with only between 8% and 13% professing to be uncertain.
A comparison of these results with our previous findings shows a similar overall consistency.

![Support for Nelson Mandela Trends - 1991](image)

**Figure 2**

Asians

Of the 312 Asian respondents the majority would choose De Klerk as national leader. He has had a consistent 53% support from their ranks over the past three months. In February slightly more than one third (37%) of Asians would choose De Klerk. This jumped to 53% in May, where it has now stabilized (June - 53% and July 51%). Similarly, Asian support for Mandela remains at a low 6% (which is in line with the previous months). The "don't know" category (29%) accounts for most of the remainder.

So-called coloureds

Our previous so-called coloured samples of approximately 400 telephone respondents were augmented with an additional 100 respondents who do not own telephones. This again proved to be significant, with telephone owners recording substantially higher support levels for De Klerk (67% of the men and 71% of the women compared to 57% of non-owners). These differences do not imply that other candidates received a similar increase in support, however: Mandela still receives a low 7% of support amongst telephone-owning men, 1% among women who have telephones and 4% amongst those without telephones. The only other significant category remains the "don't know"/undecideds, which accounts for roughly a quarter of the respondents.
Some more general conclusions

The new extended sample drawn for this survey (as discussed in our Methodology section) is representative of the urban and semi-urban population of South Africa (1985 Census). If one weights the data according to the population distribution of the 1985-Census, Mandela would get the highest support (32%), the "don't knows" would come next at 28%, followed by De Klerk (22%), Buthelezi (9%) and Treurnicht (3%).

Since 1985, however, patterns of urbanization have changed fundamentally due to the repeal of Influx Control measures amongst other things. It would, therefore, be very risky to transpose these figures to the current South African population as is.

A comparison of the metropolitan versus non-metropolitan respondents consistently shows more support for both Mandela (5% more) and Buthelezi (10% higher) in the non-metropolitan areas. A comparison of telephone owners versus non-owners (of which there are far more in the non-urban areas) also shows more support for Mandela (about 15% more) and Buthelezi (12% more) amongst non-telephone-owners. An extrapolation of these results to the total South African population, would obviously mean an increase in both Mandela's and Buthelezi's support. An accurate estimate of these percentages is not currently possible. Only when the 1991-census results become available early next year, will we be able to draw a truly representative sample of the total South African population and would we be able to make generalizations such as these with acceptable levels of confidence.

Support for political parties

The current survey again found that the respondent's political party preference is tied closely to his or her "ethnic" group. A breakdown of the results reveals the following results.

Whites

The majority of so-called whites in the sample (58%) indicated that they would support the National Party. A further 18% would support the Conservative Party or AWB, a small 2% the ANC, and a large group of 15% either refused to answer or indicated that they didn't have a clear preference at that stage.

Compared to the results of the previous months, the differences between the Afrikaans and English speaking whites did not turn out to be statistically significant. However, some interesting differences did emerge. As far as the Afrikaans respondents were concerned, 58% of them would support the National Party, 26% the Conservative Party/AWB, 2% the DP and 15% were undecided. Slightly more English speakers (62%) said that they support the NP, with 14% supporting the DP, 6% the CP, 3% the ANC and 15% indicating no specific preference.
This pattern of responses, which can be accepted as being representative of the total white population in South Africa (given a telephone ownership of approximately 95% amongst whites), is consistent with our previous results as shown in the following graph.

![Political party preferences graph](image)

**Africans**

As was found in our earlier discussion of leadership support, having a telephone turned out to be the most important predictor in explaining the differences within the group of African respondents. These differences are most notable in the greater support for the ANC amongst those who do not own telephones (68%) compared to 58% amongst telephone owners. The undecided group is also much smaller amongst non-telephone owners (12%) than amongst telephone owners (34%).

