

THE CRITERION REPORT

The Criterion Report is a quarterly market research survey conducted by the Institute of Race Relations into voter preferences, attitudes and the South African political landscape.





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The Criterion Report is a quarterly market research survey conducted by the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) into voter preferences, attitudes and the South African political landscape.

In line with the objective to become an authority on political market research, the IRR has undertaken its first survey of the electoral landscape, an exercise it aims to replicate every quarter.

What follows is the second tranche of findings from this survey – a ‘deep dive’ into the question of land, land reform, property rights and the attitude of voters towards these issues.

This report comprises a two-part summary of the key political findings: Part A comprises an objective overview of the data and what it says. Part B comprises the IRR’s own analysis of the findings and what it believes are the key insights to be drawn from them.

The banner headline findings are:

- 27% of all voters have not heard of expropriation without compensation (EWC).
- 41% of all voters who have heard of EWC, “Somewhat” or “Strongly” oppose the policy.
- 30% of all voters who have heard of EWC, “Somewhat” or “Strongly” support the policy.
- 51% of all voters believe an alternative to EWC should be pursued, while 17% believe no land reform is necessary.
- 68% of all voters believe “Individuals should have the right to own land in their private capacity”.
- 31% of all voters believe “All land in South Africa should be owned by the government”.
- However, support for EWC collapses when respondents are asked whether government should be able to take land they own themselves. 90% of all voters are “Somewhat” or “Strongly” opposed this.

Methodology:

The poll was conducted between 22 August 2018 and 4 September 2018. The sample was fully demographically representative and comprised only registered voters. A total of 978 respondents were questioned. The margin of error is 3.1%. The confidence level is 95%. The poll was conducted telephonically, using a single frame, random digit-dialling sampling design. Briefly: The sampling frame consists of every potential cell phone number in existence in South Africa, from which a probability sample is drawn. This approach ensures that every number stands an equal chance of being included in the study, which is the most basic condition that must be met for survey results to be generalizable to the population from which a sample is drawn. A fuller explanation of the methodology is available on request. The poll was conducted by Victory Research.

Interpretation:

This poll is not a prediction. It is a snapshot in time, in this case of the electoral market between 22 August and 4 September 2018. Likewise, the numbers presented in the poll are not absolutely definitive. A 3.1% margin of error means a six percent spread on any question. A confidence level of 95% means we are confident 95% of the time the findings will never vary more than 3.1 percentage points up or down from reality. When reporting on the poll, it is important to bear these parameters in mind.

PART A FINDINGS:

Awareness:

- **All Voters:** The poll found 73% of voters had heard of expropriation without compensation, while 27% had not. [See **Table 1**]
- **Black Voters:** 70% of black voters claim to have heard about expropriation without compensation, while 30% said they had not.
- **Minority Voters:** A significantly higher number of minority voters were aware of expropriation without compensation (85% compared to an average of 73%) and thus slightly less (15%) had not.
- **Finding:** Around one in three South African voters (or 27%) are unaware of expropriation without compensation; however, more minority voters (85%) are aware of the idea than are black voters (70%).

Table 1: Expropriation Without Compensation [All/Black/Minority Voters]

Q: HAVE YOU HEARD OF A LAND REFORM POLICY CALLED "EXPROPRIATION WITHOUT COMPENSATION"?			
Response	All Voters	Black Voters	Minority Voters
Yes	73%	70%	85%
No	27%	30%	15%
Don't Know	0%	0%	0%
Refused	0%	0%	0%

Support for Expropriation Without Compensation

- **Methodological Note:** This question was only put to the 73% of respondents (in the table above) who had answered that they had heard of expropriation without compensation.
- **All Voters:** The poll found that 41% of all voters who had heard of the policy "Somewhat" or "Strongly" oppose the policy of expropriation without compensation, while 30% "Somewhat" or "Strongly" support the policy. [See **Table 2**]
- **Black Voters:** Support for the policy grew slightly among black voters, with 35% of those who had heard of the policy "Somewhat" or "Strongly" supporting expropriation without compensation and 32% "Somewhat" or "Strongly" opposing the policy.
- **Minority Voters:** Opposition to the policy spiked among minority voters, with 69% of those who had heard of the policy being "Somewhat" or "Strongly" opposed to it. Just 11% of minority voters who had heard of the policy "Somewhat" or "Strongly" supported it.
- **Finding:** This question must be contextualised. First, 27% of all respondents have not heard of expropriation without compensation. Second, of those who had heard of it (73%), a majority of 41% "Somewhat" or "Strongly" opposed the policy. By race, slightly more black voters (35%) "Somewhat" or "Strongly" supported as against opposed (32%) the policy. But opposition to the policy is at its highest among minority voters, with 69% – or one in three – being "Somewhat" or "Strongly" opposed to it. Just 11% of minority voters "Somewhat" or "Strongly" supported the policy.

