

Presidential succession issues and consequences - update

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In September and October, TNS Research Surveys, South Africa's leading marketing and social insights company, conducted two studies to determine how people feel about key issues around who might be the next President of South Africa.

One survey was conducted in September amongst a sample of 2 000 SA adults from the seven major metropolitan areas of South Africa, interviewing them face-to-face in their homes, with a margin of error of under 2.5%. The second was amongst 752 adults in smaller towns and rural areas of South Africa. This has a margin of error of under 4%.

Who do people feel might be the next President of South Africa in 2009?

The front runner, albeit with a relatively small percentage of the total responses, is Jacob Zuma. People were asked who they felt might succeed President Mbeki as the next President of South Africa, and then who they would most like to be President of South Africa.

%	Who do you think <i>will succeed</i> President Mbeki?			Who would you <i>like to succeed</i> President Mbeki?		
	Total	Metro	Non-metro	Total	Metro	Non-metro
Jacob Zuma	36	28	43	33	26	38
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka	10	10	10	10	9	11
Thabo Mbeki for a third term	9	8	11	9	6	11
Cyril Ramaphosa	4	7	2	6	8	5
Tokyo Sexwale	4	6	3	5	6	4
Hellen Zille	2	4	1	3	6	1
Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma	2	3	2	2	2	2
Trevor Manuel	1	2	1	2	3	2
Patricia de Lille	1	2	1	2	2	1
Tony Leon	1	2	1	1	3	1
Others	5	5	5	5	5	5
Don't know	24	25	23	21	23	19

The close correspondence of these results suggests that most people are not able to respond beyond their own personal preferences. It further suggests a lack of understanding that the next president must come from the ruling party and that the chances of this not being the ANC are low.

As one might expect, there are strong differences by race group. For metro areas:

- For metro blacks, the top contenders are seen to be Jacob Zuma (39% but 42% amongst males), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (13% but 18% amongst females), Thabo Mbeki for a third term (8%), Cyril Ramaphosa (7%), Tokyo Sexwale (6%) and Nkosasana Dlamini-Zuma (4%). Predictably, Jacob Zuma had a higher response amongst Zulus (49%) and

a lower response amongst Xhosa speakers (27%) whereas Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Thabo Mbeki showed the reverse. Only 3% of Zulus mentioned Thabo Mbeki. Only 16% of blacks gave a “don't know” response.

- For metro whites, 45% gave a “don't know” response. No clear front-runner emerges with 9% giving Cyril Ramaphosa and 7% giving Jacob Zuma, Thabo Mbeki or Tokyo Sexwale.
- Although 30% of metro coloureds gave a “don't know” response, 21% felt Helen Zille would be the next president, whilst 10% mention Patricia de Lille and 6% gave Trevor Manuel.
- Indians/Asians had the highest “don't know” response at 52%. Jacob Zuma was given by 11% whilst 7% mentioned Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Thabo Mbeki or Cyril Ramaphosa.

For non-metro areas, Jacob Zuma is by far the front runner for blacks at 48% (but 54% for males and the youth), with 11% mentioning Thabo Mbeki and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (18% said “don't know”). Whites put Jacob Zuma at 10% and Thabo Mbeki at 5% with 70% saying “don't know”. Coloureds gave Jacob Zuma and Patricia de Lille each an 11% response but Thabo Mbeki led at 17% - with 37% saying “don't know”.

Clearly, there is little consensus in general although, amongst blacks, Jacob Zuma has by far the highest response. Nonetheless, the issue is seen to be relatively wide open.

Our take-out

It seems that people do not well understand how the next President of South Africa is determined but that Jacob Zuma is the front runner as at end October 2007, especially amongst blacks

Technical note

The metro study was conducted amongst a sample of 2 000 adults (1260 blacks, 385 whites, 240 coloureds and 115 Indians/Asians) in the seven major metropolitan areas in the first half of September 2007: it has a margin of error of under 2.5% for the results found for the total sample. The second study was conducted in early October amongst 752 adults in smaller towns and rural areas (576 blacks, 100 whites and 76 coloureds). The studies were conducted by TNS Research Surveys (Pty) Ltd as part of their ongoing research into current social and political issues and were funded by TNS Research Surveys. For more details, please contact Neil Higgs on 011-778-7500 or 082-376-6312.

Website: www.tnsresearchsurveys.co.za.

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