If one looks at the African respondents as a whole, trends are generally quite similar to those of previous months. Any changes can be attributed to the additional 340 respondents who were interviewed personally. The total sample of over 1200 African respondents can be regarded as representative of the African urban population as based upon the 1985 Census distributions [cf. Methodology].
Asians and so-called coloureds

Compared to previous months, overall differences between the Asians and so-called coloured respondents were not statistically significant. Again the most important predictor was telephone ownership. The additional 100 or so coloured respondents (who do not own telephones) responded differently from the Asians and coloured respondents in the sample who do own telephones. These personally interviewed coloured respondents were less inclined to support the NP (29%) than were telephone owners (40-56%). There was also significantly more support for the ANC (11%) amongst the non-telephone owners. However, the level of uncertainty regarding political party reference remained high at 39%.

If we look at the Asian and so-called coloured respondents who own telephones, the National Party recorded its highest levels of support amongst the lesser educated coloureds (56%). However, the NP has a strong support base amongst matric and post-matric Asians and coloureds. The ANC received its highest levels of support amongst well-informed people (regular newspaper readers) in the Matric- and post-Matric category. The large percentages of undecided respondents in all these subgroups remain one of the distinguishing features of this year’s surveys.

A comparison of these percentages with those of previous months (if we look at the Asian and Coloured respondents separately), continues to give weight to the accuracy of our samples.
Political Party Preference
"Coloureds"

Figure 5

Political Party Preference
Asians

Figure 6
Political confidence index

Since our last survey of attitudes (June) to measure political confidence, a number of high profile events have taken place in the socio-political arena of the country. Three of the major players on the current political scene - the NP, the ANC and DP - have published their blueprints for a new constitution in South Africa. Outbreaks of violence continue. Ironically some of the worst cases of violence and the highest incidence of deaths occurred in the week before the signing of a National Peace Accord on Saturday the 21st of September.

The Political Confidence Index consists of ten questions which measure various aspects which can be regarded as indicators of the degree of trust or confidence in the future of the country. A comparison with the overall results in May and June reveals the following trends:

![Index of political confidence Trends 1991](image)

If we turn to perceptions about De Klerk's credibility and satisfaction with the general direction that he is pursuing, we find that the patterns which have been identified in our previous surveys continue.
**De Klerk’s credibility**

Do the people trust De Klerk and do they believe that he is sincere in his efforts to bring about a new society free of discrimination and racism? If we look at the overall picture first, it is evident that De Klerk’s credibility remains at a high with 64% of the sample (weighted) indicating that they believe that he is sincere in his policies; 6% taking a neutral position and only 21% indicating some level of mistrust.

Race remains the best predictor of differences in responses, with whites (80%), coloureds (79%) and Asians (77%) recording very high levels of agreement with the statement. Slightly more than half of the Africans (52%) said that they believe in De Klerk’s sincerity as opposed to 31% who had some doubts or suspicions. A further analysis of the CHAID tables shows that De Klerk’s credibility is highest amongst English speaking whites (90%), the better informed Afrikaans speaking whites (85%) and Asians and coloureds in professional or managerial positions in the higher income brackets (90%).

De Klerk’s credibility amongst Africans and whites has increased significantly since June as is evident from the following graph:

![De Klerk's credibility Trends - 1991](image)
Is De Klerk doing a good job?

In the August survey we included for the first time the question: Is De Klerk doing a good job of running the country?

The result: overwhelming support for De Klerk. Three quarters (75%) of the total sample (representative of the urban population) believe that De Klerk is either doing very well (28%) or well (47%). On the negative side, approximately one in five respondents think that De Klerk is doing either poorly (13%) or very poorly (7%), with 5% indicating uncertainty.

De Klerk receives the greatest support from whites and Asians, less support from the coloureds (but still very high at around 90%) and the lowest level of support amongst Africans (ranging from 60% amongst Africans below 45 years to 73% amongst the older Africans saying he is doing fine).

Level of satisfaction with De Klerk’s policies

The next question addresses the level of satisfaction with De Klerk’s policies and whether people believe that these policies will bring lasting peace to South Africa.

Overall support for De Klerk’s policies remain high. On the basis of the weighted results, we found that approximately 60% of the urban population in South Africa are either very or to some degree satisfied with De Klerk’s policies, 5% are neutral, 27% are wholly or somewhat unsatisfied and 9% are undecided or uncertain.

