

**Integrative complexity in South African parliamentary debate:  
The normative basis for variability.**

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**The author hereby declares that this thesis, unless specifically indicated, is a product of his own work.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed within a hand-drawn oval. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'J. Söderlund'.

**John G. Söderlund  
December 1999**

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## **Abstract**

All 1996 parliamentary speeches of two members from each of three parties represented in the South African parliament were coded for the extent to which they demonstrated integrative complexity, a measure of the level of differentiation and integration which a decision-maker demonstrates in justifying his or her position. Each of the selected debates was also categorised according to the manner in which the speaker was aligned in relation to other parties taking part in the debate and the extent to which the matter had been aired in parliament previously. The relationship between the level of integrative complexity shown in the speeches was assessed in relation to the alignment of the speaker with other parties, the extent to which the debate had been rehearsed and the position of the speaker on the left-right political spectrum.

The results of the study indicated a strong relationship between the relationship of the speaker to the ruling ANC in the debate, with speakers showing significantly lower integrative complexity when opposing the ANC than when they were in agreement with the ANC. The extent to which the debate had been rehearsed bore a relationship to integrative complexity which only approached significance and the political affiliation of the speaker yielded a non-significant relationship to integrative complexity.

The results of the study are discussed with reference to existing theoretical understandings of and research into integrative complexity.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### *1.1. Overview*

Much research has been conducted in the past fifty years to understand the relationship between the manner in which politicians think and their political persuasion. One of the central areas of exploration has been that of integrative complexity, or the extent to which individuals attempt to differentiate between alternate points of view and marry these in arriving at a final decision. At first it was thought that integrative complexity was least prevalent in those who fell on the outer extremes of the political spectrum, namely fascists and left-wing radicals. However, later research showed that there were a range of situational factors which could alter the amount of integrative complexity shown by politicians spanning the whole political range. Some of these factors were straightforward situational constraints or macro events. But others had a more social component in that they related to how the decision-maker stood in relation to the audience to whom he was making his case and what the nature of power relationships were between the members of his group and of opposing groups, if any.

As the research proceeded, a complex and dynamic relationship began to emerge between the situational variables and the trait-like consistency shown in the integrative complexity of different



political camps. The research also began to mirror wider movements in psychological research towards greater emphasis on situationism, with much work being done to unearth the impact of a range of variables on integrative complexity. As the socially mediated variables were fleshed out, however, researchers began to contend that the political setting in which decisions were made impacted on the level of complexity shown. While conservatives and moderates were found to differ in their characteristic cognitive style, the political environment, balance of power and content of the debates was shown to impact on the previously observed systematic differences amongst politicians with different ideological leanings camps. Much of this research was conducted through the archival analysis of parliamentary and political speeches.

## ***1.2. Rationale for the present study***

This study sets out to explore the impact of one situational variable, namely the extent to which the speaker in a political debate is an outlier, or to which he or she enjoys little or no support from the other parties in the parliament. The South African parliament was selected as it represents a unique setting in which to partial out and compare variables which have been the subject of research in American, British, Soviet and other government settings. Further, the South African parliament was the scene of a dramatic change of government in 1994, when the previously banned ANC swept to power, delegating to minority status all other parties, many of whom had been present in the previous apartheid government. The speeches of members of parliament from three minority, white-run parties during 1996 were selected as the data.

The literature on integrative complexity forms a central focus in social cognitive psychology, informing many of the most recent branches of inquiry into how people make decisions and how effective those decisions are shown to be. It is expected that this study will make a contribution to the crucial area of political decision-making, where far-reaching policies are chiselled out and crises averted or fuelled.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### ***2.1 Introduction***

Almost five decades ago, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sandford (1950) published a sizeable volume of work which presented an exposition of what they called *The Authoritarian Personality*. The study examined ideological orientations of individuals and tied these to what the researchers claimed were core personality traits which the subjects demonstrated. Part of the work focused on the cognitive styles demonstrated by people with different ideological leanings. It was suggested that authoritarians tended to adopt a relatively rigid, black-white approach to issues and events. The authoritarian personality syndrome, they argued, predisposed individuals both to a rigid cognitive style and a conservative political ideology characterised by racial prejudice, ethnocentrism, conservatism and an aversion to the democratic ideals of the day. Both cognitive style and ideological content were said to be defenses against deep psychodynamic conflicts, an attempt to impose external order to compensate for the lack of control over internal needs and impulses.

In the ensuing decades, Adorno's work spurred a raft of research into a myriad of characteristic traits which were thought to be associated with authoritarianism. Amongst these traits which have been investigated since the original work are dogmatism (Rokeach, 1956), tolerance of

ambiguity (Sidanius, 1978), flexibility-rigidity (Taylor, 1960), and conceptual or integrative complexity (Tetlock, 1983a). The last of these is one which has enjoyed a central focus in the cognitive style research programme and forms the focus of this study.

Since the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality*, researchers have repeatedly returned to the question of whether people who differ in their cognitive style - or their characteristic ways of conceptually organising their environments - also differ in their receptiveness to particular political movements or ideologies (Tetlock, 1983a). Further, researchers have sought to understand what predisposes individuals to one cognitive style rather than another and how amenable one's characteristic cognitive style is to change.

The research has proceeded in two broad directions. The first has investigated theories which seek to explain cognitive style as a relative stable trait of individuals, either as a function of one's personality or a by-product of one's political persuasion. This approach assumes that cognitive style is relatively stable over the life of an individual. The second has been concerned with theories which argue that one's cognitive style is strongly influenced by situational, social, demographic and other variables external the subject, suggesting that cognitive style is capable of change from one setting to another and over the life of the individual. These two broad approaches will be referred to as the trait and situationist approaches, respectively (cf. Bowers, 1973).

## **2.2. Integrative complexity**

Integrative complexity, one of the cognitive style variables which formed part of Adorno et al's (1950) original study, has become a central focus in the research on cognitive style (Tetlock, 1992). Also called conceptual complexity, it is concerned with two separate cognitive processes - differentiation and integration. Differentiation refers to the extent to which people identify and differentiate between viewpoints embedded in a dilemma. Integration refers to the degree to which they attempt to integrate the divergent viewpoints in formulating a final position or decision in response to that dilemma (Tetlock, 1983a). Suedfeld and Tetlock (1977) associate integrative complexity with the tendency to make fine distinctions, show flexibility and employ extensive information search and usage strategies. Simplicity is marked by simple responses, the tendency to draw gross distinctions and to show rigidity and restricted information usage (Tetlock, 1992).

For example, someone who adopts an integratively simple position in response to whether there should be military spending, may simply argue that the safety of the country is of paramount importance and that a powerful military presence is essential to repelling threats from outside, fully justifying greater military spending. Another integratively simple position from a different ideological standpoint may only stress the importance of social welfare spending and how adequate provision for basic social welfare spending should always precede increases in military spending.

An integratively complex approach would attempt to take account of both of these arguments and others which bear on the decision and attempt to marry them under a broader, overarching

perspective. It may hold that, while an effective military force is necessary to ward off potential threats from outside the country's borders, the welfare of the country's citizens is as important as their safety from such threats. But, more than this, resources should also be allocated to ensuring a buoyant economy which alleviates the need for greater social spending and to diplomatic efforts which could discourage stand-offs with potential aggressors. This example illustrates that cognitive style is independent of content in its conceptualisation.

### **2.3. *The personological view of Integrative complexity***

#### **2.3.1. The rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis**

Integrative complexity, according to Adorno et al (1950), would be lowest amongst fascists who, attempting to impose order on unacceptable inner impulses, seek to banish any ambivalent thoughts about a dilemma they face. This is commonly referred to as *the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis* and suggests that these individuals would be likely to align themselves with a political movement which would give them license to view matters in a more dichotomous fashion. This trait view of integrative complexity is based in a belief that early childhood factors have made the establishment of certainty and structure imperative for the integratively simple thinker (McClosky, 1967).

#### **2.3.2. The ideologue hypothesis**

The suggestion of the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis that only those on the far right of the political spectrum was quickly challenged by others, charging that it was insensitive to "authoritarianism of

the left". They argued that differences in the content of left-wing and right-wing belief systems may be obscuring cognitive stylistic similarities between the two. Referred to as the *ideologue hypothesis* or *extremism theory*, this contention suggested that "true believers" were prone to such an cognitive simplicity, not just those who believed in fascist causes (Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti, 1984).

Rokeach (1956, 1960) was one of the first to delineate this (Durrheim, 1995), although he had been preceded by a move in this direction by Shils (1954) and Eysenck (1956; see also 1981). In so doing, Rokeach raised the possibility that political extremism may be related to style of thinking, rather than merely content of beliefs. He argued that advocates of the ideological left and right are more similar to each other in their characteristic cognitive *style* than are individuals located towards the centre of the political spectrum. The true believer, regardless of his political affiliation, then came to be seen as the prototype of cognitive rigidity, regardless of the extreme to which he belonged. Dubbed the *ideologue hypothesis* or *extremism theory*, this line of thought led the research programme in a separate direction concerned more with cognitive style than the content of one's beliefs.

Hoffer (1958) contended that the true believer was a role which was demanded by and was invaluable to the movement to which the individual belonged. A cognitively simple individual was critical in the early life of a political movement. The movement's survival depended on the "fanatics" or "men of words" to muster support for it the movement in its infancy, yielding later in a

movement's life to the "men of action" who shaped it into a more mature political movement (p 134).

While the ideologue hypothesis contested that integrative simplicity may be found in those others than fascists, it still maintained that this was a relatively stable, trait which had its roots in the intrapsychic nature of the individual. A review by Stone (1980) suggested the majority of findings playing the ideologue and rigidity-of-the-right movements against one another supported the authoritarian personality or rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis. Nonetheless, sporadic findings since that time (e.g. Tetlock, 1983a; 1984; De Vries and Walker, 1987) have lent support to the ideologue hypothesis or at least questioned the defensibility of the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis. They tended to show the least complexity on the outer edges of the political spectrum and greater complexity towards the middle.

### 2.3.3. Value pluralism theory

Tetlock (1983a; 1986a), in reviewing the authoritarianism theory and the ideologue hypothesis, observed that the very definitions of one's political affiliation were far from clear-cut. How far must one move to the left or right, for example, to be classified an extreme conservative or a liberal as demanded by the ideologue hypothesis? Moreover, a liberal in one society or historical context or system of government may be viewed as a moderate in another.



He looked to the later work of Rokeach to begin to explain how these differences between cognitive styles may be explained. Rokeach (1973, 1979) had suggested a two-value analysis of political ideology and drew on Abelson's (1959) work on modes of resolving cognitive inconsistency. Rokeach posited that two key values were prevalent in 20<sup>th</sup> century political movements, namely individual freedom and social equality. Advancing what he called the *value pluralism model* of integrative complexity, Tetlock (1983a) hypothesised that the moderate political movements would tend to place more equal emphasis on both, calling on their adherents to employ a more complex style in assessing the relative merits of both in any given decision. Because there is often a tension or trade-off between equality and freedom (especially economic freedom) in policy debates, advocates of ideologies that attach relatively high importance to both values should feel much greater pressure to rely on integratively complex modes of inconsistency reduction than advocates of ideologies that attach high importance to only one or neither of these values. The value-pluralism model proposed that moderate socialists - who, according to Rokeach, (1973) place approximately equal value on each - would be more strongly inclined to think in integratively complex ways than their extreme conservative, extreme socialist or moderate conservative counterparts.

Tetlock, much of whose work on integrative complexity had been conducted using archival material from American political settings, tested this theory in the British House of Commons (1984), which he felt represented a wider spectrum of left-right political views than the US senate. Integrative complexity was indeed found to be associated with a pragmatic, open-minded, and non-partisan

world view, offering little support for the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis and some support for the ideologue hypothesis. However, the ideologue hypothesis was still unable to explain the fact that moderate liberals showed greater integrative complexity than moderate conservatives. Tetlock argued that the value pluralism idea could still potentially explain this, saying moderate socialists valued freedom and equality more equally than extreme socialists or moderate or extreme conservatives. Tetlock (1986) extended his work in this area with a finding that the integrative complexity of peoples' reasoning about policy issues could be best predicted from knowledge of the similarity of the importance they attached to the issues which the policy dilemma raised. This, he argued, provided a flexible theoretical framework for predicting ideology by issue interactions in both the structure and content of policy reasoning.

#### ***2.4. The shift from trait theory to situationism***

The research programme into integrative complexity, while continuing to test the ideologue and rigidity-of-the-right hypotheses, had, since shortly after Adorno's original work, been introducing suggestions that situational variables may be impacting on integrative complexity scores of subjects in laboratory tests. Integrative complexity, while it might be found to differ systematically amongst adherents of different political ideologies, was increasingly being seen to be mediated at least to some extent by variables in the environments of decision makers.

Hoffer (1958) presages some of the movement towards situationism in his musings on the ideologue hypothesis, when he notes that: "There is, of course, the possibility of a change in character. The

man of words might change into a genuine fanatic or into a practical man of action.” (p 134). Around this time, researchers were beginning to advance a view of human behaviour which was sceptical of the trait view (e.g. Mischel, 1968). The ascendancy of behaviourist theories, riding a wave of positivistic, science-based approaches in related disciplines, saw psychologists attempting to draw detailed predictive relationships between external stimuli and behaviours. These approaches held that the preservation of objectivity in psychology depended on the observability of truly causal variables, which were held to be external to the individual.

Bowers (1973), in reviewing the development of the situationist and trait-based theories, describes the trait view of behaviour as employing correlational techniques, suggesting that an individual's behaviour should be relatively constant from one situation to the next and further that, in the same situation, individual differences should emerge. “The trait model provides for trans-situational similarity of behaviour within persons, and for subject differences in behaviour within situations.” (p 316) By contrast, the situationist position provides for trans-situational differences in behaviour within subjects and for minimal subject variation within situations. But Bowers called for a different approach to the debate over the relative merits of situationism versus trait theory, a debate which continues to this day. He noted that the rejection of traits does not necessarily imply the acceptance of situationism. Also, he added that much of evidence disproved both the stark situationist view and bland trait view, necessitating some reformulation of the debate which could incorporate both.

One of the first concerted efforts to partial out situational and personality variables in a more considered manner was mounted by Schroder, Driver and Streufert (1967). Their work, based on considerable laboratory research, argued that situational variables and personality dispositions were both powerful contributors to cognitive style and that the challenge lay in determining the relative contribution of each. They demonstrated that subjects who showed excessively low levels of personal interest and investment and who were provided with relatively little information about a matter tended to show less integrative complexity. They also showed that an excessively high level of information input, or information overload, can result in decreased complexity, suggesting that there may be a curvilinear relationship between situational variables and integrative complexity.

However, given the artificiality of laboratory experiments, some questioned how relevant those findings were to the real life situations in which people made decisions. While variables could be more reliably controlled, there were lingering doubts about whether these manipulations accurately emulated variables operant in higher pressure, non-artificial situations. Working from this contention, researchers began to turn to archival material for the speeches, writings and debates of real people facing real dilemmas. While obviously useful as an alternative approach, the primary flaw of this archival content analysis was that of being relatively less able to control independent variables and rule out extraneous variables. The research on situational factors impacting on integrative complexity proceeded largely with the use of archival materials.

### 2.4.1. Civil unrest, war, age, illness and integrative complexity

The earlier archival work on situational variables affecting integrative complexity concerned simple external variables with which the thinker often had only a one-way relationship, i.e. the thinker was unable to impact on the variable impacting on him or her. Porter and Suedfeld (1981) examined the integrative complexity of literary figures during times of war, civil unrest, personal stress, age and illness, as evidenced by their writing during those times. They found that integrative complexity was negatively related to the intensity of war but positively related to civil unrest. It decreased during illness, was unrelated to other stressful life events and increased with age, with the exception of the latter years of life, where it decreased in the few years prior to death.

Broadly, this work supported the growing acceptance that information processing strategies varied as a function of environmental pressure. The reduction in complexity when decision makers were under stress, possibly mediated by arousal, was compatible with extant laboratory simulation findings (Shroder, Driver and Streufert, 1967). But these researchers also noted that in some situations (e.g. civil unrest) the adaptive response of individuals exposed to stress was toward increasing rather than decreasing complexity, raising again the possibility of a curvilinear relationship between such situational variables and suggesting that individuals had more dynamic relationships with these external factors than was first surmised.

