

Pro-growth or Pro-poverty

Findings of IRR polling 2024

The political state of play as of April 2025



Hermann Pretorius
15 April 2025



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications

27 March to 3 April

Sample: N=807

Screening: Registered voters only

Margin of Error: $\pm 4\%$

Confidence Level: 95%

Questionnaire design

The survey questionnaire was carefully structured to ensure clarity, relevance, and balance. Key design features included:

- 1. Structure:** Questions were grouped thematically, covering governance, economic priorities, race relations, and quality of life.
- 2. Neutral language:** Wording was neutral to avoid influencing respondents' answers.
- 3. Follow-up questions:** Where necessary, follow-ups addressed uncertainty (e.g., “If you had to choose, which party would you support?” for undecided voters).

Data weighting

To ensure the sample accurately reflected the national population, the data were weighted according to key demographic factors, including:

- Age
- Gender
- Province
- Urban *versus* rural residency

This weighting process ensures that findings are representative of South Africa's multifaceted and demographically complex electorate.

Geographic distribution

Province	% of Respondents
Gauteng	23.5%
KwaZulu-Natal	19%
Eastern Cape	12.5%
Limpopo	12.1%
Western Cape	10.7%
Free State	7.2%
Mpumalanga	7.1%
North West	6.5%
Northern Cape	1.5%

Residential distribution

Residential area type	% of Respondents
Tribal land	37.1%
Township	30.3%
Suburb	18%
Informal	6.7%
Central Business District (CBD)	6.4%
Commercial farm	1.4%
Smallholding	0.1%

Age

Age Group	% of Respondents
18–24	3.4%
25–34	14.2%
35–44	28.3%
45–64	35.2%
65+	18.9%

Language

Home Language	% of Respondents
isiZulu	22%
isiXhosa	18.9%
Afrikaans	12.4%
Sesotho	12.2%
English	10.5%
Other languages	24%

Income

Income Level	% of Respondents
<R2 000	13%
R2 000<R8 000	57.7%
R8 000<R20 000	10.1%
R20 000+	13%
Did not disclose	6.1%



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications

DA overtakes ANC

For the first time in IRR polling, the Democratic Alliance (DA) registers a marginal lead (30.3%) over the African National Congress (ANC at 29.7%), reflecting mounting public dissatisfaction with the ANC's insistence on raising VAT. The DA's participation in the GNU, coupled with its prominent opposition to the tax hike, appears to have boosted its national appeal.

ANC support contracts

After forming the GNU in 2024, the ANC initially regained some goodwill in polling but has now dropped below 30% under the impact of the recent VAT hike.

DA's breakthrough among black registered voters

The DA's support among black voters has surged from 5% to 18%, indicating that concrete issues, like opposing higher VAT, can transcend the long-held view of the DA as primarily serving minority or middle-class interests.



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications

May-July 2024

Successful negotiations between primarily ANC and DA secures parliamentary majority for presidential election in National Assembly of Cyril Ramaphosa (ANC) on condition of creation of coalition government.

ANC expands coalition over DA wishes to establish GNU with 287 seats in the National Assembly.

GNU takes office.

September-October 2024

IRR polling finds increased support for GNU parties, decreased support for non-GNU parties, and overall popular support of GNU.

February-March 2025

Budget Address postponed as GNU fails to agree to VAT increase as proposed by Minister of Finance.

Minister of Finance Enoch Godongwana (ANC), without sufficient consensus in Cabinet as required by GNU's Statement of Intent, tables Budget to Parliament.

April 2025

Parliamentary debate over VAT increase receives extensive coverage in news media and on social media.

Fiscal Framework, containing VAT increase, adopted – ANC, IFP, PA, GD, UDM, , AJ, ASA, BOSA, RM in support

Why this context matters

The political debate in the GNU and Parliament ensured **national political interest was focused on the Budget** – particularly the **proposed VAT increase**.

Analysis of the 2024 NPE campaign shows **limited discussion of increased VAT**.

VAT debate therefore can be considered an **aberration of discourse**, introducing **alternative grounds on which registered voters are likely to make decisions of party support**.