![De Klerk - Policies and peace Trends - 1991](image)
If we turn to the various "ethnic" groups, more than 80% of the coloureds in the urban areas and approximately three quarters of all Asians (76%), believe that De Klerk's policies will bring lasting peace to the country. Just more than half of the whites (55%) and urban Africans (54%) are also positive.

These results are generally consistent with the findings in May and June (the graph above include the unweighted data to make comparison possible).

The only significant trend is that fewer Africans remain positive. It is highly likely that this change is directly related to the continuing violence in the African townships and the concomitant feelings of fear and unsafety which are pervasive amongst urban Africans. This is supported by the results of the question on feelings of safety.

In this connection, more than half of the Africans (57%) in the urban areas in South Africa feel either unsafe or very unsafe. This is much higher than the comparable percentages for the Asians (34%), whites (29%) and coloureds (18%).

A comparison with the previous three surveys shows a steady decline in feelings of unsafety amongst whites, Asians, and coloureds. For the Africans the results obtained for August are in line with the June results.
Two other questions on violence form part of our Index. Firstly, we ask people whether they believe that the current violence in the country threatens the introduction of a genuine democratic order in South Africa. A comparison with the results of the previous surveys reveals a fairly consistent pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>August</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentage which agrees that violence threatens the introduction of democracy in SA. Unweighted samples results used in order to make comparison with previous surveys possible.

The second question on violence, was phrased: Do you agree or disagree that the possibility of growing mass political violence and anarchy in SA is increasing. The combined percentages of those who either fully agree or who agree to some extent are compared with our previous surveys:

**Possibility of anarchy is increasing**

**Trends - 1991**

![Bar chart showing percentages for Africans, Whites, Coloureds, and Asians in May and August.](image)

* Percentage which agrees that the possibility of growing mass political violence and anarchy in SA is increasing. Unweighted data used in order to make comparison with previous surveys possible.
Is there mutual goodwill amongst South Africans?

Amidst continuing strife and violence in the country, as well as the terrible legacy of decades of apartheid and racism, it remains an important question whether there is sufficient goodwill left amongst South Africans to ensure a reasonably peaceful and happy future for all.

A slight majority of our respondents believe that South Africans do in fact share a sufficient degree of mutual goodwill to ensure such a happy future: 47% agreeing either fully or to some degree with this sentiment, 37% disagreeing completely or to some extent, and 9% taking a middle position.

More whites (51%), Asians (74%) and coloureds (61%) than Africans (39%) are inclined to support such a position. It is interesting that younger Asians and coloureds (i.e. under the age of 35) are slightly less optimistic on this issue than their older counterparts. The least optimistic group of people in the total sample, are Africans who are regular newspaper readers, but do not have telephones (only 35% of them sharing this sentiment). Those Africans who do have telephones (and who are regular newspaper readers) are more optimistic with 74% indicating that they support this statement.

A comparison with our previous results reveal some changes in the attitudes of the African and so called coloured responses. In both cases, however, these can be accounted for by the inclusion of non-telephone owners in our sample who recorded lower levels of support for this statement:

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**Figure 12**
Pack your bags

Another indicator of how optimistic or pessimistic people are about the future of this country, is the proportion of the population who are considering emigrating. In response to the question: Are you currently considering leaving SA because of the instability of the country? a small 11% responded affirmatively, 85% said that they are not considering leaving SA at this point in time and 4% indicated that they were uncertain. The highest proportion of respondents who are considering leaving the country, was found amongst Sotho and Nguni-speakers (15%), compared to only 7% of Afrikaans and English speakers.

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked to indicate which factors would lead them to consider leaving the country. A comparison of the three most important reasons per language group (which turned out to be the most important predictor) is presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never leave</th>
<th>Civil war</th>
<th>Family unsafe</th>
<th>Worsening economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sotho/Nguni</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Life in the new South Africa

Finally, to complete our Political Confidence Index, we asked people whether they believed that their lives would be better, the same or worse in the new South Africa.