The growth of situationism in integrative complexity research took place gradually as several theories were introduced which bridged the gap between situationism and trait theory, often without attempting a definition of the relationship between the two. Many writers had directed their criticism of trait theory at its indifference to the social and institutional variables which surround individuals who were debating an issue (e.g. Gergen, 1982; Sampson, 1981). This led to the development of several theories which tried to unpack the mediating effect of social and institutional cues on the decision-makers cognitive processes. They fall largely within the situationist approach but go beyond it in positing a more dynamic interaction between the thinker and the environment whereby the thinker responds to pressures from the environment but attempts to impact on those same factors by way of a response. These theories are discussed individually.

#### 2.4.2. Political role theory

Tetlock had also begun to investigate the political roles decision-makers filled and their relationship to integrative complexity. Politicians in opposition roles, he found, make more simplistic public statements than politicians in policymaking roles (Tetlock, 1981a; Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti, 1984). The opposition role, he argued, gives politicians the licence to present matters in a more black and white fashion. By contrast, the policy making role imposes more reality constraints on rhetoric, forcing politicians to back up unpopular trade-off decisions which their duties force them to implement.

The policy-making role requires that they engage the opposing viewpoints of a dilemma before making a decision. Failure to do so could jeopardise their reputations and careers as politicians. The opposition role is more of a license to doggedly assert the alternative view to that which is favoured by policy-makers (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Thurow, 1980). Fewer pressures exist on opposition politicians to think or speak in integratively complex terms. The opposition's role, especially where it is not likely to be able to force a change in policy at a parliamentary level, is to rally anti-government sentiment, a task which is not made easier by being even-handed and magnanimous about the views of the opposition (Tetlock, 1985a). Several studies have supported the contention that the policy-making role increases integrative complexity (Suedfeld and Rank, 1976; Tetlock, 1981a).

However, Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti (1984), comparing the statements of American senators from one congressional period to the next, found that transitions in political roles may not necessarily affect members of different political leanings in the same manner. They queried whether the apparent discrepancies in integrative complexity between liberals and conservatives could be accounted for by differences in their rhetorical style, rather than cognitive style. This, which they called the *rhetorical style hypothesis*, maintained that there would be shifts in the way people argued on the back of changes in the balance of power in political settings. However, while they found some support for this theory, it could not explain inconsistent changes in the complexity shown by American senators when the balance of power shifted from one congressional period to the next,

suggesting that there was still a more trait-like difference in the way conservative and liberal politicians responded to different political roles.

Taken together, the work on political roles invited a revision of the value pluralism model's expectation of greater complexity amongst liberals than conservatives. Liberals may, in fact, only show greater complexity when their policy-making role invites them to do so. Conservatives may, owing to a greater consistency of core values, show less change in their level of integrative complexity when their political roles change.

This line of thinking on accountability and political roles marked a shift towards incorporating some of the more dynamic elements inherent in political debate. Foes on one day can be allies on another in political settings, a factor which had been largely ignored in the research until then. Political role theory alluded to constantly changing allegiances in political debate and simultaneous potential for changes in cognitive style demonstrated by politicians. In addition to raising fundamental questions about the trait view of integrative complexity, this also raised the possibility of a more dynamic understanding of how decision-makers could vacillate between relatively high and low levels of integrative complexity in different settings. As they vacillated, however, so were the conditions created for others to vacillate, potentially impacting on the original decision-makers' cognitive styles. While illuminating in its implications, this made the process of understanding situational factors in integrative complexity more difficult to research in the largely correlative fashion in which they had been investigated until then.



### 2.4.3. Cognitive adjustment theory

One of the earlier studies using archival material which bridged the gap between situationism and trait view of integrative complexity was conducted by Suedfeld and Rank (1976). They examined the long-term success of leaders of five revolutionary movements to test the hypothesis that their cognitive style would be more simple in the revolutionary phase and more complex in the post-struggle period. The results revealed that politicians displayed different levels of integrative complexity before and after elections. This finding, which lent support to the basic tenets of political role theory, was referred to as *cognitive adjustment theory*. The theory posits that politicians who are vying for power can afford to be simplistic in their policy rhetoric, making simple promises which they believed were viable but on which they are not obliged to deliver, as they are not in power. Once in power, however, they are forced to think in more complex ways to meet the more complicated and intricate pressures of their new positions and the constituencies to which they become accountable. It suggested, more broadly, that given the same decision to make, a person would show different levels of complexity depending on the demands of the situation in which the decision was to be made. In terms of the cognitive adjustment theory this was not thought to be a conscious decision to be simple or complex but a somewhat automatic response necessitated by the demands of the setting.

However, this assumption that it was an unpremeditated response revealed that the research had not come out clearly on the question of whether integrative complexity was an *ability* or a preferred

*style* of cognition. Was it something that an individual could change at will or was it something which was changeable only when the environment demanded such a change. Until this time, researchers had assumed that decision-makers responded largely unconsciously to external stimuli, that they were prone to demonstrate complexity only when a situation allowed them to do so. In presenting their research Suedfeld and Rank noted that some previous research (e.g. Suedfeld, 1968) had already indicated that training programmes of varying degrees of intensity could affect complexity, leading them to conclude that complexity may be a somewhat flexible, situation specific response style rather than a pervasive, stable, consistent trait. The more machiavellian suggestion that politicians may be engaging in wilful manipulation of their rhetorical style to ensure their own political success, however, had not been explored. This was a question which was to be raised frequently in later research on how individuals account for their decisions to others.

#### 2.4.4. Groupthink and integrative complexity

A further theory which worked from the assumption of role or social pressure towards complexity or simplicity was that of Janis (1972), whose theory of *groupthink* suggested that social pressures in decision-making groups can impact on one's cognitive efficiency and moral judgement. Groupthink would occur, said Janis, when independent critical analysis of the problem facing the group becomes less important than the cohesiveness of the group. The result is a tendency for members of the group to repress dissenting and unpopular thoughts from the most commonly shared opinion in a bid to ensure no threat is posed to the group.

Tetlock (1979) assessed the public statements of American politicians in foreign policy decisions for the extent to which they demonstrated groupthink in the process of arriving at a decision. He hypothesised that the extent of groupthink would be inversely correlated with integrative complexity as a high groupthink group would make little room for the consideration of competing opinions. Decision-making groups with high groupthink were characterised by attempts by group members to discount warnings concerning the popularly agreed-upon solution; the self-censorship of doubts about their positions; the application of direct pressure to other group members deviating from the consensus and the presence in the group of self-appointed mind-guards who were shielded from the rest of the group. Tetlock examined the relationship between the measure of groupthink evident in the decision-making process with the integrative complexity evident in the public statements of the group members in each of these crises which the psychologists faced. He found that public statements of decision makers in groupthink crises were characterised by significantly lower levels of integrative complexity than the public statements of decision makers in non-groupthink crises. The pressure towards conformity of opinion in the interests of group cohesion may have pressured group members into suppressing alternative perspectives in the groupthink crises, which would lead to a lower demonstrated integrative complexity. He concluded that public statements in groupthink crises could best be distinguished from public statements in non-groupthink crises on the basis of integrative complexity and, to a lesser extent, by evaluations of their political groups.

In discussing these results, Tetlock noted that the only records (archival transcripts of speeches) of how groupthink and non-groupthink decision makers perceived policy options consisted of their public statements, raising some questions about whether these accurately reflected their private thoughts on the matters in question. But he dismissed this as unlikely to be a serious problem. He conceded that public statements are undoubtedly more influenced by efforts to manage political impressions than are private statements. Politicians would be inclined to ensure the public image they projected was one which would ensure public support for their position. Nonetheless, Tetlock (1979) said there was good reason to believe groupthink manifested itself in these decision makers' public as well as private capacities as the two could not be significantly different if an eventual policy decision was to be enacted in the full purview of the public.

This intention to manage the impression created of the decision makers in the eyes of others fed into another social functional theory which was gaining ascendancy in the research programme, that of impression management. This was to form a central focus of later investigations into integrative complexity.

#### 2.4.5. Impression management theory

Tetlock's more recent work attempted to discern the involvement of the intentional creation of an impression in the minds of others by thinkers in decision-making settings. The cognitive adjustment and groupthink theories had attempted to explain how the individual might mediate some of the

situational pressures encountered in justifying a position on an issue. But they had not directly addressed the possibility that rhetorical style may account better for changes in demonstrated integrative complexity than the cognitive style theories which had dominated the literature.

Tetlock's *impression management* hypothesis was the first to introduce the idea that integrative complexity may be subject to more wilful control on the part of politicians. The theory suggested that politicians do not attempt to meet the promises made during their election campaigns and that they are expert symbol manipulators who will say whatever they believe will garner greater public support (Tetlock, 1981a). A lower level of complexity before an election, for example, may be useful if one is trying simply to attract votes. After assuming power, however, a more complex approach would allow the politician to present cogent explanations for why it is less simple to implement the promises made during the election. Tetlock (1981a) played this hypothesis against the earlier cognitive adjustment hypothesis (Suedfeld and Rank, 1976), which suggested that the demands of politicians after assuming office force them to operate in a more cognitively complex manner. He gauged the integrative complexity of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American presidential candidates vying for power before elections, as elections drew nearer and after they had been elected to power. He hypothesised that if the change in integrative complexity during each of these stages was a gradual one, this would support the cognitive adjustment position while a rapid change would point to a conscious political strategy, supporting the impression management view. The study's results supported the impression management hypothesis and lent little credence to the cognitive

adjustment hypothesis, lending support to the idea that shifts in demonstrated integrative complexity may be conscious manipulations on the part of the politicians of the impression they project to voters before and after elections.

The research programme growing out of the impression management focus espoused some basic core beliefs, namely that people try to create certain impressions in others about their identity, that they are highly sensitive to the social significance of their conduct and are motivated to create desired identities in interpersonal encounters. But, noted Tetlock and Manstead (1985), a number of other questions go unanswered after these basic assumptions. For example, why would individuals assume that a more balanced, even-handed consideration of options – which would raise the level of complexity - be a more appealing impression to create under certain circumstances and a more black-and-white impression – or integratively simple approach – a more desirable impression under other conditions? Further, what are the motivations for these and what behavioural tactics may be employed to achieve the desired impressions. “As it stands, the research programme assumes only that people attempt to create desired impressions on others. It is difficult to imagine what evidence could be inconsistent with such a formulation,” he commented (Tetlock and Manstead, 1985, p.62). The obvious next step would be to attempt to discern the processes in which individuals engage in making a decision about what impression to project.

#### 2.4.6. Accountability theory

This apparently more wilful change in the level of complexity displayed raised another pivotal variable in understanding integrative complexity, namely the impact of the audience to which one is playing in defending a decision. This has been broadly referred to as *accountability theory* and suggests that integrative complexity shown would depend on one's perception of the opinions and knowledge of the audience to whom one is stating one's case. Accountability serves as a linkage construct by continually reminding people of the need to act in accord with prevailing norms and to advance compelling justifications or excuses for conduct that deviates from those norms (Tetlock and Lerner, 1999).

Tetlock (1983b) explored the impact of accountability in laboratory research where respondents were required to account to various different audiences for the positions they had taken. One hypothesis had already suggested that people, who for the most part opt for the cognitively "lazy" approach to decision making (Taylor, 1980), would be spurred into more complex thinking by the suggestion that they will have to be accountable to others for their views. The prospect of making a "bad" judgement, leading to embarrassment and loss of esteem, would prompt them to arrive at a "good" judgement in the hope of winning praise from their audience.

An alternative theory may have posited that people may be just as lazy when they know the views of the individual to whom they are expecting to justify their position - a view not dissimilar to

groupthink theory (Janis and Mann, 1977) - as when they do not have to justify it to anyone. Together, these hypotheses would suggest that accountability to a person of unknown views might be expected to increase integrative complexity as one is forced to consider potential retorts the audience may raise. By the same token, accountability to an individual of known persuasions might decrease complexity as one merely adopts the view of that person without due consideration of opposing views.

The results of Tetlock's (1983b) study supported both of the above hypotheses, suggesting that accountability leads to more complex information processing only when people do not have the cognitively "easier" option of simply adopting views akin to those of the individual to whom they feel accountable (Tetlock, 1985b). When the listener's view is unknown, people will be inclined to engage in pre-emptive self criticism. The more thoughts that people had that opposed their prospective discussion partners, the more complex was their thinking. However, in this laboratory study Tetlock required subjects to justify their positions to not more than one person at a time with a known view. But he did not address what might be the result if one were required to justify a position to a group of people, each of whom held a different view, a typical example of which may be a parliamentary debate.

A good deal of evidence has been accumulated to suggest that accountability pressures could influence both the ways people think and what they think (Tetlock, Skitka and Boettger, 1989).



Some research has argued that people view anticipatory opinion conformity as a reliable way to avoid the disapproval and perhaps gain the approval of others (Tetlock, 1983b). Other work (e.g. Tetlock, 1985b) has suggested that people tend to cope with accountability by thinking in flexible, multidimensional ways that reduce well-worn ways of thinking about a dilemma. A third strand of research shows that accountability motivates people to be defensive, to think of why they are right and how opponents would be wrong (Tetlock and Manstead, 1985). Further, Fox and Staw (1979) showed that decision makers were most likely to increase their commitment of resources to a failing policy when they were most vulnerable and were accountable to a distrusting board of directors. Accountability, they claimed, could lead to a simplistic and self-serving bolstering of policies to which subjects felt personally committed. Accountable subjects had greater difficulty than unaccountable subjects in writing off sunk costs and in acknowledging that they had been wrong in their strategies (Fox and Staw, 1979).

Tetlock and Lerner (1999) attempted to bring together this substantial and sometimes confusing body of work on accountability by proposing what they called *the Social Contingency Model* of accountability. They posited four key motivational and coping-strategy assumptions. The first is that accountability is universal, that all individuals are driven to account for their positions in relation to situational and social norms. The second assumption posits an audience approval motive, leading all individuals to seek the approval of the constituencies to whom they feel accountable. Thirdly, there is assumed to be motive competition with accountability, i.e. accountability is not the sovereign

motive for human conduct. Finally, motives are linked to coping strategies. Individuals will cope in one of a number of ways to demands for accountability. They may respond in a pre-emptively self-critical fashion, anticipating reasonable objections that critics might raise to their position (Tetlock et al., 1989). This would present as integrative complexity as criticisms of one's own view would often present as possible alternative points of view. Secondly, they may respond in a self-justifying fashion directing mental effort toward generating as many reasons as they can to bolster past positions taken (e.g. Staw, 1980). In this case, the expressed thoughts which are prompted by having to be accountable would all run in the same evaluative direction, which would present as integrative simplicity.

Tetlock's Social Contingency Model argues that the following conditions would be most likely to promote pre-emptive self-criticism, which is a hallmark of integrative complexity:

- Decision-makers are accountable either to an audience with unknown views or to two audiences with conflicting views who recognise the viability of the other. Playing to an audience with unknown views tends to encourage pre-emptive self-criticism in the event that the audience holds a different view. Further, the presence of two audiences with conflicting views puts pressure on a decision-maker to anticipate the reasonable objections of the member with a conflicting view.
- Decision-makers perceive the audience to be powerful and, in the case of two or more audiences, equally powerful. This condition is thought to promote integrative complexity as

the potential loss of face spurs some pre-emptive anticipation of objections from somebody whose disapproval could have further consequences.

- Decision-makers perceive the audience or audiences to be cognitively sophisticated and, if more than one audience is present, to be equally sophisticated. Cognitive sophistication would raise complexity as the speaker would expect that the audience would have thought more complexly about the matter.
- Decision-makers do not hold strong private views and are unconstrained by public commitments. The freedom from these views allows the speaker to leave matters a little open for fear of rejection of a simplistic opinion.

By contrast, defensive bolstering is most likely to be activated when:

- Decision-makers are accountable to powerful audiences that are not believed to be knowledgeable about the topic. A lack of knowledge of the topic would suggest the audience is itself unaware of some of the nuances of the issue, prompting more simplistic bolstering in the hope that the audience will not consider reasonable alternative views.
- Decision makers are accountable for past actions that cast some doubt on their competence or morality and that cannot be retracted or reversed. The need to recoup sunk costs puts this speaker in a corner where expressing knowledge of alternatives to the chosen one would

suggest the original decision was made in the knowledge of its folly. In such cases, any mention of alternative views may be self-damaging, prompting further defensive bolstering.

- Decision-makers recognise that it is impossible to deny responsibility for the conduct in question. In this case, offering support for an alternative approach throws into relief any undesirability of the pre-existing commitment. To make the most of the commitment to the chosen action, defensive bolstering is used in a bid to ensure its acceptance by the audience.