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

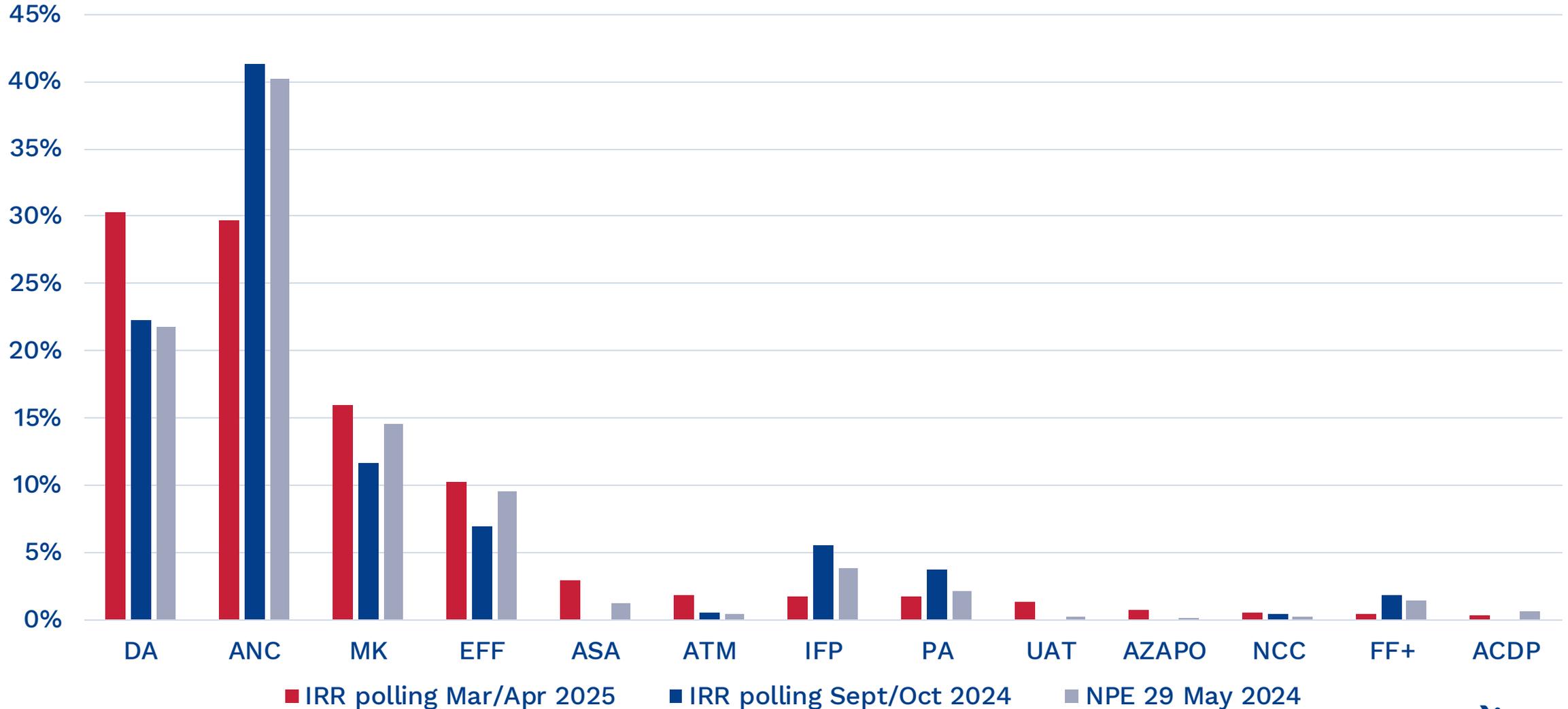
3. Context

4. Changes in support

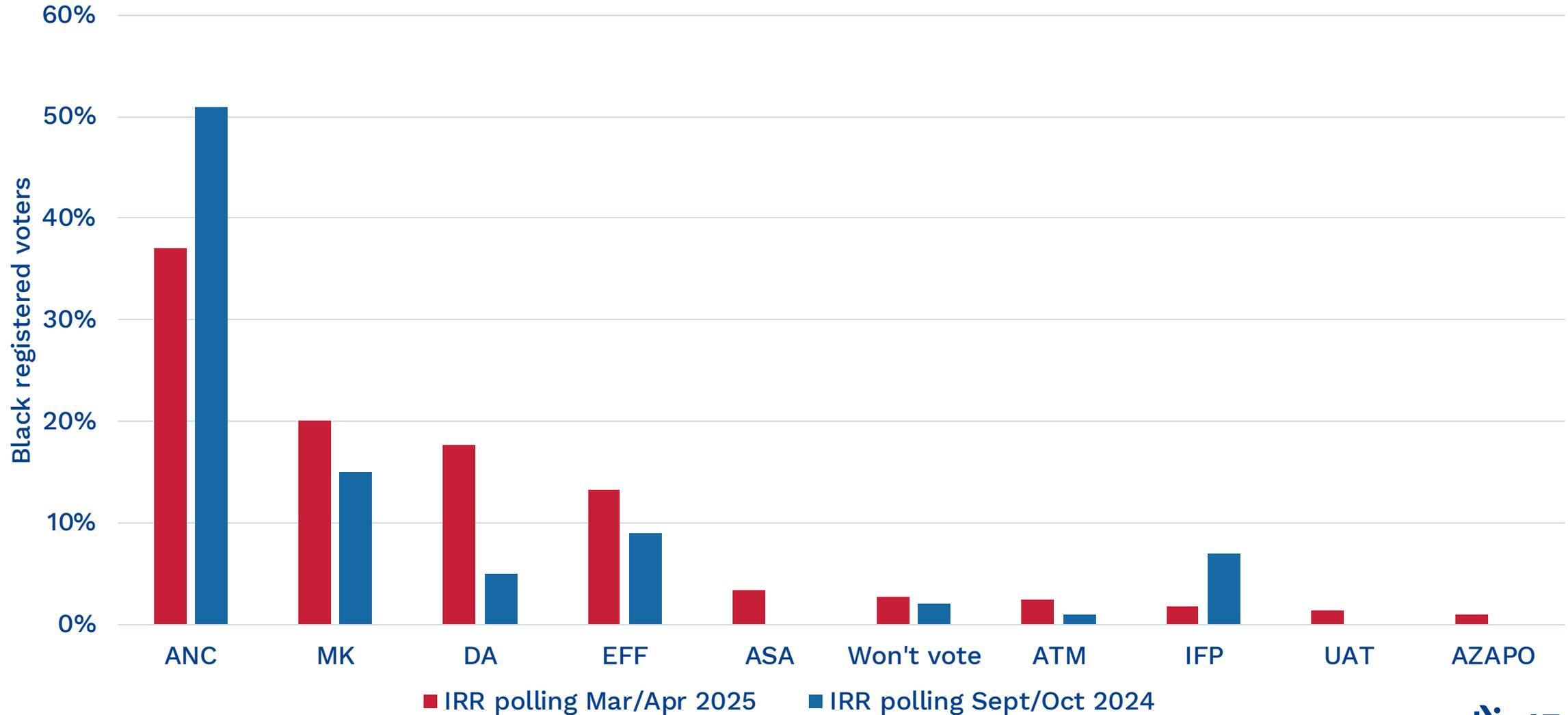
