



# A New Messiah to Fill the Void in South Africa's Psyche

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3 August 2023

# AGENDA

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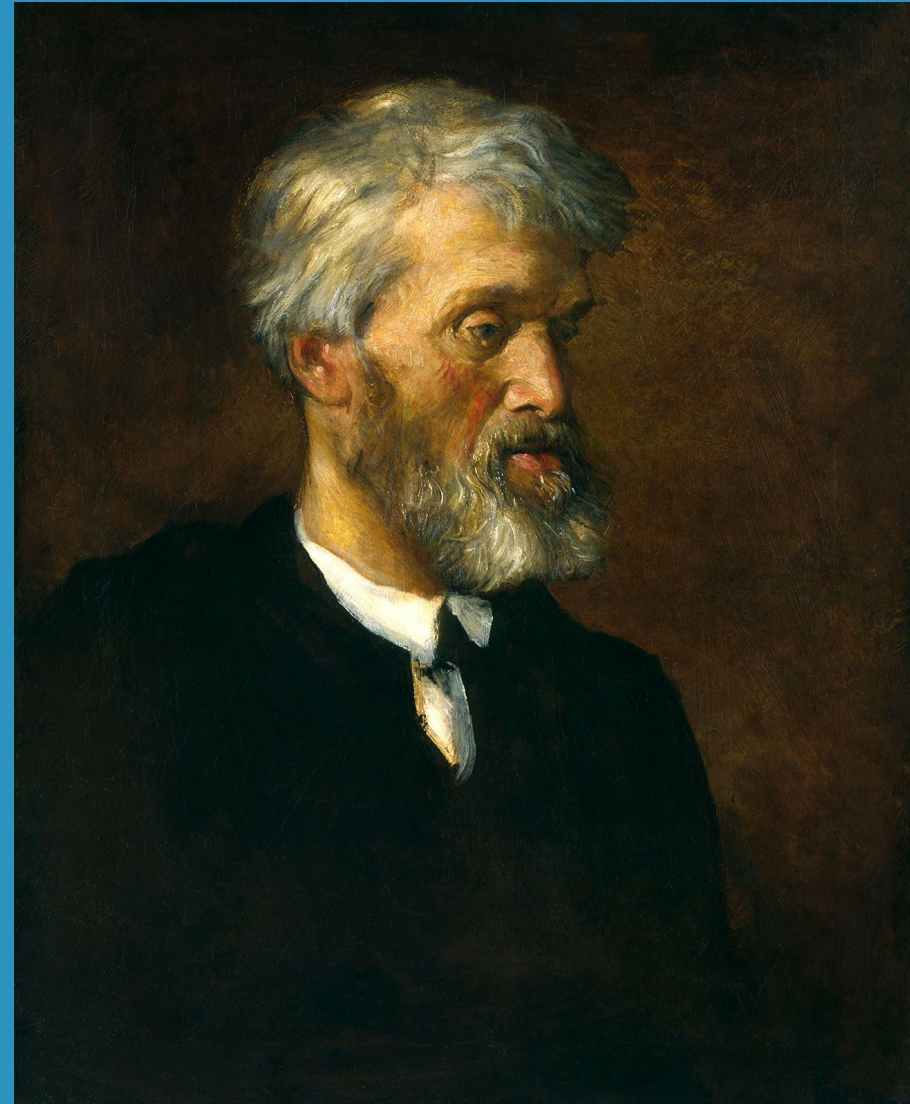
# Charismatic Leadership

Leadership obtained through gifts of grace, or charisma, rather than any specific credentials, established status or social or professional position



"The History of the world is but the Biography of **great men**"

~ Thomas Carlyle



“This strongly suggests that when the situational determinant of a charismatic response is present, **the presence or absence of a genuinely charismatic leader-personality may be a critical historical variable.** The varied fate of the ANC’s struggle against the disempowerment of their people may be accounted for by the absence of such charismatic leader-personalities at certain times, and the presence of figures such as Luthuli – the Mandela before Mandela – and Mandela – should we say the Luthuli after Luthuli – at others.”

*Benda Hofmeyr*

### We want to “be led”

(Actual results for lives and livelihoods notwithstanding; unemployment has still not recovered to pre COVID levels, and post-lockdown childhood literacy has plunged to new lows.)