However, Tetlock (1998) concedes that accountability theory is an increasingly complicated field, with new variables continually being identified as mediating demands on subjects who are called to be accountable and suggests that any overly reductionistic theory is likely to oversimplify the matter.

## **2.5. Summary**

Two of the key thrusts of the integrative complexity research programme to date have concerned the work which identifies pervasive and longstanding differences in integrative complexity amongst individuals and groups of people and, secondly, an understanding of the situational variables which impact on integrative complexity. Much of the work has been focused on the complexity demonstrated by politicians, an area where the manner in which decisions are made has far-reaching implications and where the relative merits of simplicity and complexity can be seen in decisions which are enacted.

While both the trait and the situationist views have received much support, more recent work has been directed at understanding the interactions of the two, for example, how is it that conservatives respond differently to some situational variables than do liberals. One of the areas which has been less explored is the manner in which an individual fits into and forms part of a group of speakers who are debating a topic. Some work on political roles (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986; Suedfeld and Rank, 1976; Tetlock, 1981a) has shown that a change in role from opposition politician to policy-making politician is marked by an increase in integrative complexity. Beyond this political role work and the accountability research, however, the shorter-term and more issue-specific impact of a speaker's relationship to those who are also engaged in the debate has not been examined as a variable which may impact on integrative complexity. While the role of opposition may decrease complexity, for example, it is unclear what would be the role of more transitory changes in political position. Would a moderate who is forced into a temporary alliance with a conservative show less complexity as long as the alliance continued? Or would the effect of the alliance be overshadowed by a more trait-like consistency in the moderate's cognitive style for that temporary alliance, resulting in the moderate showing no change in complexity?

With these questions in mind, this study attempts to isolate one such variable, namely the extent to which the speaker is an outlier in the debate and the extent and nature of the support and opposition he receives from others in the debate. While this relates tangentially to some of the variables already

investigated in the integrative complexity research programme, it has not been directly examined in the published research.

The research into accountability theory, while illuminating the effect of the audience and its views on the research subject, does not differentiate between audiences with differing profiles and the power relationships which exist between the audience and the speaker. The bulk of the laboratory research on accountability has used subjects whose relationship to their researchers may best be described as subservient. This is not the flavour of relationship which typifies the settings in which political decisions are hammered out, making it difficult to extend the findings of the accountability research programme beyond the laboratory in which they were conducted.

Accountability theory would predict that opposing a majority of other parties in a debate could rise to the occasion with some pre-emptive self-criticism or throw in the cognitive towel and engage in hard-nosed defensive bolstering of his position. By contrast, when the same speaker is part of the mainstream of opinion in another debate, the absence of any powerful critics may lead him to show low complexity as he anticipates no reasonable or knowledgeable objections to his position. Further, the dynamic relationships in parliamentary settings, marked by transitory allegiances on certain issues and often vociferous differences of opinion on others might be expected to impact on how much integrative complexity a speaker shows from one debate to another from one parliamentary work day to the next.

While the cognitive adjustment theory and impression management theory offer insights into why politicians may show greater complexity when in power than when they are vying for power, they fail to account theoretically for variability in the level of integrative complexity which opposition politicians may show across debates during their opposition period.

Value pluralism, while presenting a strong case for the values inherent in political parties, does not account for the extent to which these core values may change in a sweeping change of government and the realignments which occur. Political movements, it may be argued, are not static entities with static core ideologies. The South African parliament, which was dramatically changed with the election to power of the previously banned ANC, forced its members, many of whom had served long years under the apartheid regime, to rethink their ideologies and the impressions they sought to project to potential voters.

As is evident from the research of the past two decades, the parliamentary setting offers a useful environment in which to compare the cognitive styles of politicians across a range of issues and political allegiances, while ensuring a consistent structure in which they take place to minimise the potential effect of a potentially confounding variables. This study uses the South African parliament as a means of investigating the relationship between the dynamic political groupings of South

Africa's first post-apartheid government and the level of integrative complexity shown by some of its members.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **3.1. The political background**

South Africa's transition to democracy, following the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, was cemented by the country's first all-inclusive general election in 1994. The ANC swept up a resounding majority of the vote, making it by far the most dominant party in the new parliament. The 400 seats in the national parliament were allocated as follows in proportions corresponding to the numbers of votes received by each party in the election.

**Table 3.1. Proportional representation of parties in South African parliament in 1996**

African National Congress (ANC)	63 percent	252 seats
National Party (NP)	21 percent	82 seats
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	11 percent	43 seats
Freedom Front (FF)	2 percent	9 seats
Democratic Party (DP)	2 percent	7 seats
Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)	1 percent	5 seats
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	0.5 percent	2 seats

In terms of the country's new constitution, the ANC's failure to achieve a two thirds majority prevented it from being in a position to unilaterally push through constitutional reforms on its own. Instead, it had to rely for this two thirds majority on ensuring the support of at least one and often more than one of the other parties, depending on their size for this constitutional change. In the

enacting of other legislation, a simple majority is sufficient to secure the passage of the bill. Despite this, the ANC has made efforts to ensure as great a level of consensus amongst parties. This has served to ensure that new bills have some broader base of legitimacy than just the support of the ANC. While the ANC, on the strength of its majority alone, can ensure the passage of legislation and has on occasion done so, this has often met with vehement media criticism and vociferous challenges by the opposition. Further, the stated goal of the ANC has been to run the first post-apartheid government as a “Government of National Unity”, suggesting that it was interested in candid consultation and accommodation of opposing views inasmuch as possible. Much of the parliamentary work of the ANC, therefore, has been directed towards convincing enough of the opposition parties to back the passing of new legislation.

An analysis of the Hansard Parliamentary Record, a transcript of the debates conducted in the National Assembly, shows that most parliamentarians, whether pressured by their party principals or by a sense of loyalty, have seldom, if ever, voted outside of party lines on any motion. Although each parliamentarian votes in his/her own right, an analysis of the first four years of the new government reflect that members vote strictly along party lines, almost without exception.

The overwhelming dominance of the ANC in parliament has also made it impossible for the other parties to get anything passed on their own steam if the ANC opposes it, even if all of them band together to that end. Much of the parliamentary debate of all parties except the ANC has, therefore,

been directed towards either preventing smaller parties from supporting the ANC. The ANC, in that sense, has on several occasions, been a lone voice in terms of the number of parties offering support for any motion. But, by weight of sheer numbers, it has never been threatened with having to support its position in any way other than to win the support of one or two other smaller parties.

The parties included in the parliament cover a broad spread of political leanings. The FF, representing primarily Afrikaners disenchanted with the more populist policies of the new government, is the furthest right wing party. A little to its left, the NP represents primarily Afrikaans-speaking white and coloured voters. Filling the more central positions in the government are the DP, the most liberal of the “legal” white political organisations in the apartheid government years, and the IFP, whose support is located mostly in the Zulu-speaking KwaZulu/Natal region and whose leader enjoyed many years as a head of the quasi-independent KwaZulu region under the apartheid government. To the left of the IFP is the ANC and, to its left is the PAC, the most socialist of the parties, with support in the more radical black consciousness movement.

### ***3.2. The research design***

This study attempted to analyse the impact of the position of a speakers in relation to other parties in the parliament on the integrative complexity shown by the speaker. All of the speeches made in parliament by two members of each of three opposition parties in the South African parliament, as recorded in the Hansard Parliamentary Record for a period spanning January to December 1996, were selected as the data set. The three parties were the National Party, the Freedom Front and the

Democratic Party. The six speakers who were selected as the sample were selected on the basis that they were the two speakers from each of the chosen parties who made the greatest number of speeches during the selected year.

### 3.2.1. Hypotheses and research questions

This study attempts to tease out the interaction of several personality and situational variables at play in parliament and the level of integrative complexity shown by speakers. These variables were:

- The extent of support the speaker enjoyed from other parties and who the supporting parties were, with special reference to the position of the ruling ANC;
- The nature of the debate in which the speaker was engaged, i.e. the extent to which it was prepared before delivery or impromptu;
- The position on the political left-right spectrum of the party to which the speaker belonged;
- The length of the speech

Specifically, the following outcomes were anticipated:

#### HYPOTHESIS 1

Members of parliament (MP) would demonstrate significantly different levels of integrative complexity when they are minorities or outliers in a debate than when they form part of the mainstream opinion on the issue under discussion.

Work on impression management (Tetlock, 1981a; Tetlock and Manstead, 1985) (see section 2.7.4) would suggest speakers would be motivated to create favourable impressions to their constituents and their colleagues and opponents and that this would vary with what is perceived to be favourable in each setting. A favourable impression when opposed to the vast majority of the parliament may be to project an uncompromising and single-minded approach. As the ANC is the distinct majority party, opposing this party alone would leave the speaker in a numerical minority, while agreeing with the ANC would place him in a numerical majority. Accountability theory would argue that speakers who perceive their opposition to be powerful and knowledgeable would be inclined to show greater complexity, suggesting that complexity should be greater if a minority parties face formidable opponents in parliament. Finally, groupthink theory (Tetlock, 1979) would suggest that complexity would decrease when a cohesive group argues together for a position. Political role theory (Tetlock, 1981a) would predict that when speakers oppose the ANC, they are fulfilling their opposition role and would show less complexity than when in agreement with the ANC.

## HYPOTHESIS 2

In keeping with the rigidity of the right (Adorno et al, 1950) and the ideologue hypotheses (Rokeach 1956, 1960; Stone, 1980), the party to which the member belonged would be a significant indicator of the level of integrative complexity. Moderates would be expected to show the greatest overall level of complexity, while conservatives would show the least.

### 3.2.2. Sampling procedure

The three parties included in the analysis were the National Party (NP), the Freedom Front (FF) and the Democratic Party (DP). The two male members who made the greatest number of codeable speeches during 1996 in parliament were selected. The parties were selected for the following reasons. Firstly, they are parties which share a number of traits, minimising the potential for confounding variables in the study. All are comprised to a large degree of members who have substantial parliamentary experience in the National parliament of the previous government. They were all, to a greater or lesser extent, part of the previous Nationalist-led government, exposing them to a wealth of experience as participants in the parliament.

Secondly, they are all parties dominated by white males, minimising the potential for racial or gender differences in their cognitive style. Thirdly, they all fall squarely in the opposition camp of the new parliament, with no previous or existing alliances with the ruling ANC.

To select the members whose speeches were to be analysed, the Hansard parliamentary record was consulted. The two members who made the greatest number of codeable speeches from each of the three selected parties during the 1996 parliamentary sessions were selected as the sample. Specifically, the 1996 session was selected to exclude other potentially confounding variables. Firstly, 1996 was two years after the election and three years prior to the following election,

minimising the chances for electioneering and political posturing in the National Assembly as part of an election campaign. Secondly, the two years following the election allowed these members of parliament to settle into their opposition role in the new parliament. Selecting debates closer to the 1994 election may have introduced the possibility that their cognitive styles were influenced by the novelty of an entirely different parliament from that to which they had become accustomed under the previous government. Thirdly, by 1996, the new parliament had begun debating the more substantial and contentious issues attendant with rewriting some of the country's key legislation, which elicited more involvement from members than was the case in the first few months of the new parliament's existence.

### 3.2.3. Characteristics of the sample

Everything which was said by each of these six members, as recorded in the Hansard Parliamentary Record during 1996, was used as the data for the present study. The data fell into the following categories of debate, as listed in the Hansard directory.

- Reading debates: The most prolific source of spoken material, these are pre-planned statements or arguments by party members, typically on a piece of planned legislation. They are read to the parliament and may be punctuated by questions or interjections from the floor. Typically, they are the longest of the data samples. Parliamentary rules allow each member to speak for a predetermined time based on proportional representation in the house, during which he or she enjoys

the ability to forward an argument for or against a motion. For this data set, the reading debates were either first or second reading debates on a piece of legislation.

- **Draft resolutions:** These are motions tabled by members for discussion in the house, relating to matters arising in the public or political domain and which they feel warrant parliamentary discussion. Typically, the tabling is made some days before the debate is conducted, allowing the members to formulate an opinion on the matter. They tend not to be concerned with legislation but with the issues which arise daily in the process of governance and invite opinion on how best to manage them.

- **Matters of Public Importance:** These are issues raised for debate by members and relate to an emerging issue or difficulty unrelated to the law-making procedure.

- **Votes:** These are statements by members as to why their parties will or will not be supporting a piece of legislation and follow the often protracted process of tabling the legislation and then discussing it during reading debates.

- **Declarations of vote:** Declarations of vote are the final step in the parliamentary approval of a piece of legislation or motions. They have been debated, the vote has been discussed and finally, members declare their vote for or against, sometimes with a brief statement as to why they are doing so.

- **Subjects for discussion:** Similar to a Matter of Public Importance, these are more impromptu debates on an unexpected or urgent issue requiring a parliamentary response or debate.



- Extended Public Committee hearings: Very similar in format to reading debates, these may include members of the public in the debate in parliament, but are also aimed at advancing, in a measured, preconsidered and time-regulated way, a position on an issue under consideration.
- Statements: These do not invite members to make their position known on something. Rather, they are simple statements, either of intent to table a motion or to make a record of something.

The eight forms of address which were included were ranked in order of the extent to which they represent an impromptu statement. The rank ordering, from most impromptu to most prepared, was made as follows:

1. Matters of public importance
2. Subjects for discussion
3. Statements
4. Draft resolutions
5. Extended Public Committee hearings
6. Reading debates
7. Votes
8. Declarations of vote

From all the speeches delivered by the selected six members, no speeches which were labelled as Statements were codeable as they involved no reasoning or debate and were thus excluded altogether. The final grouping of the debates in terms of their impromptu nature, from least prepared to most, was as follows:

1. Matter of Public Importance (MPI)
2. Subject for Discussion (SFD)
3. Draft Resolution (DR)
4. Extended Public Committee hearing/Reading Debate (EPC/RD)
5. Vote/Declaration of Vote (V)

#### 3.2.4. The integrative complexity coding scale

All of the debates were analysed for integrative complexity using the Integrative Complexity Coding system, developed by Baker-Brown, Ballard, Bluck, de Vries, Suedfeld, and Tetlock, (1992) from an earlier coding scheme put together by Schroder, Driver and Streufert (1967). This is the most recently refined method for assessing integrative complexity manifest in archival materials and has been used to investigate the writings and speeches of revolutionary leaders (Suedfeld and Rank, 1976), Supreme court rulings (Tetlock, Bernzweig and Gallant, 1985), senatorial speeches (Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti, 1984) interviews with members of parliament (Tetlock, 1984) and prime ministers (Ballard, 1983). It has also been shown to be sensitive to situationally induced shifts in complexity of information processing and can be usefully applied to documents such as letters,

essays, speeches and diplomatic communications. (Suedfeld, 1978; Suedfeld and Rank, 1976; Suedfeld and Tetlock, 1977; Suedfeld, Tetlock and Ramirez, 1977).

One of the earliest attempts to measure the level of integrative complexity demonstrated by subjects in controlled experimental systems was the semi-projective Paragraph Completion Test (PCT) developed by Shroder, Driver and Streufert (1967, Appendix 1). The test required that subjects respond to “stems” of information, such as “when I am in doubt...”, which they were required to complete. The time allowed for completion of each the stems was short (about 90 seconds), during which time subjects were also requested to write one further sentence on the topic with which the stem dealt. The responses were coded for the extent to which they demonstrated conceptual differentiation of the various points of view which came to bear on the debate and integration of these differing views under an overarching principle.

However, as noted by Tetlock et al (1992), one of the primary theoretical drawbacks of early research on the PCT was its assumption that responses to test items reflected an individual’s *characteristic style* of cognitive processing across a broad range of issues and situations. Integrative complexity was assumed to be a stable personality attribute. While there was support for the existence of systematic individual differences in integrative complexity, it by no means told the whole story.

More recent research documented a number of situational factors, outlined in the previous chapter (literature review), which impact on the level of integrative complexity which an individual demonstrates. Integrative complexity is now viewed as a product of “interacting dispositional and situational tendencies” (Tetlock et al, 1992). Working from the framework of the PCT, Tetlock provided a more detailed methodology for coding archival material for integrative complexity. His seven-point scale maps out conditions for identifying differentiation, defined as the identification of alternative viewpoints on an issue, and integration, defined as attempts by the subject to integrate the alternate viewpoints under a broader overarching principle. Scores are assigned as follows.