5. The GNU

6. Implications

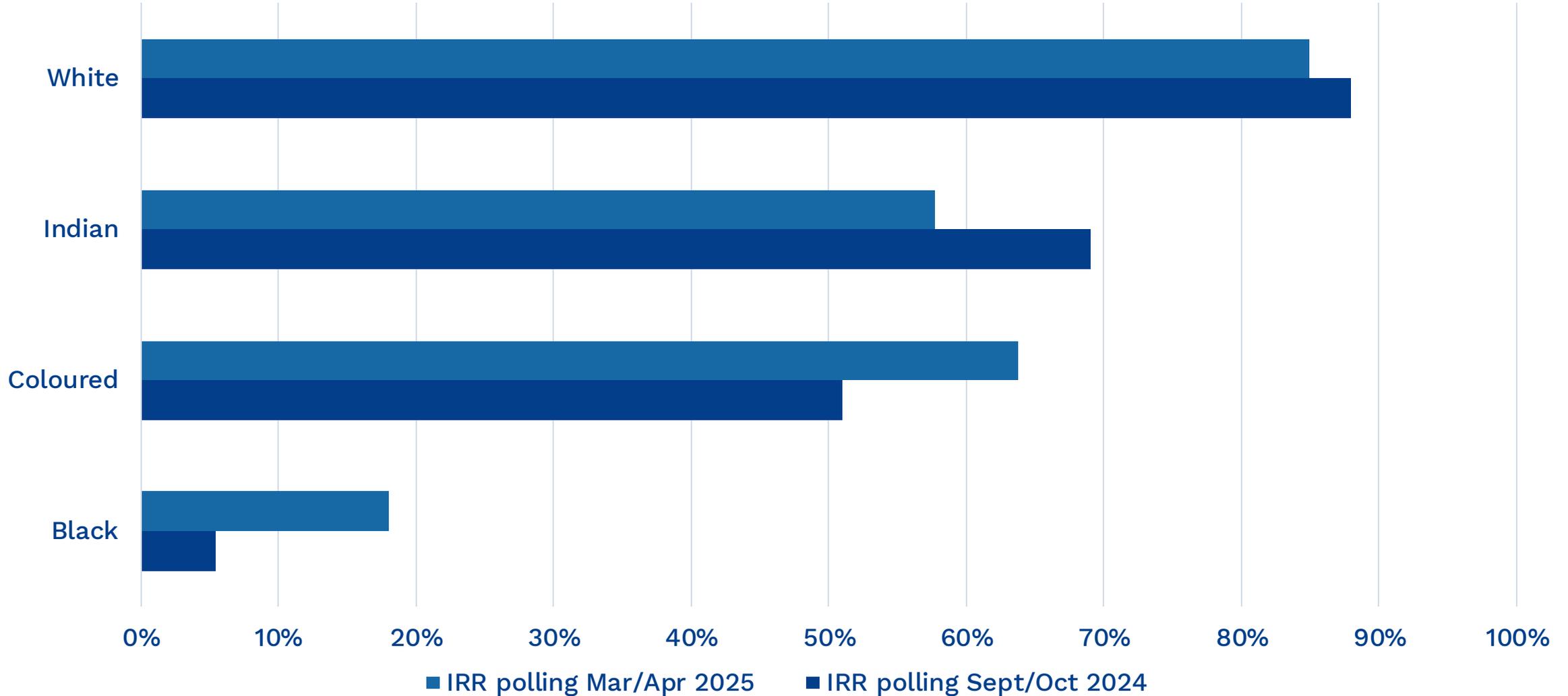
If a national election was held today, which party would you vote for?