**Hulisani Ravele**  [@HulisaniRavele](#) · [Follow](#)

“Leadership is an action, not a position.” – Donald McGannon

Fellow South Africans, we are led. 🙏🌞 Thank you Mr President [@CyrilRamaphosa](#). Thank you. 🙏🇿🇦 [#CyrilFridays](#)



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Your doing an amazing job Mr President, we know your tired but we thank you for being our hero [#CyrilFridays](#) 🇿🇦❤️



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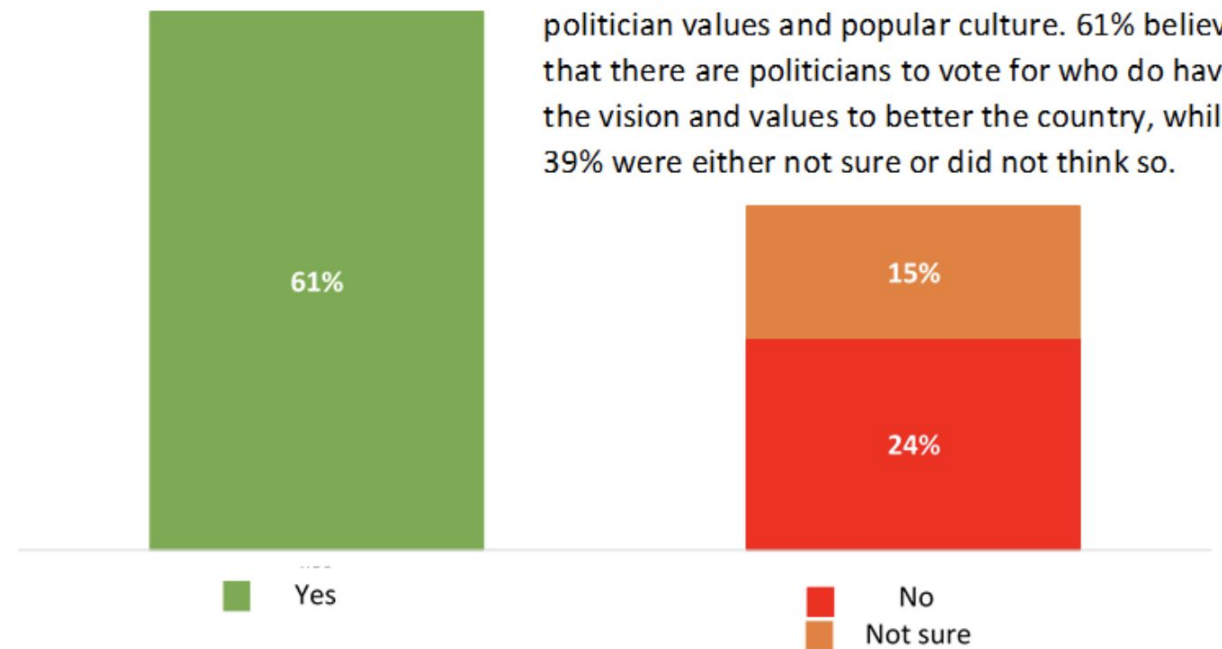
# Even After Zuma, We Still Believe

Social Surveys, 2018

<https://socialsurveys.co.za/press-release-poll-reveals-that-south-africans-still-have-faith-in-politicians/>

## Do you believe there are politicians you can vote for who have the vision and the values to take South Africa forward?

24,198 people voted on the Big Debate's poll on politician values and popular culture. 61% believe that there are politicians to vote for who do have the vision and values to better the country, while 39% were either not sure or did not think so.