A score of one would be assigned to data showing no sign of differentiation or integration. The subject would be relying on unidimensional, value-laden and evaluatively consistent rules for processing information. An example showing such evaluative simplicity, and warranting a score of 1, is:

“The proposal before us is nothing more than an attempt to exclude certain parts of the population from the democratic right to freely express their opinions. It represents the most reprehensible of the tactics of new power structure which we have inherited and must be opposed by anybody who has an interest in ensuring that our nascent democracy will remain viable in the long term.”

A score of three would demonstrate differentiation of a moderate to high degree but would not include attempts to integrate these opposing views. An example of a score of three would be:

“Denying the right to allow the use of these posters as outlined in the proposal is a risky business. The MMP says, rightfully, that we should be careful of the inflammatory content of these posters

and what the results may be, but we have to be careful to ensure we don't clamp down on what is a fairly fundamental freedom, namely right to express an alternative view to that which the lawmakers would like to see us express. We have no doubt that the public should be told about the abuses that are being committed in the corridors of power.”

A score of five would show moderate to high differentiation and moderate integration and the author would show an awareness of conceptual links between differentiated dimensions of judgement.

“What has been called inflammatory here is surely more complicated an issue that the MMP would suggest. Surely, one of the fundamental freedoms of our new constitution is that of the freedom of expression. That is the right under which the a claim has been made on the validity of this poster campaign. However, we can't lose sight of the bigger picture, namely that should this campaign result in open bloodshed between already warring factions, it would be unwise to allow it go ahead purely because of the rights of these campaigners to spread their message. Their rights need to be balanced against the rights of those members of these surrounding communities to avoid yet another violent clash between supporters of warring parties to whom they have no real ties.”

The integration could take various forms. It could be based on the identification of an overarching category under which the divergent views fall, shared attributes between them, the value trade-off or conflicting goals which they embody, the identification of interactive causes of effect for an event or an explanation of why reasonable people view the same event in different ways.

Scores of seven on the scale point to high differentiation and high integration. Such scores would be assigned when an author explains how a superordinate principle provides a conceptual framework for understanding specific interactions among differentiated dimensions. An example of a score of seven would be:

“What has been called inflammatory here is surely more complicated an issue than the MMP would suggest. Surely, one of the fundamental freedoms of our new constitution is that of the freedom of expression. That is the right under which the a claim has been made on the validity of this poster campaign. However, we can’t lose sight of the bigger picture, namely that should this campaign result in open bloodshed between already warring factions, it would be unwise to allow it go ahead purely because of the rights of these campaigners to spread their message. Their rights need to be balanced against the rights of those members of these surrounding communities to avoid yet another violent clash between supporters of warring parties to whom they have no real ties. We need to step back from the obvious and polarised positions and consider the greater public good which may come from both of these approaches. The abuses of power to which these posters draw our attention are unacceptable. And, while exposing them is important in demonstrating good governance, the greater public good may be served by ensuring that we do not diminish the quality of life of those people who are most affected by the ongoing battles which have repeatedly been fuelled by assertions of this kind. We would recommend that the poster campaign be postponed until we have had a chance to engage the next round of mediation talks in a bid to mitigate their potential impact.”

Scores of 2, 4 and 6 represent transitional levels in conceptual structure between the scores of 1, 3, 5 and 7.

One of the strengths of the integrative complexity coding scheme lies in its analysis of the structure of the cognitive processes and not their content (Tetlock et al, 1992). However, this may be open to question, as the content is often difficult to disguise entirely. There is a danger that coders could be swayed in one or another direction by their own sentiments about the ideology espoused in the archival material being coded. In principle, though, subjects may advance integratively complex or simple arguments for a broad range of ideological positions. Tetlock warns against assuming that complex is always “better” than simple.

In terms of the integrative complexity coding scheme, text is considered unscorable if it consists principally of any of the following:

1. Cryptic or glib remarks or clichés
2. Satirical or sarcastic content
3. Quotations
4. Definitions
5. Purely descriptive content
6. Material which the coder cannot understand

### 3.2.5. The coding of debates

In accordance with the above guidelines, the text selected for analysis in this study was screened for scorability and all unscorable text excluded. The resulting 101 debates were coded by two blind coders who understood nothing of the research hypotheses, nor of the source of the debates, the identities of the speakers or their party affiliations. The coders were trained in the integrative complexity coding method as outlined by Tetlock et al (1992). They each individually studied the manual (Tetlock et al, 19??), whereafter the method of coding was discussed among the author and the two coders. Using the manual as a reference, the coders and the author then practised the coding technique over a period of four hours on debates sampled from the South African parliamentary from around the same time as the data sample had been collected. In all these debates and the debates included in the study sample, all identifying information, party references and other information which may give a clue to the identity or political affiliation of the speaker, was blacked out. However, it was, on occasion possible for the coders to identify the broad political leanings of the speaker from the content of the speech, potentially biasing the scores they assigned. Discrepancies in the scores from the two coders were discussed as they were encountered and coding was rehearsed until all three coders consistently coded within one point of one another.



Tetlock recommended that coders achieve a correlation of at least 0.8 with an expert scorer in order to be considered a trained complexity scorer. While this was not possible in the present study, owing to the absence of an expert scorer, the two coders were trained in the method with close reference to the coding manual then coded debates similar to those used in the study until they consistently scored within one point of one another.

Once coders had been trained in the method, both of them entirely independently coded all 101 debates. They achieved an initial score correlation of  $r=0.59$ , with 44 of the 101 debates being assigned identical scores by both coders. A further 33 were scored with one point difference between the two coders and the remaining 24 were assigned scores which were more than a single point different by the two coders. To deal with these 24 debates, the two coders were informed there was a discrepancy in their scores and were requested to reconsider their scores and alter them if they felt appropriate. For debates where the discrepancy was still greater than one point difference after both coders had reconsidered their scores, the author and the two coders discussed these until they were able to agree on a score which was within one point of one another. In so doing, the correlation between their scores rose considerably ( $r=0.91$ ).

### 3.2.6. The characteristics of the debates

The debates varied considerably in length, from one Hansard column to six columns. For long debates, where more than one matter is addressed by the speaker, the coders were

instructed to assign the highest score obtained by the speaker during that speech, regardless of whether, at times, he demonstrated a more integratively simple approach. One potential problem with this approach was that longer speeches might then be expected to score higher than shorter addresses. However, the correlation between the length of speech and integrative complexity score was not significant ( $r=0.13$ ).

When all 101 debates had been coded to within one point difference between the coders, each of them was assigned a mean score calculated from the scores of both of the coders and then ranked according to the several criteria:

#### *3.2.6.1 The extent to which the speeches were prepared or impromptu*

This is detailed above, on a scale from 1 to 5 (see Section 3.2.4.)

#### *3.2.6.2 The extent to which the speaker is an outlier in the debate and the parties from which his support came*

In order to test the possible impact of the strength of support by other parties for the view of the speaker, each debate was coded in terms of the extent to which other parties supported the speaker's position. Three measures were assigned to each debate in order to measure this.

##### *a. Position in Relation to the ANC*

The first is a simple indicator of whether the speaker enjoyed the support of the ANC or not. This is referred to as the "Position in Relation to the ANC".

***b. Outlier Ratio Without Direction***

The second measure, which will be called the “Outlier Ratio Without Direction” was computed as follows:

$$\frac{1}{\text{Number of parties supporting speaker (including speaker's party)}}$$

This measurement, which does not indicate whether the ANC was in agreement with the speaker or not, yielded a score of between zero and one, with lower scores showing a high degree of support for the speaker by other parties and a score of one showing a speaker who enjoyed no support.

***c. Outlier Ratio With Direction***

Using the Outlier Ratio Without Direction, a third measure was obtained to delineate the interaction of Outlier Ratio with the position of the speaker in relation to the ANC specifically. Referred to as the “Outlier Ratio with Direction”, this carries the same numerical value as the Outlier Ratio Without Direction, but is multiplied by either 1 or -1. Where the speaker is in agreement with the ANC, the Outlier Ratio With Direction would be a positive score. When he is opposed to the ANC, his Outlier Ratio with Direction score is denoted as negative. The overall Outlier Ratio with Direction, therefore, is determined using the following formula:

$$+ \text{ or } - \times \frac{1}{\text{No. of parties supporting the speaker (including speaker's party)}}$$

This ratio yielded scores ranging from -1 (alone against the ANC) to +0.5 (alone with the ANC).

The scores never rose above +0.5 because the ANC was always taken as the one party with whom the speaker in question was in agreement. This prevented this ratio from rising above 0.5 as there were always two speakers, viz. the ANC and the speaker's party in this condition.

For example, if a speaker was in agreement with the ANC along with two other minority parties, the outlier ratio would be

$$\begin{aligned} &+ \text{ (for being in agreement with the ANC)} \quad \times \quad \frac{1}{4} \\ &= +0.25. \end{aligned}$$

The mean for Outlier Ratio With Direction across all 101 debates was -0.078 (SD=0.4099), reflecting the fairly even balance in debates between those where the speaker was opposed to the ANC and those where he was in agreement with the dominant party.

The above three measurements were used to enable a computation of the relationship between integrative complexity and the position of the speaker in reference to the ANC together with the extent of the support he enjoyed from other parties.

#### ***d. Categorisation of Outlier Ratio with Direction for statistical analysis***

The outlier ratio scores with direction, which range from -1 to 0.5, were then categorised into four groupings for the purposes of the statistical analysis. These categories were assigned to allow the computation of variations in the amount of integrative complexity each speaker showed when falling within each of four broad categories of support. The four groups represent two broad bands of

support (namely low and high) for the speakers when they are opposed to the ANC and a further two broad bands of support (low and high) for the speaker when arguing with the ANC. The four categories, with numerical value limits for the Outlier Ratio with Direction, were set as follows:

**Group 1:** Outlier Ratio with Direction scores ranging from -1 to -0.5 inclusive. These are debates in which speakers are against the ANC and have no more than one other party supporting them.

**Group 2:** Outlier Ratio with Direction scores ranging from -0.49 to 0. These are debates in which speakers are against the ANC and have two or more parties supporting them.

**Group 3:** Outlier Ratio with Direction scores ranging from 0 to 0.49, representing debates in which speakers are in agreement with the ANC with two or more other minority parties.

**Group 4:** Outlier Ratio with Direction scores of 0.5, representing debates in which speakers are in agreement with the ANC only.

The mean scores for each of these four support categories is presented in Table 4.7.

### *3.2.6.3 Parties ranked on political spectrum*

The three parties represented in the sample were ranked in terms of their relative positions on the political spectrum in the parliament during 1996. The rankings were assigned scores from one to three, with one representing the most conservative of the parties. This ranking of the three parties was conducted to allow a testing of the possible impact of political leaning on the integrative complexity shown, an hypothesis which fuelled some of the earliest work in cognitive style and political ideology.

The most conservative of the three, the Freedom Front, was led by a former head of the South African Defence Force during the apartheid regime. It was launched with the hope of drawing a following from among disgruntled former Afrikaans supporters of the National Party and other right wing parties located further to the right on the political spectrum who had been opposed to the dismantling of apartheid. A key item in the election manifesto of the Freedom Front was that of establishing a linguistically and racially separate geographical area for Afrikaners to avoid what they felt would amount to wholesale deterioration of living standards after the election to power of a black majority government.

The NP was ranked in the second position of the three parties. This party led the former government for some 40 years and designed and implemented a comprehensive policy of institutionalised racism, apartheid. A period of armed resistance by the ANC and concessions by their final president, FW de Klerk, saw the NP government moving aside in a negotiated settlement which eventually resulted in the 1994 election. The NP, as the second largest party in the parliament, entered into what was called a government of national unity with the ANC. Their policies, while markedly different from those they pursued under their previous rule, fell in an area somewhere between those of the parties further to their left, such as the DP, and those to their right which comprised principally disenchanted Afrikaner-backed parties like the FF.

The DP equates most closely to the liberal democratic ideals to which much of the early research in cognitive style, particularly that of Adorno et al. (1950) attributed the greatest integrative complexity and flexibility of thought. While enjoying credibility almost exclusively among white South Africans, the DP was a vocal member of the apartheid government and agitated for a dispensation which was more in line with those of the liberal, capitalist democracies operating in the USA and the UK. At no point, however, was it a vocal enough threat to the apartheid regime to be considered a party which stood unabashedly for extending the vote to black South Africans.

### ***3.3. Data analysis***

The data was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) (Norusis, SPSS Inc., 1988). Descriptive statistics were calculated for each of the measures detailed above. Thereafter, correlation coefficients were calculated for the integrative complexity scores of debates by speaker, party, Outlier Position with and without Direction, Position in Relation to the ANC, and Type of Debate in a multiple correlation matrix. One-way analyses of variance were calculated for those variables which had yielded significant results in the multiple correlation coefficient calculations.

### **3.4. Key hypotheses Investigated In the data analysis**

The key hypotheses investigated in the data analysis were:

#### **3.4.1. Integrative Complexity to vary significantly depending on support from others**

This hypothesis proposed that speakers would demonstrate significantly different levels of integrative complexity when they enjoyed varying degrees of support from other parties. To assess this, Integrative Complexity scores were examined for the extent to which they varied in sympathy with Position in Relation to the ANC, Outlier Ratio With Direction and Outlier Ratio Without Direction. Simultaneously, Party, Debate Type and Speaker were controlled for to ensure they were not confounding the relationship between the level of support and integrative complexity.

#### **3.4.2. Conservative parties would show lower integrative complexity**

Much of the previous research would suggest that the more conservative parties would demonstrate lower Integrative Complexity than more moderate liberal parties (Stone, 1980; Adorno et al, 1950). The sample for this study included parties weighted more to the right of the political spectrum. It was expected that the FF would show less Integrative Complexity overall than the NP, who would show less Integrative Complexity than the DP. Again, potential confounds, including the Type of Debate and level of support from other parties were controlled.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the study. Firstly, characteristics of the data are presented, followed by analyses of the data to explore the key hypotheses and some related findings. Significant relationships between variables in the study pertaining to the hypotheses are presented, with the maximum level of significance set at five percent ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). In some cases, non-significant findings are also included as they relate to the central hypotheses.

#### **4.2. Demographic characteristics of the sample**

The sample of debates, which included all codeable parliamentary speeches by the six selected speakers during 1996, amounted to 101 speeches. These varied in length from 12 to 63 sentences in length. There was no significant relationship found to exist between the length of the speech and the score assigned it by the two coders ( $r = 0.13$ ), suggesting the length of speeches was not significant confound in determining the level of integrative complexity shown in speeches.

##### **4.2.1. The speakers**

Some demographic information is provided on each of the six speakers in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Demographic information about speakers<sup>1</sup>**

Party	Speaker name	Number of debates
FF1	J. Chirole	19
FF2	P. W. Grobelaar	19
NP1	I. D. Van Zyl	12
NP2	W. A. Odendaal	7
DP1	M. Ellis	17
DP2	D Gibson	27

**FF=Freedom Front/ DP=Democratic Party/ NP=National Party**

Gender and race were controlled for in this selection of speakers to ensure these demographic data were not confounding variables.

#### 4.2.2. Characteristics of the debates

Each of the five types of debate (see section 3.2.3 for breakdown of debate types) was assigned a value to reflect the extent to which the issue could have been expected to be thoroughly thought out before the speaker delivered his address. The first group, matters of public importance, represented speeches which had been little rehearsed and little debated previously while, on the other end of the continuum, the Votes were speeches delivered after they had already been thoroughly debated and the parties had a thorough knowledge of how each of the other parties felt, was likely to vote, and

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<sup>1</sup> Real names have been used as the Hansard Parliamentary Record is a public document.

their reasoning for their position. Table 4.2 shows the frequency with which each of the debate types occurred in the sample for each of the speakers.

**Table 4.2: Frequency of the five debate types for each speaker.**

Speaker	MPI	SFD	DR	EPC/RD	V	TOTAL
FF1	4	0	0	9	6	19
FF2	1	0	2	11	5	19
NP1	1	1	0	8	2	12
NP2	1	0	3	1	2	7
DP1	1	0	6	6	4	17
DP2	5	1	2	14	5	27
TOTAL	13	2	13	49	24	101

MPI = Matter of Public Importance/SFD = Subject for Discussion/DR = Draft Resolution/EPC/RD = Extended Public Committee or Reading Debate/V = Vote or Declaration of Vote.

The low number of subjects for discussion in the above table is largely a function of the manner in which parliament functions. Typically, they are short notice debates on a burning issue in much the same way that Matters of Public Importance are. However, they also tend to concern less “debatable” matters than do Matters of Public Importance, rendering some of them uncodeable for the purposes of this study.