Table 2: Support for Expropriation Without Compensation [All/Black/Minority Voters]

Q: DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POLICY OF EXPROPRIATION WITHOUT COMPENSATION? AND IS THAT STRONGLY, OR SOMEWHAT?			
Response	All Voters	Black Voters	Minority Voters
Strongly Support	25%	31%	4%
Somewhat Support	5%	4%	7%
Combined: Somewhat/Strongly Support	30%	35%	11%
Somewhat Oppose	6%	5%	8%
Strongly Oppose	35%	27%	61%
Combined: Somewhat/Strongly Oppose	41%	32%	69%
Don't Know	3%	3%	5%
Refused	0%	0%	0%

Position on Land Reform

- **All Voters:** 30% of all voters felt a policy of “taking land from whites without paying” was closest to their view. In the other direction, 51% felt that an alternative best represented their view: either continued use of the “willing buyer-willing seller” approach (22%) or the “redistribution of government land” (29%). 17% felt there was no need for land reform. [See **Table 3**]
- **Black Voters:** The number of black voters who felt a policy of “taking land from whites without paying” was closest to their view stood at 37%. In the other direction, 46% felt that an alternative best represented their view: either continued use of the “willing buyer-willing seller” approach (20%) or the “redistribution of government land” (26%). 15% felt there was no need for land reform.
- **Minority Voters:** The number of minority voters who felt a policy of “taking land from whites without paying” was closest to their view stood at just 3%. In the other direction, 70% felt that an alternative best represented their view: either continued use of the “willing buyer-willing seller” approach (30%) or the “redistribution of government land” (40%). 24% felt there was no need for land reform.
- **Finding:** There is a stark disjuncture between black voters (37% support) and minority voters (3% support) with regard to the approach of “taking land from whites without paying”. However, there is stronger support across demographics for an alternative approach, either willing buyer-willing seller or the redistribution of government land (51% of all voters support an alternative). A reasonably consistent block of voters across all races (between 15% among black voters and 24% among minority voters) believe there is no need for land reform.

Table 3: Position on Land Reform Policy [All/Black/Minority Voters]

Q: WHICH ONE OF THESE FOUR STATEMENTS COMES CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEW?			
Response	All Voters	Black Voters	Minority Voters
No need for land reform	17%	15%	24%
Land reform necessary, willing buyer-willing seller	22%	20%	30%
Land reform necessary, distribute government land	29%	26%	40%
Land reform necessary, take from whites without paying	30%	37%	3%
Don't Know	2%	2%	2%
Refused	0%	0%	0%

State or Private Ownership

- **All Voters:** The majority of all voters – 68% – believe in property rights and that “Individuals should have the right to own land in their private capacity”. By contrast, 31% of all voters believe “All land in South Africa should be owned by the government”, from which land should be leased. [See **Table 4**]
- **Black Voters:** The majority of black voters – 62% – believe in property rights and that “Individuals should have the right to own land in their private capacity”. By contrast, 37% of black voters believe “All land in South Africa should be owned by the government”, from which land should be leased.
- **Minority Voters:** The overwhelming majority of minority voters – 88% – believe in property rights and that “Individuals should have the right to own land in their private capacity”. By contrast, just 9% of minority voters believe “All land in South Africa should be owned by the government”, from which land should be leased.
- **Finding:** There exists a significant segment of black voters (37%) who believe “All land in South Africa should be owned by the government”. This cuts a stark contrast with the position of minority voters, of whom just 9% agree with that statement. An overwhelming majority of minority voters (88%) believe in private property. But the majority view (68%) across all demographics is that “Individuals should have the right to own land in their private capacity”.