If we look at the overall picture first, the majority believe that their lives will either be much better (14%) or better (36%). One in five believes it will be the same, and 19% expect their lives to be worse or much worse. Once again the differences between the various ethnic groups turned out to be the most significant predictor of responses to this question. On the whole whites are the least positive, with only 24% believing that life will be better or much better in the new South Africa, compared to 59% of Africans, 62% of Asians and 54% of coloureds. If we look even more closely at the results (cf. CHAID table), we find that white respondents with a lower educational qualification (Std 9 or less) are even less optimistic about their lives in the new South Africa, than whites who have at least a matric. Most of the rest of the sample (group ranging from 50% to 70%) indicated that they expect a better life in the new South Africa.
Again, a comparison with our previous surveys this year reveals an interesting pattern with the whites continuing to be less optimistic that their lives will improve in the New South Africa.

![Life in the new SA will be better](Figure 13)
Brave new world

The phrase "New South Africa" has very quickly become part of our everyday discourse. Like so many "fashionable" phrases, one would expect different people to attach different meanings to it. So we asked our respondents: What do you think of when hearing the phrase "the new South Africa"?

The following seven categories accounted for 77% of the responses. A further 14% said that they did not know and 4% chose not to comment. The following are, in descending order, the most popular choices:

A better life (17%)
Something positive (16%)
Freedom (16%)
Something negative (10%)
SA without apartheid (8%)
That everything will change (6%)
A better job (4%)

It is significant that members from the various "ethnic" and "language" groups gave very different weights to these categories of responses.

A comparison of these responses per ethnic group reveals the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Africans</th>
<th>Asians</th>
<th>Coloureds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A better life</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA - no apartheid</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything changes</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A better job</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that the different "histories" of the four main groups in the country explain some of the most salient differences. Nearly a quarter of the so called whites attach a negative meaning to the phrase "new South Africa", compared with only about 6% in the other groups. Similar proportions amongst all groups view the phrase in a positive light. Very clearly economic improvements, or improvements in the quality of life of the Africans, Asians, and coloureds, are closely associated with their expectations of what a new South Africa will bring.
Significant proportions in these groups associate the new SA with a better life or a better job. Expected improvements in living standards are seen to be more important. However, the advent of the new South Africa will also bring positive changes in the political sphere as indicated by the associations with "freedom" and "a society without apartheid".

On cultural identity

How do South Africans see themselves? In a recent programme on MNET, participants differed vehemently on this issue, with the representatives from the far right claiming that people see themselves first and foremost as part of some cultural group or nation, such as the Afrikaners or Zulus, with which they identify. On the other hand, and this is undoubtedly the more "politically correct" position today, representatives from the center and left claimed that most inhabitants of South Africans see themselves as South African. This debate, which is certain to become more heated as we move to a non-racial, multi-cultural society, stimulated us to ask our respondents the question: What do you regard yourself as?

The overall results give strong support to what is called "South Africanism" with 83% of the total sample (weighted to represent the urban population in South Africa) indicating that they see themselves first and foremost as South Africans and 16% saying that they see themselves as members of a cultural group.

![On ethnic/cultural identity](image)

Figure 14
Language group turned out to be the most significant predictor of responses to this question. All Afrikaans and English speaking respondents were grouped together (cf. CHAID table). Age emerged as the second largest predictor within this group. Very clearly - and surprisingly so - the younger group (under 25) are less inclined to view themselves as South African (83%) as against 93% of the over 25 age group). In both age groups, though, we still have large majorities opting for the South African category.

The second main category was the Sotho speakers in the sample with 85% of them preferring to be viewed as South Africans. More variation was recorded amongst the Nguni speakers where ownership of telephones turned out to be a significant predictor of differences: the better informed telephone owners recording a high level (91%) of support for the notion of South Africanism, followed by the rest of telephone owners (74%) and those who do not own telephones (68%).

What is significant from these findings, however, is that only 10% of Afrikaans speakers in the sample said that they see themselves first and foremost as Afrikaners. This is clear evidence that the far right’s claims about the importance of Afrikanerskap does not have a broad base of support in the country.