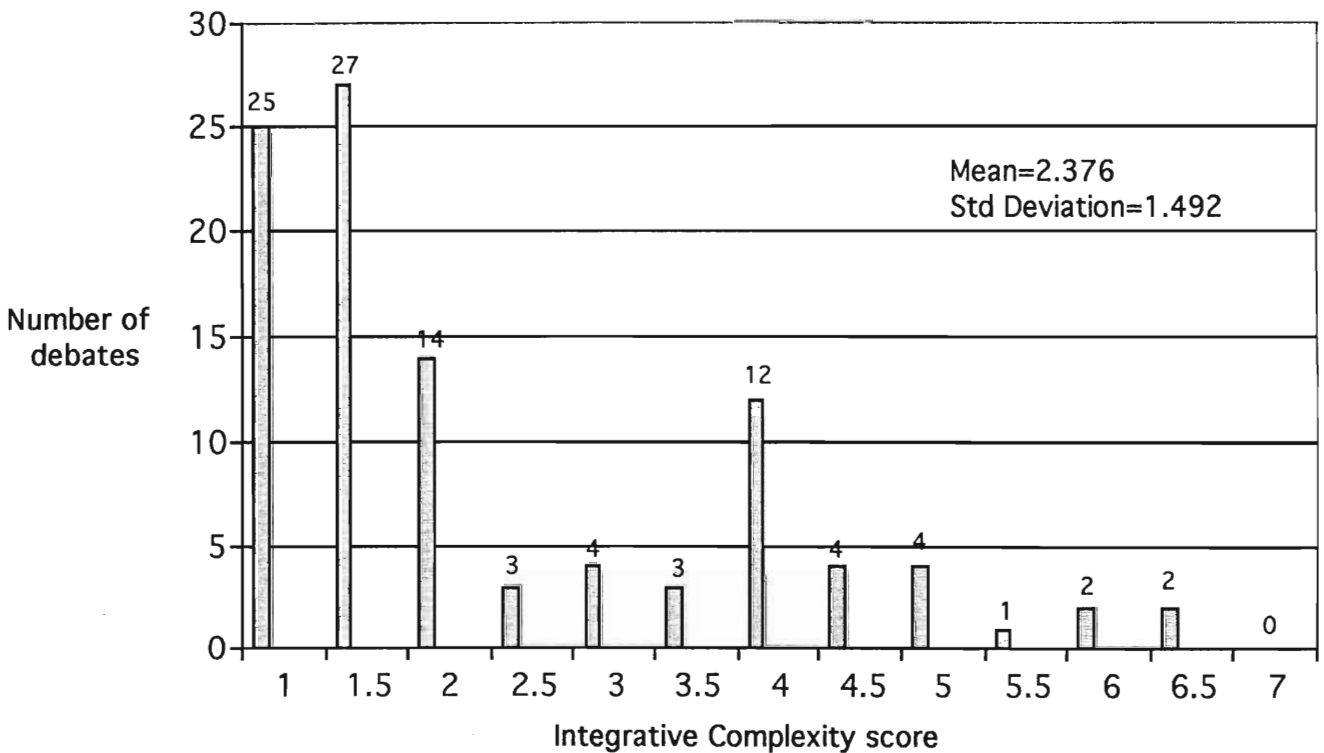
### **4.3. Data analysis**

This section presents the statistical analyses of each of the key variables in the study. Firstly, some broad features of the Profile of Integrative Complexity scores is provided.

### 4.3.1. Integrative complexity scores

The overall scores for the 101 debates, each of which was calculated by averaging the scores assigned by each of the two scorers, ranged from 1, the lowest possible score of the Integrative Complexity Coding Scheme (ICCS), to 6.5, half a point below the highest possible score. The mean score for the 101 debates was 2.376 and the standard deviation 1.492. A distribution of the frequency of each of the mean scores is shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Distribution of Integrative Complexity scores**



This distribution, which is skewed heavily towards the lower scores, reflects the generally low level of complexity shown by the six speakers. The high frequency with which a score of 1.5 was assigned reflects the frequency with which the two coders were unable to agree on whether the score should be a one or a two, i.e. whether the speaker showed any real evidence of an attempt to

differentiate an alternative view to his own. Interpretation of the correlation between integrative complexity scores and the independent variables should be made with caution in the light of the above distribution as the low number of scores above four represents a small number of cases on which to delineate relationships between the variables.

#### 4.3.2. Multiple correlation coefficients

In order to guide further statistical analysis, multiple correlation analyses were performed on all variables relating to the relative position of the speakers in each debate, their political party and debate type. The key independent variables which were investigated were those which might have been expected to have an impact on the level of integrative complexity shown by speakers on different occasions. These were:

- Whether or not the speaker was in agreement with the ANC (position in relation to the ANC).
- The extent to which the speaker was an outlier in the debate and how much support he had from the ANC (Position in Relation to the ANC) and the other minority parties (Outlier Ratio With and Without Direction).
- The Debate Type, which ranged from off-the-cuff addresses to speeches on topics which had been publicly debated on several previous occasions in the parliament.
- The party which the speaker represented and its position on the political spectrum.

The results of the correlation coefficients of these variables with integrative complexity scores are presented in Table 4.3:

**Table 4.3: Variables significantly correlated with integrative complexity scores**

<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Correlation coefficient with integrative complexity</b>	<b>Probability</b>
<b>Position in Relation to the ANC</b>	<b>0.276</b>	<b>0.005</b>
<b>Outlier Ratio With Direction</b>	<b>0.209</b>	<b>0.036</b>
<b>Debate Type (Ranked for level of familiarity)</b>	<b>0.1878</b>	<b>0.060</b>
<b>Outlier Ratio Without Direction</b>	<b>-0.023</b>	<b>0.821</b>
<b>Party (Ranked from conservative to liberal)</b>	<b>0.169</b>	<b>0.092</b>

As can be seen, the first two of these variables bore significant correlations to the level of integrative complexity at the specified significance threshold ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). A third, debate type, approached significance and so was still included in further analyses. The last two were excluded from further analysis as they were further from the threshold 5 percent level of significance adopted for this study. They were, however, tested for the extent to which they might have been confounding variables in the other significant relationships.

While the above correlations are informative, they should be treated with caution. The correlational analysis does not take account of the fact that the 101 debates were made by six speakers, i.e. six different data points. To treat the 101 debates as independent events obscures the fact that they came from six speakers and this list of correlations is unable to control for the extent to which the individual speakers may have differed across each of these variables. The correlation coefficient is likely to depend on the distribution of utterances across speakers and is likely to be biased in that the individual observations are correlated within variables. This problem is addressed later in the assessment of the

impact of critical variables on each of the speakers. This same problem occurs in other statistical analyses used in this thesis. Where there is reason to believe this may be the case based on the correlation coefficients above, potential bias is investigated within these variables.

Despite this limitation, the correlations shown in Table 4.3 suggest that the party affiliation of the speaker and the number of other parties supporting him were not significant indicators of the level of complexity he could be expected to show. However, whether that support came from the ANC did, on the basis of the correlation coefficient, appear to be highly significant, as did the extent to which the debate had been continuing in parliament and the attendant level of familiarity of the speaker with the issues it addressed. Further analyses of variance were conducted on the significant relationships outlined above to understand the nature of the relationship between them and integrative complexity.

#### 4.3.3. Integrative complexity scores of speakers and parties

The mean integrative complexity for the three parties is shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Mean integrative complexity scores for each of the parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>
<b>FF</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>1.06</b>
<b>NP</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>1.96</b>
<b>DP</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>1.54</b>

Amongst party members, the variance in scores was marked, both between members of the same party and between parties, as shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Mean integrative complexity scores for each of the six speakers.**

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>
<b>FF1</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>1.03</b>
<b>FF2</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>1.10</b>
<b>NP1</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>2.02</b>
<b>NP2</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>0.39</b>
<b>DP1</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>1.83</b>
<b>DP2</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>1.32</b>

It should be noted that the score of NP2 above may in part be a function of the smaller number of codeable debates available for this speaker.

A one-way ANOVA of integrative complexity scores by speaker was conducted to test for differences in the scores of the six speakers. A Tukey–HSD test was conducted to determine where specific mean differences lay. The F statistic was significant ( $F(5, 95)=3.82, p=0.0034, \eta^2=0.167$ ). Mean integrative complexity was found to be significantly different between speaker NP1 (mean = 3.58) and both of speakers NP2 (mean = 1.29) and FF1 (mean = 1.84), with all the other comparisons of means lying within a non-significant range. As discussed in section 4.3.2, a caution about the possible impact of the other variables limits the interpretive strength of this result, which should be considered together with the ANOVA’s investigating the impact of party affiliation, type of debate and position in relation to the ANC of each of the speakers.



The sharp difference between the mean scores of speakers NP1 and NP2 is consistent with and may be explained by the strong correlation between integrative complexity and position in relation to the ANC (see Table 4.3). Speakers tended to argue in a significantly more simple fashion when opposing the ANC than when they were in agreement with the ruling party. Speaker NP1 was opposed to the ANC for only two of his 12 codeable debates, while NP2 was opposed to the ANC for all seven of his debates. Given the strong relationship between position in relation to the ANC and integrative complexity, one would therefore expect the score of NP1 to be considerably higher than that of NP2. The same factor may explain the low mean integrative complexity score of FF1, for whom 13 of a total of 19 codeable debates found him opposing the ANC.

An ANOVA was conducted to assess the variation in integrative complexity by speaker, with Type of Debate as a covariate. All effects were entered simultaneously. Type was found to approach significance ( $F(4, 96)=3.795, p=0.054, \eta^2=0.0323$ ), but Speaker was highly significant ( $F(5, 96)=3.864, p=0.003, \eta^2=0.17$ ). This would suggest that Type of Debate may have impacted on the overall levels of integrative complexity. A more rehearsed debate seems to have elicited greater complexity from speakers.

#### 4.3.4. Scores and the relationship of speakers and parties to the ANC in the debate

Three of the speakers demonstrated higher integrative complexity when arguing on the side of the ANC for an issue than when opposing the ANC. A further two showed a marginal decrease when arguing with the ANC and a sixth was unanalysable as there were no occasions when he was in agreement with

the ANC, as shown in Table 4.6. While a visual scan of the table provides a sense of the pattern of Integrative Complexity scores when speakers moved from being opposed to the ANC to being in agreement with the party, an independent samples t-test was conducted to check the statistical significance of the relationship.

**Table 4.6: Changes in mean integrative complexity scores of speakers by position in relation to the ANC.**

Speaker	Mean when opposed to ANC	Count	Mean when with ANC	Count	Percentage of debates in agreement with the ANC
FF1	1.85	13	1.83	6	32
FF2*	1.43	7	2.54	12	63
NP1	3.00	2	3.70	10	83
NP2	1.29	7	N/A	0	0
DP1	2.28	9	3.63	8	47
DP2	2.42	6	2.31	21	78

Note: \* = significant change in mean integrative complexity when with the ANC compared to when opposing the ANC ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in independent samples t-test.

This relationship between position in relation to the ANC confirmed the strong correlation between position in relation to the ANC and integrative complexity, which was highly significant ( $r=0.276$ ;  $p=0.005$ ). An ANOVA was conducted to further explore this relationship and the Party to which the speaker belonged, with Type of Debate as a covariate. Type of Debate was first entered as a covariate and the main effects calculated for position in relation to the ANC and Party. Position in relation to the ANC was the only significant result found in this ANOVA ( $F(3, 94)=8.93$ ,  $p=0.004$ ,  $\eta^2=0.133$ ). Type, as a covariate, approached significance ( $F(1, 94)=2.95$ ,  $p=0.089$ ,  $\eta^2=0.258$ ), and Party was not

significant ( $F(3, 94)=2.290, p=0.107, \eta^2=0.04$ ). The interaction between the two main effects, position in relation to the ANC and party, was not significant ( $F(2, 94)=2.256, p=0.110, \eta^2=0.395$ ). These results point to the powerful impact of the position in relation to the ANC on the integrative complexity shown by speakers, regardless of their Party affiliation or the Type of Debate.

Overall, all three of the parties showed greater complexity when arguing on the side of the ANC than when opposing the ANC (see Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7: Changes in mean integrative complexity scores of parties, depending on position in relation to the ANC.**

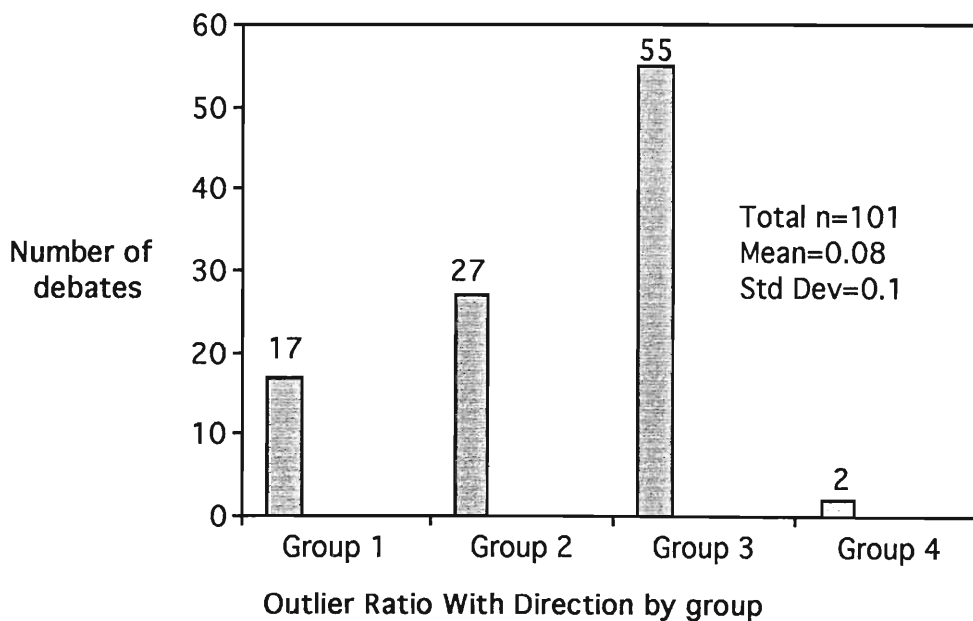
Party	Mean when opposed to ANC	Count	Mean when with ANC	Count	Percentage of debates in agreement with the ANC
FF	1.7	20	2.31	18	26
DP	2.33	15	2.67	29	26
NP	1.67	9	3.70	10	72

This finding confirms that across parties, as well as speakers, the tendency was for integrative complexity to be higher when the speaker was in agreement with the ANC than when opposing it.

#### 4.3.5. Integrative complexity scores and their relationship to the strength of support from other parties

Based on the strong relationship between Position in Relation to the ANC and Integrative Complexity, a further analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which integrative complexity varied across each of the four categories of Outlier Ratio with Direction (see Section 3.2.3 for a description of these categories). The number of debates falling within each of the four categories is presented in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Distribution of debates across the four groups of Outlier Ratio With Direction.**



The mean integrative complexity shown by speakers in each of the four categories and the frequency of debates in each of the categories of Outlier Ratio With Direction is presented in Table 4.8 .