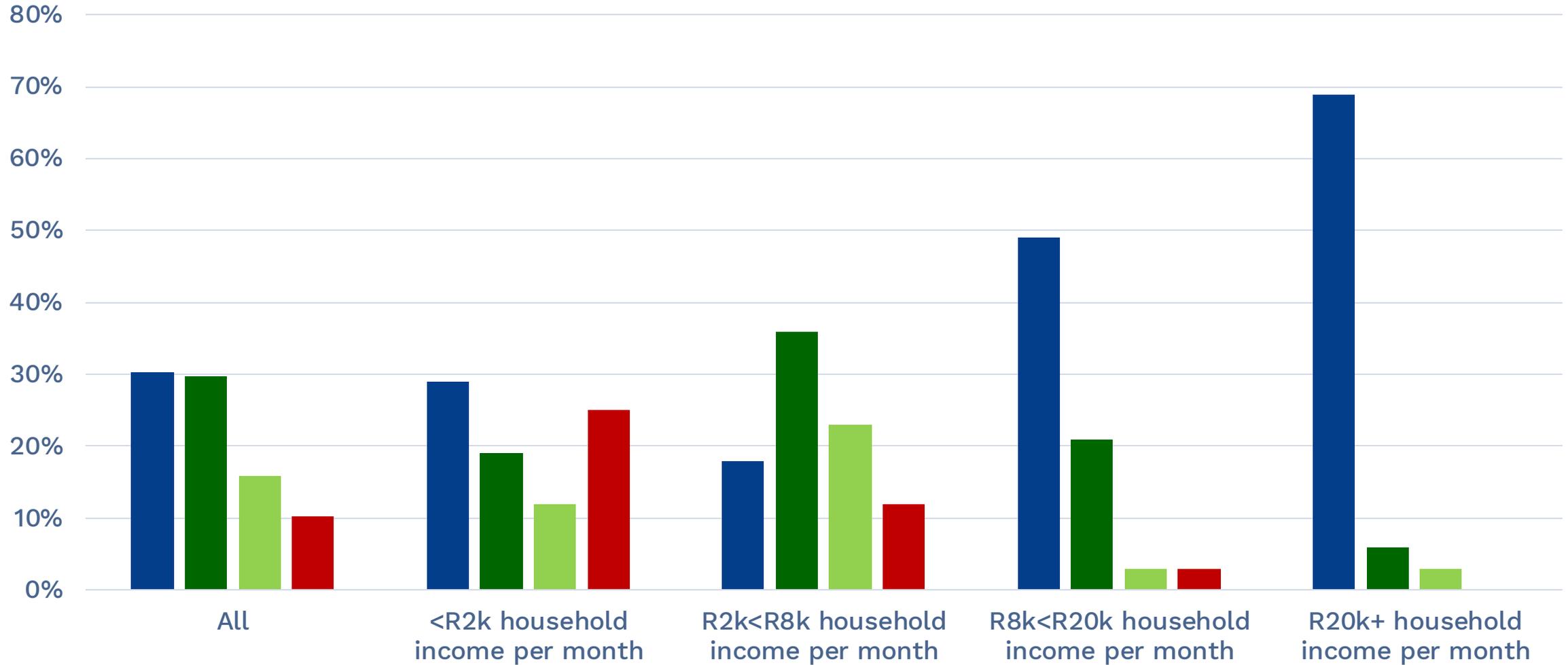
If a national election was held today, which party would you vote for?