Table 4: State versus Private Ownership of Land [All/Black/Minority Voters]

Q: WITH WHICH ONE OF THOSE TWO STATEMENTS DO YOU AGREE MOST?			
Response	All Voters	Black Voters	Minority Voters
All land in South Africa should be owned by the government on behalf of the people and people should only have the right to lease, but not own, land	31%	37%	9%
Individuals should have the right to own land in their private capacity	68%	62%	88%
Don't Know	1%	1%	2%
Refused	0%	0%	1%

Personal Property

- **Methodological Note:** It is important to read responses to this question with those to the previous question. The responses, below, suggest that a significant number of voters support the policy of expropriation without compensation when it is presented to them as an abstract idea. However, when it is practically applied to their personal circumstances, it is overwhelmingly rejected as a policy.
- **All Voters:** 90% of all voters “Somewhat” or “Strongly” oppose “giving government the power to take your land without compensating you for it”, compared to just 9% of all voters who “Somewhat” or “Strongly” support that proposal. 86% of all voters “Strongly” oppose the policy. [See **Table 5**]
- **Black Voters:** 87% of black voters “Somewhat” or “Strongly” oppose “giving government the power to take your land without compensating you for it”, compared to just 11% of black voters who “Somewhat” or “Strongly” support that proposal. 83% of black voters “Strongly” oppose the policy.
- **Minority Voters:** 100% of minority voters “Somewhat” or “Strongly” oppose “giving government

the power to take your land without compensating you for it”. 97% of minority voters “Strongly” oppose the policy.

- **Finding:** There is overwhelming opposition to the idea that government should be given “the power to take your land without compensating you for it”. 86% of all voters “Strongly” oppose the idea. That opposition is replicated across all demographics: 83% of black voters “Strongly” oppose the idea, as do 97% of minority voters. Just 7% of all voters “Strongly” support the idea of government-owned land, when the policy is applied to their personal circumstances.

Table 5: Support for Expropriation of Personal Property [All/Black/Minority Voters]

Q: IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT THAT YOU OR YOUR FAMILY OWNED A HOUSE OR A PIECE OF LAND AND THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THAT THEY WANTED TO USE IT FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE. WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE GIVING GOVERNMENT THE POWER TO TAKE YOUR LAND WITHOUT COMPENSATING YOU FOR IT? AND IS THAT STRONGLY, OR SOMEWHAT?			
Response	All Voters	Black Voters	Minority Voters
Strongly Support	7%	9%	0%
Somewhat Support	2%	2%	0%
Combined: Somewhat/Strongly Support	9%	11%	0%
Somewhat Oppose	4%	4%	3%
Strongly Oppose	86%	83%	97%
Combined: Somewhat/Strongly Oppose	90%	87%	100%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%
Refused	0%	0%	0%

Rural Land

- **All Voters:** A majority of all voters (57%) believe “Individuals who live in rural areas should all be given a piece of communal land to own privately”. 41% of all voters believe “Land in rural areas should continue to be controlled by traditional leaders”. [See **Table 6.1.**]
- **Black Voters:** That majority decreases among black voters to a very slim margin. Just 51% of black voters believe “Individuals who live in rural areas should all be given a piece of communal land to own privately”. 49% of black voters believe “Land in rural areas should continue to be controlled by traditional leaders”.
- **Black Voters/Geographic Location:** When you cross tabulate location with black voters, the majority of black voters who live in urban areas (“townships”, “cities” and “informal settlements”) support the private ownership of rural land, but only by a small majority in each category. The only exception is “suburbs”, where 52% of black voters feel rural land should continue to be controlled by traditional leaders. The sample size for rural black voters would have been very small in this survey; nevertheless, 100% of black voters on “smallholdings” or “commercial farms” believed rural land should be privately owned. 60% of black voters who live in “rural areas” or “villages” believed traditional leaders should continue to control rural land. 39% believe rural land should be privately owned. [See **Table 6.2.**]
- **Minority Voters:** An overwhelming majority of minority voters (77%) believe “Individuals who live in rural areas should all be given a piece of communal land to own privately”. Just 16% of minority voters believe “Land in rural areas should continue to be controlled by traditional leaders”.
- **Finding:** While the majority of all voters (57%) believe rural land should be privately owned, among black voters there is effectively a 50/50 split. Minority voters are overwhelmingly in favour

of the private ownership of rural land, with 77% supporting the idea. 60% of black voters who reside in rural areas believe traditional leaders should continue to control rural land ownership.