**Table: 4.8: Mean integrative complexity scores for each of the four categories of Outlier Ratio With Direction**

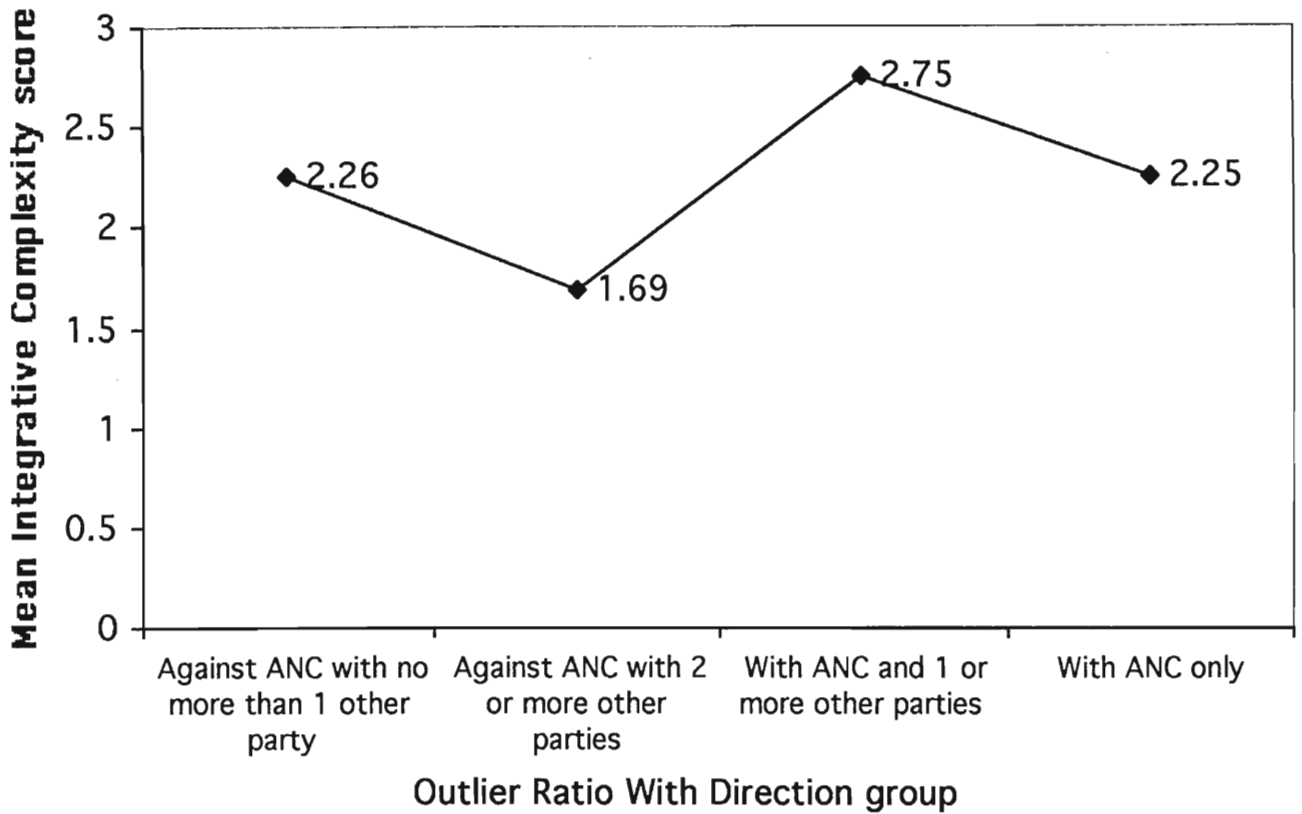
<i>Outlier Ratio with Direction by group</i>	<i>Mean integrative complexity</i>	<i>Count</i>
Group 1: -1 to -0.5	2.26	17
Group 2: -0.49 to 0	1.69	27
Group 3: 0 to 0.49	2.75	55
Group 4: 0.5 to 1	2.25	2

As is evident from Table 4.8, the mean score was highest in the third group, where speakers enjoyed the support of the ANC and at least one other party, where the majority of the debates fell.

The low number (2) of debates which fell into the fourth group is worth noting. This group represents the occasions on which speakers are supported by only the ANC in their position. This seems to have been a feature of this post-apartheid period of parliament in other debates and periods before and after the one under review and does not necessarily reflect a sampling bias. This scarcity of occasions on which one opposition party joined the ANC may be a function of the overwhelming majority which the ANC enjoyed, encouraging all of the other minority parties to operate as an opposition block. One of the most powerful ways in which minority parties could make their influence felt in parliament was to join with other minority parties in opposing the ANC. This polarisation of the majority and the minorities may have led to there being few occasions on which the ANC was arguing with one minority party against the other minority parties. However, this low number of debates in the fourth support category makes interpretation of results relating to this

position difficult and potentially unreliable. Figure 4.3 offers a graphical representation of this distribution of scores across the four categories.

**Figure 4.3: Variation in mean scores across the four groups of Outlier Ratio With Direction**



A one-way ANOVA of the differences in integrative complexity over the first three groups of Outlier Ratio With Direction was conducted to further assess where significant differences lay between them. The last group was excluded due to the low frequency of debates which it contained. This yielded a significant F statistic ( $F(2, 98)=4.995, p=0.0086, \eta^2=0.094$ ) and the Tukey HSD test showed Outlier Ratio Group 3 (with a mean of 2.76) to be significantly different from Group 2 (with a mean of 1.69), with the other interactions between the groups falling within an range which was not significant. This suggests that speakers tended to show the least integrative complexity when

they were part of a large block of opposition to the ANC than when they were part of a large block of support for the ANC. When they enjoyed little support from other parties in opposing or supporting the ANC, they tended to show a moderate level of integrative complexity.

This tendency towards a higher integrative complexity in the third group of Outlier Ratio with Direction is replicated when differences in the integrative complexity of parties across the four groups is compared, as shown in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Mean integrative complexity scores for the three parties by each of the four groups of Outlier Ratio with Direction**

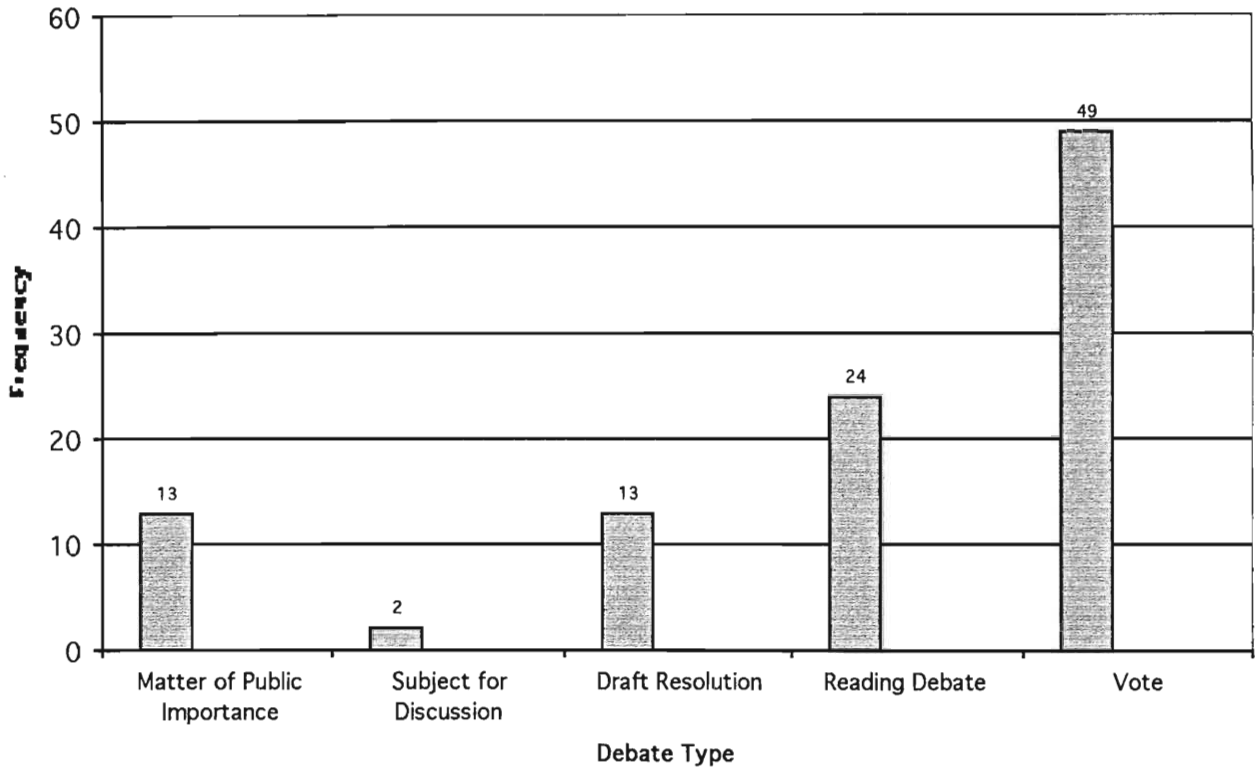
Party	Mean for Group 1 outlier ratio	Mean for Group 2 outlier ratio	Mean for Group 3 outlier ratio	Mean for group 4 outlier ratio
FF	2.09	1.22	2.31	N/A
NP	2.75	1.29	3.70	N/A
DP	3.00	2.32	2.70	2.25
MEAN	2.61	1.61	2.9	2.25

The one exception is the DP, which showed higher complexity in the first group, a position where they enjoyed little support from others in opposing the ANC. This may be in part a function of their self-avowed, long-standing role as the traditional and most vociferous opposition to the ruling party in government. The outlier position may be one to which the DP speakers became more accustomed under the previous government and the new government and one they publicly espouse.

#### 4.3.6. Debate type and integrative complexity

The distribution of the five different types of debate, which were rank ordered for the extent to which they had been discussed in parliament previously, is represented in Figure 4.4.

**Figure 4.4: Distribution of the five categories of Type of Debate**



The correlation between type of debate (as ranked in ascending order of the degree to which the debates were rehearsed) and integrative complexity approached significance ( $r=0.188$ ,  $p=0.06$ ) (see Table 4.3). As discussed above (Section 4.3.2), despite only approaching significance, Type of Debate was found to have been a possible factor impacting on the overall levels of integrative complexity, with a more rehearsed debate eliciting greater levels of complexity from speakers.



#### 4.3.7. Party affiliation and integrative complexity

The correlation between Integrative Complexity and Party, ranked from conservative to liberal, was not significant. However, an ANOVA was carried out to determine the differences in integrative complexity across the four support categories and party, with covariates partialled out before the main effects and interactions were analysed. Type of debate was partialled out before entering support category and party as the main effects. The resulting F statistics approached significance in the case of both Outlier Ratio with Direction by group ( $F(3, 90)=2.69, p=0.051, \eta^2=0.122$ ) and Party ( $F(2, 90)=2.77, p=0.068, \eta^2=0.0485$ ). The ANOVA showed a non-significant interaction between support category and party affiliation in determining integrative complexity ( $F(4, 96)=1.553, p=0.194, \eta^2=0.54$ ). However, this statistic suggests that, with Type partialled out of the equation, the role of the party to which the speaker belonged was almost as powerful in its ability to predict integrative complexity as the Outlier Ratio With Direction grouping into which the speaker fell.

#### 4.4. Summary

Position in relation to the ANC had a powerful relationship to Integrative Complexity. Speakers tended to argue more complexly when they were arguing with the ANC, regardless of the Party or Type of Debate. The scores of speakers tended to rise further when there was at least one other minority party joining them in supporting the ANC and were the lowest overall when they were one of at least three parties opposing the ANC. However, the party to which the speaker belonged also enjoyed a noteworthy, although not statistically significant, relationship with integrative complexity

scores, which was roughly as significant as the support category into which the speaker fell. Speakers from more liberal parties tended to show greater integrative complexity than their counterparts from parties further to the right of the political spectrum.

The Type of Debate also impacted on the level of integrative complexity shown, although this relationship only approached significance. Topics which had been discussed previously in parliament were associated with greater integrative complexity than those which were being debated for the first or second time.

Individual speakers tended to show similar reactions to the variables outlined above and, although there was a significant difference between the mean integrative complexity of one of the speakers and two others, this appears largely to be accounted for by the fact that they tended to fill different positions in relation to the ANC in their debates. Individual speakers showed marked variability in Integrative Complexity, suggesting that the situational variables examined here had a strong impact on their scores.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### *5.1 Introduction*

This study explored the relationship between integrative complexity, as assessed on the integrative complexity coding scheme, with a number of variables which have been identified as impacting on the level of integrative complexity in a body of research spanning the past five decades. Some of the explanations of changes in complexity in past research have posited a trait-like consistency to the cognitive style of individuals over time, principally relating to personality (e.g. Adorno et al, 1950) or to the demands of the political ideology to which one subscribes (e.g. Tetlock, 1984, 1986a). Still other explanations of changes in complexity have come from those who hold that situational variables can alter the level of complexity shown. Some situational variables which have been studied are external, such as the impact of war or civil unrest (Porter and Suedfeld, 1981) and information overload (Schroder et al, 1967) imposed on a decision-maker. Other situational variables incorporate a more social component in that they allow the decision-maker to respond in a more dynamic way. These include the audience to whom one must justify one's decision (Tetlock, 1983b), the group of which one forms part (Tetlock, 1979) and the power relations in the setting in which one is debating the issue (Tetlock, 1981a).

This chapter discusses the results of the study. The key hypotheses outlined in Chapter 3 (Methodology) will be discussed as they relate to the results and how and other findings which have grown out of the body of research in this area over the past few decades.

## **5.2 Hypothesis one – Support for speakers by other parties**

The first hypothesis of this study suggested that members of parliament (MP's) would demonstrate significantly different levels of integrative complexity when they enjoyed little or no support from others in a debate than when they formed part of the mainstream opinion. Managing impressions in the opposition and the larger audience (Tetlock, 1981a; Tetlock and Manstead, 1985) would encourage the speaker to project what he or she felt was an appealing impression to those constituents. Demands to account for his or her position to the audience would put further pressure on the speaker, with some evidence (Tetlock, 1999a) suggesting that the presence of a knowledgeable and diverse audience in the opposition would raise the level of complexity shown. Further, his or her political role (Tetlock, 1981a), either as opposition (which would be expected to lower complexity) or policy endorser (which would be expected to raise complexity) would further impact on complexity.

To test this a number of measures were established to quantify and qualify the support speakers received for their position, namely Position in Relation to the ANC, Outlier Ratio With Direction and Outlier Ratio Without Direction. Since significant relationships were found to exist between the first two of these, they will be discussed individually.

### 5.2.1. Position in relation to the ANC and Integrative Complexity scores

Integrative complexity scores in this study bore a stronger relationship to Position in Relation to the ANC than to any other single variable. Speakers tended to show significantly greater levels of complexity when they were arguing with the ANC on an issue than when they were opposing the ANC, regardless of party affiliation, debate type or the extent of the support from other minority parties.

This finding, in combination with the strong relationship between Outlier Ratio With Direction and Integrative Complexity, dovetails with and offers support for some of the extant research on political roles and integrative complexity. Tetlock (1981a), in summarising the research on political roles, notes that the policy-making role is one which typically elicits greater complexity from politicians than the opposition role. However, there is no work to date which directly addresses what may cause opposition politicians to show greater complexity. The present results suggest that when opposition parties are aligned with the ruling party in government on an issue, they demonstrate greater complexity. So, while the opposition role may predispose politicians to lower levels of complexity (Suedfeld and Rank, 1976; Tetlock, 1981a, 1984), opposition politicians they may be able to shift to greater complexity when temporarily in agreement with the majority of the house on an issue.

Tetlock has argued (1981a) that the policy-making role is more conducive to complexity because of the accountability demands attached to it, namely that one needs to be accountable for the

implementation of a decision after it has been implemented. These results suggest that something in addition to accountability may be at play, however, as opposition politicians who merely agree with a policy to be implemented by the ruling party will not be held directly accountable for its later implementation.

Tetlock's later work on accountability (1999a) sheds further light on this. He suggested that accounting to a knowledgeable and diverse opposition would be inclined to raise complexity. The present findings could be a function of the presence of conditions which promote pre-emptive self-criticism - a hallmark of an integratively complex approach. Tetlock (1998) notes that having to account for one's position to two audiences with conflicting views or an audience one perceives to be powerful or knowledgeable is conducive to pre-emptive self-criticism. However, in all but those settings where the speaker is alone in making a point, there is more than one audience to whom he should account. The nature of the audience would be different in the eyes of the speaker than it might to outside observers, however. To be an effective voice in this period of the parliament's life, minority parties relied heavily on other minority parties for mutual support in opposing the overwhelming ANC majority.

It is hard to believe that the ANC would be seen as anything but powerful by minority parties but this does not seem to have bolstered complexity when opposing it with a number of other parties. In terms of Outlier Ratio With Direction, the greatest level of complexity was shown when the speaker

was in agreement with the ANC with at least one other party, leaving, at most, three opposition parties in the opposing camp (see Figure 4.3 for a diagrammatic representation of the mean integrative complexity for the four groups of Outlier Ratio With Direction). The second greatest amount of complexity was recorded when the speaker enjoyed the support of no more than one other party in opposing all the remaining parties. Minority parties, who, during this period of the South African parliament frequently relied on other minority parties to support them in obstructing the passage of an ANC-led bill, may feel more accountable to fellow minorities when defending a position the ANC shares. Seeing their fellow minority parties as an important group to whom they should justify their position, they would be inclined to argue more complexly to them.

