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# A (Qualified) Reaffirmation of ANC Hegemony: Assessing South Africa's 2009 Election

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## Abstract

This article analyses South Africa's 2009 general election, the fourth of the democratic era. It contends that while the pre-election period created a number of opportunities for the principal opposition parties, the outcome was a disappointment for them, at least in terms of seriously eroding the national electoral dominance of the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The article seeks to offer a number of explanations for the ANC's fourth consecutive victory while also recognizing that 2009 did not provide it with an unambiguously positive mandate. The outcome might best be characterized as one of qualified hegemony in which the ANC may now have passed its electoral high water mark. The 2009 poll has created some useful bridgeheads for the opposition from which

they can make further advances if they can demonstrate the tactical flexibility, the political acumen, the organizational skills, and the staying power to do so.

## Notes

This is an Afrikaans term which translates as a quarrel between brothers.

## Additional information

### Notes on contributors

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The author would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by the British Academy.

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