DA support from registered voters by race



ANC, DA, MK, and EFF support from registered voters by monthly household income





1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

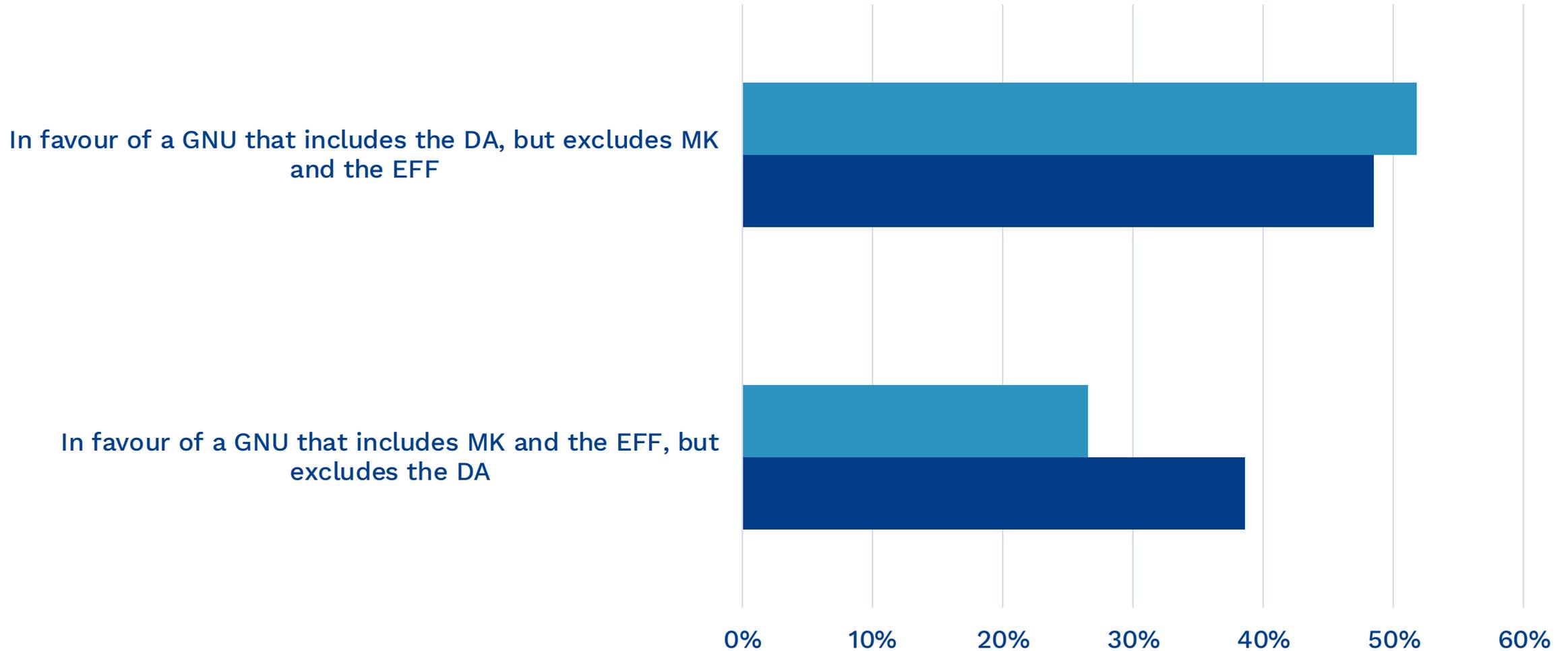
3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications

Support for GNU including MK and EFF, excluding DA versus GNU including DA, excluding MK and EFF





1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications



1. Methodology

2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications

- The dominant national narrative will shape the future political landscape – **pro-growth** politics focused on bread-and-butter issues *versus* more traditional **wealth redistribution** with racial undertones.
- DA's polling lead signals the **potential of a shift toward political prioritisation of economic growth** and service delivery.
- **Enduring realignment** is possible if any party consistently champions pro-growth, non-racial policies.
- **ANC likely still competitive** if it returns to Mbeki-era economic pragmatism, it could reclaim public trust and electoral strength.
- Long-held assumptions about the **centrality of race or identity** in public priorities and political debate **increasingly proven false**.



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2. Key findings

3. Context

4. Changes in support

5. The GNU

6. Implications

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