The significant rise in complexity when on the side of the ANC shown in this study may convincingly be explained by *impression management* theory. Impression management refers to the behavioural strategies people use to create desired social images or identities (Tetlock and Manstead 1985). However, what is considered desirable in political settings can vary from one occasion to another (Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti, 1984). In the South African parliament, an open-minded and tolerant approach seems to have been a desirable image to project when one is clearly part of the dominant opinion – which is indisputably the case when one is joining the ANC in opposing three or less minority parties. On these occasions, speakers may be inclined to take advantage of chance to project an image of open-minded candour and generosity in acknowledging the validity of the

opposition's argument without any fear that it would result in one's own opinion not being heard or enacted into law in the vote which ensues.

By contrast, it is unlikely to be of benefit to an opposition party member to be mindful of the views of others when it is opposing the majority party, a position in which a speaker is extremely likely to face outright defeat in the South African parliamentary context. The ruling party's view would in all likelihood have been thoroughly aired on several occasions as time allotments in parliamentary debates are made on the basis of proportional number of seats in the house. Moreover, in the South African parliament, speakers opposing the ANC can never expect to "win" as the sheer numerical strength of the ANC is sufficient to block any motion passed by opposition parties in parliament. On occasions when one is facing this sort of immutable opposition, MP's may feel it more useful to project the image of a committed and resolute opposition to the ruling party. This combination of political role theory and politically savvy impression management may go some way to explaining the patterns of integrative complexity shown in Figure 4.3.

Accountability theory and impression management theory are both potential explanations of these results. But the boundaries between the two are not well defined and impression management may be seen to be part of the response of these politicians to the demand from other minorities that they account for their support of the ANC. As such, we may only guess at whether impression management or accountability more cogently explains the results.



may go some way to explaining the fact that the lowest level of integrative complexity was demonstrated in the debates where the speaker was opposing the ANC with at least two other opposition parties (see Figure 4.3). These speakers, all of whom had been part of the previous government, had become accustomed to the capitalist, market-oriented and institutionally discriminatory policies of the apartheid government. The shift in mindset they encountered on entering the new government was marked and unexpected, especially for those of more conservative persuasions. Accusations that the communist leanings of the Tripartite Alliance (of which the ANC, the Communist Party and the labour movement were part) amounted to a recipe for economic and social suicide were commonplace in opposition statements. This opposition to and derision for alternative paradigms could amount to a belief for some of these speakers that their chief opponent was not “knowledgeable” about some of the issues under debate, possibly accounting for the defensive bolstering they displayed when opposing the ANC with other minority parties. While this may be conflating belief in knowledgeability and ideological disagreement and should be entertained as a possible, if unlikely relationship, it would also account for the rise in complexity when several of the opposition parties (with whom the speaker was probably often in agreement) joined the ANC in opposing the lone minority speaker.

This rise in complexity when the speaker was alone may also be a function of having to account for one’s position to more than one audience, some of whom were allies of the speaker on more occasions than not in parliament. In these settings, decision makers are inclined to engage in more

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pre-emptive self-criticism (Tetlock, 1998) and to be less dismissive of alternative views. However, this too does not adequately explain the pattern shown in Figure 4.3.

The third and perhaps the most compelling explanation of the low level of complexity shown by speakers who oppose the ANC with several other opposition parties comes from the literature on groupthink. Groupthink occurs when independent critical analysis of the available options is put aside as the group members attempt to maintain group solidarity by the suppression of unpopular doubts or opinions (Janis, 1972). Tetlock (1979) found that public statements by politicians in groupthink crises were marked by significantly lower levels of integrative complexity than statements in non-groupthink crises. While all the opposition parties in the South African party together do not equal the numerical strength of the ANC and are thus unable to ensure the blocking of a piece of legislation, they are a formidable opposition in the number of party voices and constituencies they represent. As a solid block of opposition, there may be a tendency for groupthink. There is a likelihood that dissenting voices in such a grouping will be suppressed in an effort to sway any opinion which, while unable to win by sheer voter numbers, may at least be able to sway popular opinion in its direction and raise doubts in the minds of the undecided if it presents a singular front. For these minority opposition blocs, the nurturance of doubts could mean the difference between allowing the ANC the required public and moral support for the passing of a piece of legislation and its effective blocking through the presence of a singular, protesting voice.

By contrast, when the speaker is part of a large block in agreement with the ANC, the stakes are not nearly as high. This position (Outlier Ratio With Direction Group 3) represents a “no-threat scenario” for the minority party speaker. At worst, the bill he is supporting will be passed with some vocal opposition from minority parties who can do practically nothing to halt its progress. Groupthink will, in these cases, be unlikely to feature as there is no need for a singular voice to ensure the desired outcome.

### **5.3. Hypothesis two – Political orientation and integrative complexity**

The second hypothesis stated that the party to which a speaker belonged would be a significant indicator of the level of integrative complexity.

In a stark rigidity-of-the-right perspective (Adorno et al, 1950), the FF, which falls furthest to the right of the three parties in the sample, would be inclined to show an generally lower level of complexity across all debates, regardless of the situational variables at play. The DP, filling the furthest left position as a moderate liberal party, would be expected to show the greatest integrative complexity. While the right-wing hypothesis enjoys no currency in this bland form, though, a more situationally informed rigidity-of-the-right view would expect the overall average level of complexity of the FF to be lower than that of the NP, which would in turn be lower than the DP, but with some impact being felt from situational variables. The ideologue hypothesis, which expects similar patterns from both the far left and the far right, would expect much the same in the way of

results as there were no members of the far left of the political spectrum represented in the sample. The value pluralism model would predict that the DP would show the greatest complexity but only insofar as the debates in the data sample elicited the core values of individual freedom and social equality. In terms of all three of these theories, the FF, which falls in the far right of the political spectrum, would have been expected to score lowest, followed by the NP and the DP.

This above distribution of parties by integrative complexity was confirmed by the mean Integrative Complexity scores of the three parties, which were FF: 1.99 (SD=1.06); NP: 2.56 (SD=1.96) and DP: 2.74 (SD=1.54).

However, these results should be interpreted with caution for the following reasons:

The sample of debates for speaker NP2 was significantly smaller than that of the other speakers. Each of the speakers had a different distribution of debates across the five debate types, a variable which was shown to approach significance as a confounding variable in a number of the analyses of other independent variables.

Despite the mean Integrative Complexity for the NP falling in the expected middle position, there was a significant difference in the scores of NP1 and NP2, with NP1 showing the greatest complexity of all six speakers and NP2 the lowest. This runs counter to the rigidity-of-the-right, the ideologue and the value pluralism theories and suggests on face value that political affiliation is a poor way of anticipating integrative complexity scores of speakers in this study.

The only significant difference in the mean scores of the six speakers, as determined by a Tukey HSD test, was that between NP1 and NP2.

The sharp difference between the mean scores of speakers NP1 and NP2 may be best explained by the strong correlation between integrative complexity and position in relation to the ANC more readily than it may be explained by the ideologue or rigidity of the right hypotheses. Speakers tended to argue in a significantly more simple fashion when opposing the ANC than when they were in agreement with the ruling party. Speaker NP1 was opposed to the ANC for only two of his 12 codeable, while NP2 was opposed to the ANC for all seven of his debates (see Table 4.6 for a distribution of the debates by Position in Relation to the ANC for each speaker).

On the basis of the distribution in Table 4.8, and given the strong relationship between position in relation to the ANC and integrative complexity, one would expect the score of NP1 to be considerably higher than that of NP2. The same factor may explain the low mean integrative complexity score of FF1, for whom 13 of a total of 19 codeable debates found him opposing the ANC.

Of the six speakers, FF2, DP1 and NP1 recorded substantially higher Integrative Complexity when they were in agreement with the ANC than when they were opposing it, although only FF2 was shown to be significant in independent samples t-tests of these changes. FF1 and DP2 showed

almost the same level of complexity and there were no occasions on which NP2 was in agreement with ANC. However, in comparing the mean scores of parties when they filled different positions in relation to the ANC (see Table 4.7 for a distribution of debates by Position in Relation to the ANC for each of the parties), the FF performed as expected with the lowest score in both positions.

However, the NP scored highest when in agreement with the ANC and showed a dramatic 72 percent increase when moving from opposition position to a position of agreement with the ANC. Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti (1984) found that more conservative American Senators tended to show less change in Integrative Complexity when they assumed power than when they filled an opposition role. However, this is not the case in this study. The DP speakers - representing the most liberal camp - recorded the same percentage increase in integrative complexity when they joined the majority as did the FF, the most conservative party of the three.

Together, these findings suggest that, while the impact of position in relation to the ANC was a more significant determinant of Integrative Complexity than the political affiliations of speakers, there were marked differences in the responses of different speakers and parties to this variable. The DP's failure to show a strong increase in complexity when in agreement with the ANC contradicts earlier findings (Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti, 1984) that conservatives tended to show the least change in cognitive style on the back of changes in the power balance in the American Congress.

Tetlock had proposed that the rigidity of far right ideologies may lead to a corresponding disinclination to alter their rhetorical style to meet a change in situation.

However, the overall distribution of the scores in Table 4.7 confirms the ideologue and rigidity-of-the-right hypotheses in that the FF showed an lower overall level of integrative complexity than the DP or the NP. Tetlock, Hannum and Micheletti (1984) noted that Senatorial debate in the U.S.A may be a function of both relatively context-specific styles of political impression management (which depend on the issues being discussed and the balance of power in Congress) and relatively stable cognitive styles of organising the political world (which depend much less on the issues being discussed and on the balance of power in Congress). This appears also to be the case in the present study.

### **5.3. *The interaction of impression management, accountability and groupthink***

The above discussion would suggest that no one theory can alone account for the variation in integrative complexity shown in this study. There is good reason to believe that several of them were at play, depending on the circumstances in the parliament, the political balance of power, the political affiliation of the speaker and the most favourable impression that the speaker could project under the circumstances.



The range of explanatory theories invoked here, including impression management; political role theory; accountability; groupthink and the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis have been found to interact in a somewhat cyclical manner which belies the mostly separate manner in which they have been tested to date. Impression management depends to a large degree on the audience to whom one is trying to project an image, which is closely allied to accountability. The attendant defensive bolstering or pre-emptive self-criticism speakers engage in as a response to the demand for accountability is dependent to a large extent on their belief about what is a desirable image to project.

Audiences who are tolerant of ambiguity and dissonance - cognitive qualities closely related to integrative complexity - have been found to see pre-emptive self-criticism as a sign of cognitive maturity (Tetlock, 1992) and defensive bolstering as a sign of self-righteousness (Staw, 1980). However, those with a more "authoritarian" approach to decision-making take the opposite perspective, viewing self-criticisers as confused and weak (Tetlock & Boettger, 1989, 1994) and viewing the defensive approach as a sign of courageous, principled decision making (Suedfeld, 1992; Tetlock et al., 1991). Those who were more rigid than others – in this study, the FF MP's – would see defensive bolstering as a more desirable response to opposition than moderates – in this case, the DP. This was supported by the results. However, should the FF and the DP find themselves together opposing the ANC, the FF may exert pressure towards what appears to be a groupthink dynamic, while the DP may feel it more important to project an attitude of pre-emptive self-criticism

in order to take the moral high ground. How these two parties influence one another, and how other similar groupings of speakers behave and interact, has not been examined in any of the research to date. The findings in the present study suggest that the more dynamic and fluid nature of integrative complexity in settings such as this is an area requires further investigation.

#### **5.4. Debate type and integrative complexity**

Although only close to significant, there did seem to be a relationship between debate type and integrative complexity, with debates which had been aired previously being associated with greater complexity. This would lend support to *persuasive arguments theory* (Vinokur and Burnstein, 1978), which states that the arguments that emerge in the course of a group discussion on a given issue tend to favour the alternative generally preferred by group members, and that because it is very unlikely that any individual group member will have considered all the options, some of them will have persuasive impact. It would appear that the airing of alternative views in the course of the passage of a piece of legislation through the parliamentary process leads to greater complexity on later occasions on which it is debated as new ideas are incorporated into the discussion.

Further, this supports accountability theory (Tetlock, 1983b), which argues that when a decision-maker knows the views of the audience he is addressing, he is inclined to engage in pre-emptive criticism of his own views. As a debate proceeds through the various reading debates and discussions in parliament, speakers are given the opportunity of digesting and developing counters

to the reasonable objections of their opponents, possibly explaining the higher complexity shown in debates which have been aired on previous occasions.

### **5.5. Integrating the explanatory theories**

The results of this study suggest that the *dynamic* and *relative* position of a speaker to other parties in the South African parliament may have a powerful relationship to integrative complexity. The sharp rise in complexity when arguing with the ruling party in a debate suggests integrative complexity may be more flexible and manipulable over the short term than has been suggested by previous research and offers strong support for the role of the more relational situational variables which have been identified in the research programme to date. Further, the ease with which speakers made this shift between different levels of complexity is evident in that they could oppose and support the ANC during the same week in parliament, showing sharply varying levels of complexity in both. This finding contrasts with work done to explore the impact on integrative complexity of the *absolute* position which the politician occupies on the political spectrum, i.e. whether he fills an outlier or policy-making position in the government of the day. Both policy-maker and opposition politician are rather static descriptions of political role which assume a consistency of political role over a long period.

No singly theory of integrative complexity is insufficient to explain the unexpected variation in scores found in this study. Different theories appear to be able to offer a more cogent explanation for

these findings in each of the four categories of Outlier Ratio with Direction, suggesting that all explanations may be able to account for the dynamics at work in the South African parliament. However, all these explanatory forces seem not to be elicited to the same degree under a range of circumstances.

I have argued that the study shows the strongest support for the notion of groupthink (Tetlock, 1979) political role theory (Tetlock, 1981a) and accountability theory in attempting to explain the findings of the impact of Outlier Position on integrative complexity. Together, these suggest that the political role the speaker fills as an outlier is one in which he frequently needs to assess the nature of his opposition and respond in a manner which will not isolate his supporters or create dissent which could undermine the solidarity he enjoys with them. However, these speakers often found themselves opposing former and potential future allies in the other minority parties and having to finely balance a relationship with them with the relationship they have in the debate to their present allies in the issue under debate. This may have been the critical factor in determining their response to the demand for accountability to more than one audience.

Speakers appear broadly to have viewed opposing minority parties in a different way to opposing the ANC and their perception of how formidable and influential the opposition was impacted strongly on their complexity. Speakers may have made careful and consistent evaluations of the different combinations and permutations of their opposition in each of the four categories of Outlier

Ratio. This could account for the finding that they accounted for their position in a more defensive manner when opposing the ANC, which they may have perceived as a behemoth they knew they could not defeat.

The study offers limited support for the personality type theories of integrative complexity. While the FF, the most conservative of the three parties sampled, showed lower overall complexity than the NP and the DP, the impact of the relationship of speakers to the ANC was found to far overshadow the effects of their ideological position. While there may be a predisposition towards lower complexity on the part of FF members in this study because of an overall rigidity of cognitive style, and while this may offer some support for the rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis, the impact of political leaning is insignificant when compared to the situational variable of the outlier position of the speaker from one debate to the next.

## **5.6. *Limitations of this study***

### **5.6.1. The impact of the wider audience**

Set piece political speeches, which formed the bulk of the data sample for this study, have been shown to be constructed and organised with a much wider, national audience in mind than merely the other parliamentarians to whom they are delivered (Reicher and Hopkins, 1996; Atkinson, 1984). The media disseminate the content of the speeches widely and they are the subject of written parliamentary records. To fully understand the audience to which the speakers are accountable, one

would need to take into account the perception which politicians are trying to portray outside parliament and contrast this with the image they attempt to portray to their peers in the National Assembly. While this may impact on the speeches delivered to parliament, there is reason to believe that the public statements of politicians do not vary dramatically from their more private policy positions (Tetlock, 1979).

### 5.6.2. The value pluralism model

This study failed to control for the extent to which the value pluralism model could be invoked as an explanatory theory. This theory posits that whether a speaker perceives two competing values in the issue under debate as equally important would impact on the complexity shown. To analyse this variable, it would have been necessary to code debates for the extent to which they introduced conflicting variables for each of the speakers concerned. This was not possible as the values which are most important to the speakers are difficult to identify, especially in the new South African parliamentary setting, where politicians who once supported apartheid almost overnight began to express the need for social equality. Further, these core values appear often to be obscured by the need for politicians to score political points not necessarily related to the issue under discussion during their allotted time.