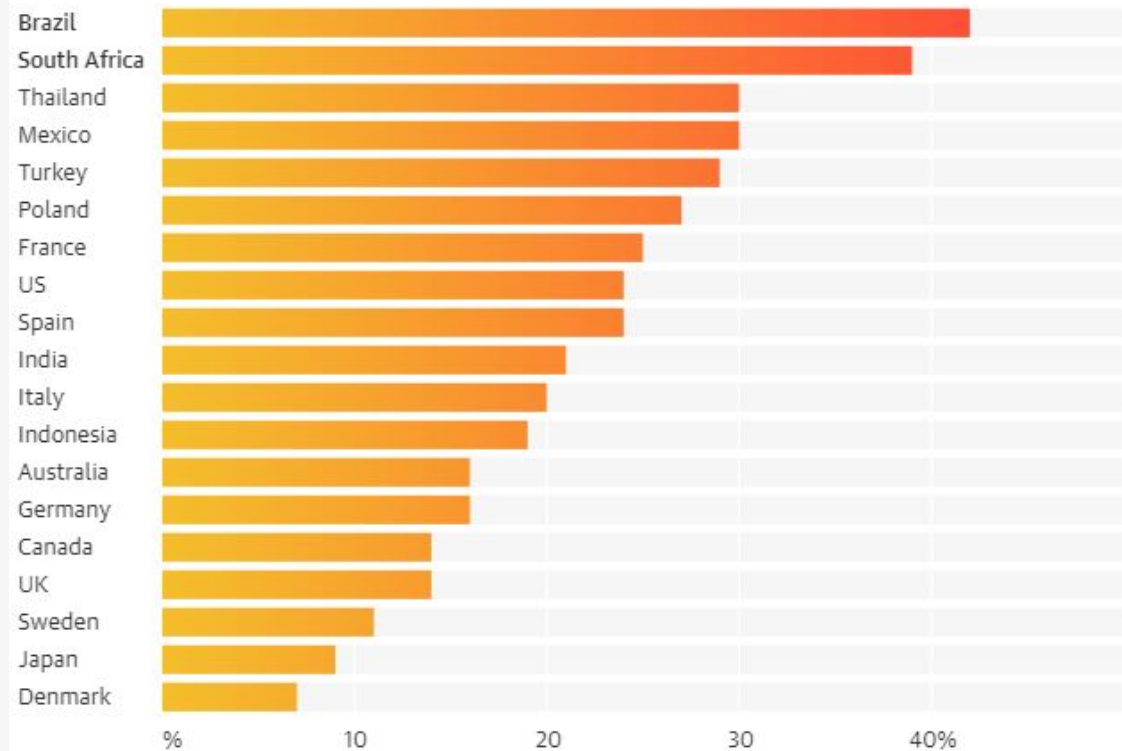


# Populism is Popular

YouGov, 2019

<https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/314328/south-africa-named-as-one-of-the-most-populist-countries-in-the-world/>

### Brazil and South Africa had the highest percentage of **populist respondents**



Guardian graphic. Source: YouGov. Total sample was 21,295, with 4,542 populist respondents.



“Our local historical present testifies to the continued existential distress of the vast majority of the population who remains disempowered and plunged into abject poverty, which makes for **conditions ripe for the emergence of a new charismatic movement.** What such a movement depends upon, though, is the concomitant emergence of an efficacious leader – the glaring absence of which we have witnessed in the past 25 years.”

*Benda Hofmeyr*

# An Absent Messiah



*“Where have all the heroes gone and where are all the gods”*

# Lost Credibility and Opportunity

*Charismatic leadership is bestowed unto chosen leaders (for better or for worse, as a blessing or a curse) by the followers rather than being a title that can be claimed or a role that is chosen to be played by the leader themselves.*