Table 6.1: Control of Rural Land [All/Black/Minority Voters]

Q: AT THE MOMENT, A LOT OF LAND IN RURAL AREAS IS CONTROLLED BY TRADITIONAL LEADERS ON BEHALF OF THEIR PEOPLE. WITH WHICH ONE OF THOSE TWO STATEMENTS DO YOU AGREE MOST?			
Response	All Voters	Black Voters	Minority Voters
Land in rural areas should continue to be controlled by traditional leaders	41%	49%	16%
Individuals who live in rural areas should all be given a piece of communal land to own privately	57%	51%	77%
Don't Know	2%	1%	6%
Refused	0%	0%	1%

Table 6.2: Control of Rural Land [By Geographic Area/Black Voters]

Q: AT THE MOMENT, A LOT OF LAND IN RURAL AREAS IS CONTROLLED BY TRADITIONAL LEADERS ON BEHALF OF THEIR PEOPLE. WITH WHICH ONE OF THOSE TWO STATEMENTS DO YOU AGREE MOST?			
Response	Land in rural areas should continue to be controlled by traditional leaders	Individuals who live in rural areas should all be given a piece of communal land to own privately	Don't Know / Refused
Suburb	52%	48%	0%
Township	43%	56%	1%
City/Town Centre	41%	59%	0%
Informal Settlement	49%	51%	0%
Commercial Farm	0%	100%	0%
Smallholding	0%	100%	0%
Rural Area or Village	60%	39%	0%

PART B: ANALYSIS

Summary: There appears to be a significant section of the voting population that is amenable to the policy of expropriation without compensation. However, it is not large. 27% of all voters have not heard of the idea, and, of the 73% who have, only 30% “Somewhat” or “Strongly” support the policy. (25% “Strongly” support it). The proportion (35%) is higher among black voters. Opposition to the idea among minority voters is exceedingly high, with 69% saying they “Somewhat” or “Strongly” oppose the policy.

In short, the majority of all voters, across a range of questions on land, either do not support the policy – choosing instead to support private property rights – or support alternative reform policies to expropriation without compensation.

With regards to alternative policies, a minority of 30% of all voters support “taking land from whites without paying” (37% among black voters). Most voters and the vast majority of minority voters, however, agree with a different approach – continuing with willing buyer-willing seller or redistributing government land. 15% of all voters believe there is no need for land reform at all.

However, a key finding is that, when the policy of expropriation without compensation is put to respondents as a practical consequence for their own private property, support for the policy collapses. Whereas 31% of all voters (and 37% of black voters) agree with the statement that “All land in South Africa should be owned by the government on behalf of the people”, when asked whether respondents support or oppose government taking their own land, 90% of all voters (and 87% of black voters) “Somewhat” or “Strongly” opposed the idea. 86% of all voters strongly oppose that idea.

This is a significant insight. It suggests that those political parties which have a vested interest in countering the EFF’s narrative (that all land should be owned by the state) need to be able to demonstrate the practical implications of the policy for individuals. If they can do that, support for the policy falls dramatically. 31% of voters might be favourable to the abstract idea of expropriation without compensation, but when it is brought home in real terms – when the implications for their own property is explained – it is rejected.

In short, the poll suggests that those who support the policy of expropriation without compensation do so only when it applies to other people; when it is applied to them, they reject it.

Finally, the percentage of people who support or oppose the ownership of rural land by traditional leaders is far closer than it is when framed as a ‘private ownership versus state ownership’ question. While a majority of all voters (57%) believe individuals in rural areas should be given a piece of land to own privately, the percentage of black voters who support that statement drops to 51%. Among black voters who live in rural areas or villages, the number of people who support land ownership by traditional leaders, climbs to 60%, suggesting that, outside of urban centres, there exists a far smaller appetite among black voters for private land ownership.

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