### 5.6.3. The absence of parties to the left of the political spectrum

The absence of parties to the left of the political spectrum precluded comparisons of the overall integrative complexity of speakers from the full range of the South African parliament's political leanings and made it difficult to speculate on the relevance of the ideologue vs rigidity-of-the-right hypotheses. There is no party further to the left which would have been amenable to the same analysis, save for the ANC, whose dominant position in the government would have made comparisons between it and other parties somewhat meaningless. Further, the selected parties allowed control over the debating experience, age, race, gender and

### 5.6.4. The training of the complexity coders

The coding for this study was done by complexity coders who were trained using the manual of complexity coding (Baker-Brown et al, 1992). The robustness of the study may have been enhanced by the use of coders qualified by a greater history of and experience in the method, as recommended in the complexity coding manual. The use of coders with greater experience may also have increased the intercoder correlation to the 0.8 level recommended by Tetlock, thereby obviating the need for discussions of the debates for which the two coders obtained scores of greater than one point difference.

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## APPENDIX – Debates used in the study

<i>Debate</i>	<i>Speaker</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Type of debate</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Description of issue under discussion</i>	<i>Outlier Ratio With Direction</i>	<i>IC score</i>
Abolition of restrictions on the jurisdiction of the courts	DG	RD	Establishment of the right of everybody to have justiciable disputes settled by a court of law.	0.25	1.5
Allegation by Deputy Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism regarding Minister for Public Enterprises	DG	MPI	Allegations of gross financial misconduct against a Minister in respect of previous term as Prime Minister of one of the self-governing territories.	0.5	2.5
Appropriation - Correctional Services	DG	VOTE	Budget vote for Correctional Services Department.	-0.5	1
Appropriation - Justice	DG	VOTE	Vote for budget for Justice Department.	-0.5	1.5
Appropriation - Parliament	DG	VOTE	Budget vote for Parliament.	0.14	4
Appropriation - President	DG	VOTE	Budget vote for President's office.	0.14	4.5
Appropriation - SA Police Service	DG	VOTE	Budget vote for marginally increased spending on police services and enhancements of its effectiveness.	-0.25	5
Banning of public display & carrying of dangerous weapons	DG	MPI	Calls for banning of carrying and display of traditional weapons and other potentially dangerous weapons.	0.33	1
Births and death registration	DG	RD	Changes in legislation to recognise customary unions and marriages and recognition of children from these unions as not being illegitimate.	0.2	4.5
Conflict between Pagad and gangs	DG	MPI	Debate over how to handle brewing conflict between anti-drug group and organised crime syndicates	0.5	2
Consideration of report of ad hoc committee on allegations by a member of parliament	DG	MPI	Allegations by a member about comments made by a Minister about the status of nurses in the state health sector.	-0.25	2

<sup>1</sup> RD: Reading debate; EPC: Extended Public Committee; MPP = Matter of Public Importance; DR = Draft Resolution; SFD = Subject for discussion

<sup>2</sup> JC = J. Chirole; ME = M. Ellis; DG = D. Gibson; PG = P. W. Grobelaar; WO = W. A. Odendaal; IVZ = I. D. van Zyl.

Consideration of report on the rules committee of the National Assembly and the Senate on Code of Conduct for Financial interests	DG	MPI	Increase in the duty to disclose more fully the financial interests of political parties, politicians and the adoption of a code to ensure greater disclosure of a wide range of financial interests.	0.17	1.5
Correctional services	DG	RD	Amending bill in Correctional Services to allow children convicted of serious offences to be detained in prisons.	0.25	4
Correctional Services Second Amendment Bill	DG	RD	Conversion of the Department into a non-military institution.	0.17	1.5
Demobilisation	DG	RD	Integration of the former liberation army members into civilian life if they are not wanting to join the new South African National Defence Force.	0.33	1.5
Divorce Amendment Bill	DG	EPC	Amendment to allow the courts greater power to decide on the dissolving of marriages and the releasing of spouses.	0.14	1
Hague convention on the civil aspects of international child abduction	DG	RD	Restriction of the wrongful removal of children across international boundaries and the establishment of a process to restore children to their rightful custody as soon as possible.	0.25	1
Hunger strike by Comdt Willem Ratte	DG	MPI	Debate about what to do in respect of demands by a hunger striker regarding the cut-off date for a general amnesty.	0.2	2.5
International Women's Day	DG	DR	Discussion over recognition of International Women's Day	0.17	1
Legal Aid	DG	RD	Extension of legal aid system to former self-governing states.	0.14	3
Magistrates	DG	RD	Increase in the number of members of the Magistrates' Committee, making provision for executive committee and various functional committees, setting parameters of composition and functioning.	-1	1
National gambling	DG	RD	Plans for the controlled development and legislation of the gambling industry by limiting the number of licenses and the gradual relaxation of laws governing gambling.	0.33	4
National road traffic	DG	RD	Bill to ensure uniformity across South Africa in respect of road traffic law enforcement.	0.17	1.5
National roads	DG	RD	Bill to amend the National Roads Act to lend greater flexibility to the activities of the SA Roads Board, whose competencies are to be expanded, especially with regard to financial matters, thus putting the board in a position to obtain and invest funds more effectively.	-0.25	4
Road accident fund	DG	EPC	Changes in the administration of the state-run Road Accident Fund, including increased compensation for hit-and-run victims.	0.14	3

Special investigating units and special tribunals	DG	RD	Bill to deal with corruption in government departments and corruption and malpractice in parastatals.	0.14	1.5
White paper on defence	DG	SFD	Comprehensive and wide-ranging policy document on the new shape of South Africa's Defence Force.	0.14	1.5
Appropriation vote - Agriculture	IVZ	VOTE	Budget vote on Dept of Agriculture	0.14	5.5
Appropriation vote - State expenditure	IVZ	VOTE	Budget vote on state expenditure	-1	4
Communal property associations	IVZ	RD	Proposal to allowing a legal mechanism for the communal ownership of land by a group of people.	0.33	5
Consideration of report of the Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry on the small and medium enterprise provincial study tour.	IVZ	MPI	Report on a tour to assess initiatives in small and medium enterprise sector in all provinces. Recommendations include concessional interest rate loans to smaller businesses and other similar strategies to spark greater activity in this sector.	-1	2
Land administration	IVZ	RD	Bringing land affairs into line with the constitution and to assist broad process of land administration and process of securing access to land by previously disadvantaged people.	0.25	3.5
Land reform (Labour tenants)	IVZ	RD	Regulation to control the conditions under which labour tenants may be evicted, effectively allowing greater legal protection of labour tenants.	0.33	5
Land restitution and reform laws	IVZ	RD	Sets principals for restitution of land and processes for and protection of claimants' rights.	0.33	6.5
Marketing of agricultural products	IVZ	EPC	Reduction of state intervention in the pricing of agricultural products and ensuring more transparency in state interventions in prices.	0.2	2
Plant breeders' rights	IVZ	RD	Establishment of a system to grant and regulate the rights to breed certain types of plants.	0.2	1.5
Plant improvement	IVZ	RD	Tying up legal loopholes to ensure maintenance and improvement of plant quality and enhanced protection of consumers.	0.14	1
Supervision of Financial institutions rationalisation	IVZ	RD	Bringing the legislative functions of the financial institutions of the former self-governing states under the Financial Services Board of South Africa.	0.14	1



Trade relations between EU and South Africa	IVZ	SFD	Discussion of strategies to enhance trade deal between EU and South Africa to ensure best deal for South African exporters.	0.14	6
Appropriation - executive deputy president from largest minority party	JC	VOTE	Budget debate for office of executive deputy president	0.14	1
Appropriation - Improvement of conditions of service, public service and administration	JC	VOTE	Proposal to accelerate affirmative actions programme in public service and improve conditions of work.	-0.5	1
Appropriation - Improvement of conditions of service, public service and administration	JC	VOTE	Proposal to accelerate affirmative actions programme in public service and improve conditions of work.	-0.5	3
Appropriation - Parliament	JC	VOTE	Parliamentary budget vote - to increase parliamentary allowances.	0.17	1.5
Appropriation - Public enterprises	JC	EPC	Budget vote for department of public enterprises - Significant indications of intent to partially privatise key state industries.	-1	4
Appropriation - Public enterprises	JC	EPC	Budget vote for department of public enterprises - Significant indications of intent to partially privatise key state industries.	-1	2
Appropriation - SA Police Service	JC	VOTE	Budget vote for marginally increased spending on police services and enhancements of its effectiveness.	-0.25	1
Appropriation - Transport	JC	VOTE	Budget vote for transport department	-1	1.5
Banning of public display & carrying of dangerous weapons	JC	MPI	Calls for banning of carrying and display of traditional weapons and other potentially dangerous weapons.	-0.5	2
Conflict between Pagad and gangs	JC	MPI	Debate over how to handle brewing conflict between anti-drug group and organised crime syndicates	-1	1
Management of Transnet	JC	MPI	Charges of mismanagement and corruption in transport parastatal Transnet	-0.33	1
Management of Transnet	JC	MPI	Charges of mismanagement and corruption in transport parastatal Transnet	-0.33	1
National road traffic	JC	RD	Bill to ensure uniformity across South Africa in respect of road traffic law enforcement.	0.17	2

National roads	JC	RD	Bill to amend the National Roads Act to lend greater flexibility to the activities of the SA Roads Board, whose competencies are to be expanded, especially with regard to financial matters, thus putting the board in a position to obtain and invest funds more effectively.	-0.25	1
Parliamentary and provincial medical aid scheme	JC	RD	Proposal to extend mandatory medical aid membership to judges of the Constitutional Court and members of the provincial legislatures.	0.2	1.5
Public service	JC	RD	To reduce retirement age of public servants from 65 to 55	-1	1.5
Public service	JC	RD	Amendment to bring all employees in the public service under the same jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission and enable them to enjoy the protection of the proposed Public Service Act (still to be enacted). Principally to establish equality amongst personnel ahead of other amending legislation.	0.25	3.5
Road accident fund	JC	EPC	Changes in the administration of the state-run Road Accident Fund, including increased compensation for hit-and-run victims.	0.14	1.5
Transport advisory council abolition	JC	RD	Bill to abolish the old transport advisory council as it is seen as non-representative of the players in the industry and because other structures now perform its duties more efficiently.	-1	4
Appropriation - Education	ME	VOTE	Vote on Education budget	-0.5	6
Appropriation - Health	ME	VOTE	Budget vote for Department of Health	-0.33	1.5
Appropriation - Public enterprises	ME	VOTE	Budget vote for department of public enterprises - Significant indications of intent to partially privatise key state industries.	0.2	1.5
Appropriation - Welfare	ME	VOTE	Annual budget vote for Department of Welfare.	0.25	5
Appointment of Committee on Assertions by Min for Health regarding Sarafina 2	ME	DR	Motion tabled to appoint a committee to investigate allegations that the Minister of Health deliberately misled parliament in respect of the management of donor funding for Sarafina 2.	-0.17	1
Appointment of Committee on Assertions by Min for Health regarding Sarafina 2	ME	DR	Motion tabled to appoint a committee to investigate allegations that the Minister of Health deliberately misled parliament in respect of the management of donor funding for Sarafina 2.	-0.17	2.5
Choice on termination of pregnancy	ME	RD	Proposal to allow a choice on termination of pregnancy in the early stages of a pregnancy.	0.25	6.5
Expenditure by Min for Health on Sarafina 2	ME	DR	Public outcry over the unauthorised expenditure by the Minister for Health of donor funds on the Aids play Sarafina 2.	-0.17	1

Expenditure by Min for Health on Sarafina 2	ME	DR	Public outcry over the unauthorised expenditure by the Minister for Health of donor funds on the Aids play Sarafina 2.	-0.17	4
Formation of an SADC Parliamentary forum	ME	DR	Establishment of a SADC parliamentary forum and the mechanisms of its establishment.	0.14	4.5
Land reform (Labour tenants)	ME	RD	Regulation to control the conditions under which labour tenants may be evicted, effectively allowing greater legal protection of labour tenants.	-0.33	2
National youth commission	ME	RD	Establishment of a National Youth Commission to promote empowerment and development of youth.	0.17	2
Parliamentary and provincial medical aid scheme	ME	RD	Proposal to extend mandatory medical aid membership to judges of the Constitutional Court and members of the provincial legislatures.	0.2	1.5
Parliamentary oversight of donor funds	ME	MPI	Call for the more transparent parliamentary oversight of donor funds in light of the unauthorised expenditure on Sarafina 2.	-0.2	1.5
Public prosecutor's report on Sarafina 2	ME	DR	Discussion of report censuring the Department of Health for the manner in which the Sarafina 2 play was overseen.	-0.17	1
South African schools	ME	RD	The creation of a single national school system and norms for learners and school administration.	0.25	4
University of Port Elizabeth	ME	RD	Proposal to change the administration and constitution of the university to redress discriminatory policies operative under the previous government.	0.2	4
Agricultural research	PG	RD	Sets out objectives of Agricultural Research Council and delineates the administrative functions thereof, especially the constitution of its council.	0.2	2
Appropriation - Agriculture	PG	VOTE	Budget vote for Department of Agriculture	0.14	1.5
Appropriation - Health	PG	VOTE	Budget vote for Department of Health	-0.33	1.5
Appropriation - Housing	PG	EPC VOTE	Budget vote for Department of Housing	0.14	1.5
Appropriation - Land Affairs	PG	VOTE	Budget vote for Department of Land Affairs	-1	2
Appropriation - Land Affairs	PG	VOTE	Declaration of vote on budget vote for Department of Land Affairs	-1	1
Appointment of Committee on Assertions by Min for Health regarding Sarafina 2	PG	DR	Motion tabled to appoint a committee to investigate allegations that the Minister of Health deliberately misled parliament in respect of the management of donor funding for Sarafina 2.	-0.17	2
Choice on termination of pregnancy	PG	RD	Proposal to allow a choice on termination of pregnancy in the early stages of a pregnancy.	-0.33	1
Communal property associations	PG	RD	Proposal to allowing a legal mechanism for the communal ownership of land by a group of people.	0.33	4

Deeds registries	PG	RD	Amendments to change the deeds regulations to reflect changing patterns of land usage.	0.2	1.5
Expenditure by Min for Health on Sarafina 2	PG	DR	Public outcry over the unauthorised expenditure by the Minister for Health of donor funds on the Aids play Sarafina 2.	-0.17	1
Interim protection of informal land rights	PG	RD	Protection of informal rights to land tenure until land tenure solutions are in place.	0.33	4
Land administration	PG	RD	Bringing land affairs into line with the constitution and to assist broad process of land administration and process of securing access to land by previously disadvantaged people.	0.25	3
Land reform (labour tenants)	PG	RD	Regulation to control the conditions under which labour tenants may be evicted, effectively allowing greater legal protection of labour tenants.	0.33	1.5
Land restitution and reform laws	PG	RD	Sets principals for restitution of land and processes for and protection of claimants' rights.	0.33	2
Marketing of agricultural products	PG	EPC	Reduction of state intervention in the pricing of agricultural products and ensuring more transparency in state interventions in prices.	0.2	4.5
Parliamentary oversight of donor funds	PG	MPI	Call for the more transparent parliamentary oversight of donor funds in light of the unauthorised expenditure on Sarafina 2.	-0.17	1.5
Plant breeders' rights	PG	RD	Establishment of a system to grant and regulate the rights to breed certain types of plants.	0.2	1.5
Upgrading of land tenure rights	PG	RD	Offering a choice of land tenure system, ie. freehold or other methods used in some areas.	0.25	3.5
Appropriation - Health	WO	VOTE	Budget vote for Department of Health.	-0.33	1
Appropriation - Health	WO	VOTE	Budget vote for Department of Health.	-0.33	1.5
Appointment of Committee on Assertions by Min for Health regarding Sarafina 2	WO	DR	Motion tabled to appoint a committee to investigate allegations that the Minister of Health deliberately misled parliament in respect of the management of donor funding for Sarafina 2.	-0.17	2
Choice on termination of pregnancy	WO	RD	Proposal to allow a choice on termination of pregnancy in the early stages of a pregnancy.	-0.33	1
Consideration of report of ad hoc committee on statements of member	WO	MPI	Allegations made by minister concerning provocative statements allegedly made by Minister for Health about nurses	-0.25	1

Expenditure by Min for Health on Sarafina 2	WO	DR	Public outcry over the unauthorised expenditure by the Minister for Health of donor funds on the Aids play Sarafina 2.	-0.17	1.5
Public prosecutor's report on Sarafina 2	WO	DR	Discussion of report censuring the Department of Health for the manner in which the Sarafina 2 play was overseen.	-0.17	1