# (Young) Voter Apathy

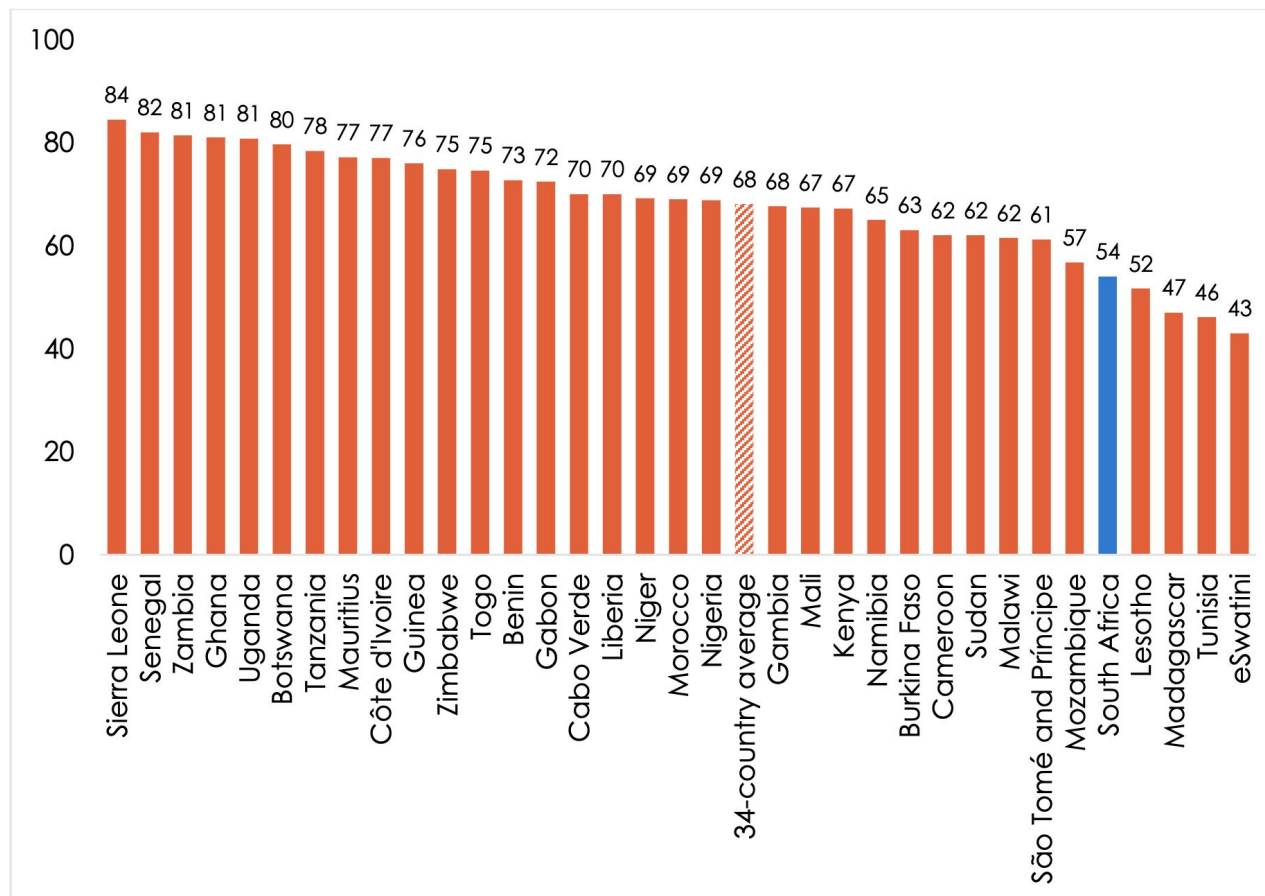


*“Other countries have old-age homes, but in South Africa we have Parliament. It is a joke,”*

# Democracy in Decline

Afrobarometer

Figure 1: Support for democracy (%) | 34 countries | 2016/2018

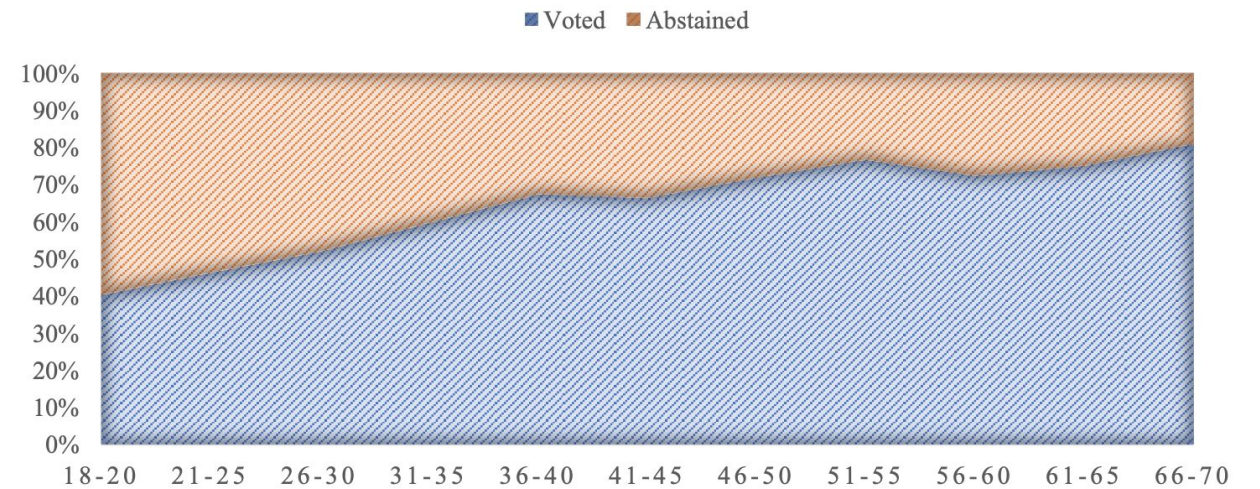


# Youth Opting Out

Konrad Adenauer Foundation

<https://www.kas.de/documents/261596/10543300/The+youth+vote+in+the+2021+Local+Government+Elections.pdf/41ea7d35-a7c9-2098-6ad5-cb7ad12c5a1f?version=1.0&t=1643879656662>

**Figure 1: Voting participation by age cohorts in the 2021 Local Government Election**  
(reporting the University of Johannesburg Centre for Social Change 2021 Election Survey data)



“The period in which young people are trapped in dependency and unable to become economically active and obtain the independence expected of becoming an adult is termed ‘**waithood**’... This has resulted in the emergence of the ‘youth-adult’ who is neither a dependent child nor an independent adult, and who is instead caught in the curse of waithood due to unemployment, lack of access to services, structural inequalities and narrowly distributed economic opportunities.”

*Miché Roberts*

Remember **Fees Must Fall?**





The dichotomy of youth **activism and apathy.**



*What happens when “waithood’s” latent energy is harnessed?*

# Four Scenarios



*Antichrist or Messiah, we decide*

# Absent Messiah

*Continuation of waiting for Godot*



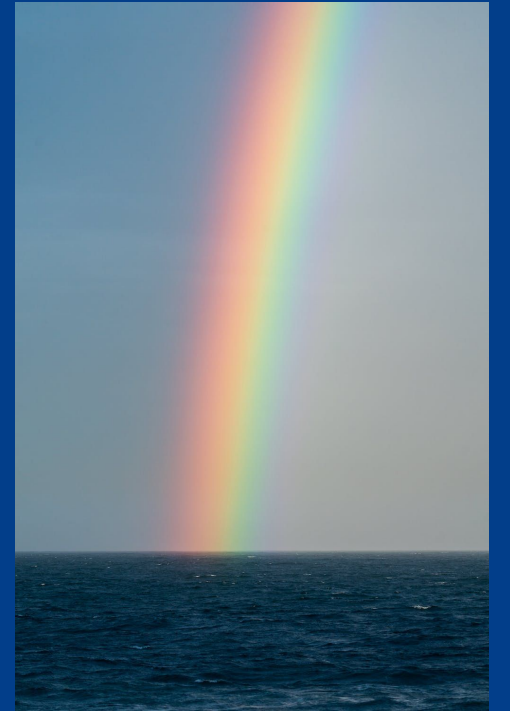
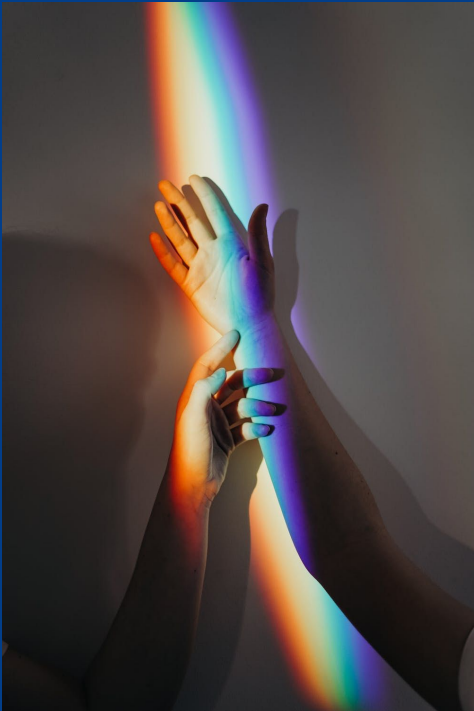
# False Prophet

*All pomp and hypocrisy*



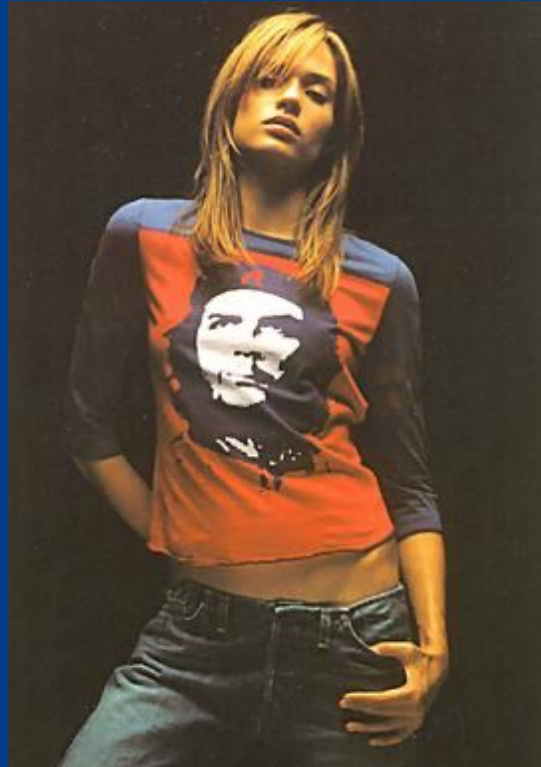
# Second Coming

*Deus ex humanica*



# An Antichrist

*The frogs get their snake king*



# A Vacuum to Fill



*The Mandela shaped-hole in the South African soul*



*Conclusion : Fill the leadership vacuum, before it's filled for us.*

# Discussion



Q&A