

Unpacking race, party and class from below: Surveying citizenship in the Msunduzi municipality

Laurence Piper, Cherrel Africa

Abstract

On the basis of a 2008 survey conducted in the Msunduzi municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal province, the paper begins an exploration of the character of popular politics and citizenship in South Africa. Embracing a 'citizen-centred' methodology informed by participation literatures, and sensibilities to the 'work in progress' character of African cities from urban studies debates, the paper interrogates the mainstream liberal-participatory model of citizenship in South Africa, and the critiques of current South African politics informed by these notions, specifically the 'racial census' and 'dominant party syndrome' analyses. Taken together these views can be read as characterising South African politics as a game for individual citizens governed by liberal rules, but played by racial and/or partisan groups in exclusionary ways, thus distorting liberal democratic mechanisms of representation and accountability. The paper also examines evidence for an alternative class-based analysis of one aspect of citizenship, namely, protest against poor local governance.

The paper looks to unpack this 'liberal model versus racialised communitarian practice' imaginary by, on the one hand, demonstrating the ways in which citizenship is not racialised, or is asymmetrically racialised. Indeed, other than party allegiances and trust in key offices, very little by way of what citizens do, believe or think of themselves follows discrete racial lines. Similar points hold for partisanship too. On the other hand, the paper does not redeem the liberal-democratic model as there is also evidence of trust in government when it is not deserved based on performance, but more importantly, evidence that citizens embrace 'informal' means to secure their rights. A good example of this is protestors who are also more likely to vote than non-protestors. Taken together, these findings affirm both the way in which the racial and partisan legacy of the past is being undone by new institutions and practices, and suggest the complex intersection of these with networks of personal relations which characterise the local politics of most African cities.

1. Introduction

Over the past 10 years in South Africa the number of public protests against poor local governance has risen dramatically (Karamoko, 2011: p. 6). Further, protests have increased despite the introduction of 'invited spaces' (Cornwall, 2002) for communities to engage local government since 2000. Consisting of ward committees, and forums for public consultation around the annual budget and development planning (Barichiev et al., 2005), these spaces are poorly implemented and ineffective at best, or captured for some other politics at worst (Piper and Deacon,

2009; Piper and Nadvi, 2010). Just as remarkable as the growing level of local protest is that fact that electoral support for the ruling party in almost all the areas where protest occurs has remained minimally affected. Thus African National Congress (ANC) support has dropped only in the last two elections (one national, one local), and only by a few percent (Southall and Daniel, 2009; Booysen, forthcoming).

The fact that the ANC - and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) for that matter - continue to do so well at the polls despite popular dissatisfaction with local governance has led many to argue that racial or party loyalty trumps assessments of interests for voters. Hence the recent 2011 local government elections saw some commentators interpreting the results as the triumph of 'identity politics' over the interests of voters in good service delivery (Mangu, 2011). This argument is a reincarnation of the idea of elections as a 'racial census' first mooted by Johnson and Schlemmer (1996). Since then, the debate on the significance of identity for voter choice has moved on substantially (Mattes, 2005; Lodge, 1999; Reynolds, 1999), and most scholars of South African politics do not see voting for, and protesting against, ANC local governments as necessarily contradictory. For example, Booysen (2007) articulates the combination of 'ballot and brick' as a rational strategy by voters to maximise their interests rather than just register a racial identity. According to Booysen (2007: p. 31) the reason for this is that, 'in the service-delivery stakes, they still trust the ANC more than other political parties and they reckon that they have a better chance to hold the ANC accountable through protest, if and when necessary'. Notably, even in this account the appeal to trust leaves open the possibility that identity may influence choice, albeit party rather than racial identity. This sentiment is well captured by Tapscott (2011) who states that 'in South Africa most people support political parties like they support their sports teams. When the team does badly they may want to change the coach and players, but they would not dream of supporting another team'.

Despite this more nuanced analysis of representation and accountability in South African politics as not just about race but perhaps about party-linked forms of identification, the notion of 'voter loyalty' remains powerful in mainstream political science discourse, and is explicitly linked to many of the problems of poor governance commonly observed in the media. This is because a basic tenet of the liberal democratic model is that democracy is about choosing leaders to represent popular interests in the decision-making process. This has its most famous articulation in the works of Joseph Schumpeter (1942) and was further developed by Dahl (1971, 1998), and is now operationalised globally into various indices of democracy and democratisation. In South Africa, the argument runs, accountability is severely undermined because voter loyalty means that the vote is not used for its intended purpose, but rather to reflect 'team' identification.

Voter loyalty is widely seen as further endangering democracy in South Africa as it maintains the electoral dominance of the ruling party, the ANC, regardless of its

performance, thus producing a de facto one-party system (see Butler, 2009). The claim is that this enduring dominance is leading to a 'dominant party syndrome' where the party starts to assume that it alone is entitled to govern, and treats the state as an extension of its own identity, making it more inclined to respond to the logics of intra-party dynamics rather than the people it serves. Over time, it is held, the ruling party will become more complacent and self-serving, and even authoritarian in reacting to the legitimate demands of its citizens. Of late the ANC certainly does seem vulnerable to forms of neopatrimonial politics with factions or networks within the party at all levels looking to plunder state resources for their own private rather than public ends.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that this approach resonates with received Western opinion about politics more widely in Africa which is characterised as in some way perverse (Meredith, 2006). Against the ideal-typical modernist construction of state and democracy in formal and depersonalised terms is rallied the stereotype of African politics as authoritarian rule and personalised patron-client relationships, usually underwritten by some shared ethnic, family or kin identity, with associated moral economy. In the South African case, the significance of voter loyalty, linked to some form of racial and/or party identity politics, is reinforced by the history of the racialisation of power under the systems of segregation and apartheid, the effects of which are still very much evident to this day. Indeed, the undoing of apartheid has taken a shape nicely summarised by Seekings and Nattrass (2006) when they state that in South Africa wealth, but not poverty, has been deracialised.

This asymmetrical undoing of apartheid's race/class hierarchy links to a more recent set of class-related analyses of popular protest. Thus Peter Alexander (2010: p. 37) argues that protest can be seen as a 'rebellion of the poor' principally about inadequate service delivery and lack of accountability by local government councillors. Holdt et al. (2011: p. 24) argue that protests are best understood as forms of 'insurgent citizenship' due to rapid processes of class formation which are 'generating fierce struggles over inclusion and exclusion both within the elite, between elites and subalterns, and within the subaltern classes themselves'. In the turn to race or class respectively to explain key aspects of citizenship in South Africa, there is something of earlier debates about the nature of the apartheid, although notably Van Holdt et al. do look to move the debate forward by linking class struggle to issues of citizenship. Thus, writing in respect of the protests they state (2011: p. 24):

While the processes of class formation are producing what Holston (2008: pp. 7-9) calls 'differentiated citizenship'—which distributes treatment, rights and privileges differentially among formally equal citizens according to differences of education, property, race, gender and occupation—subaltern groups respond by mobilising an 'insurgent citizenship' around claims that 'destabilise the differentiated'.

In sum then, the paradox of 'ballot and brick' in local governance in South Africa has prompted analysis from the Political Science mainstream which has tended to affirm

ideas of 'voter loyalty' linked to notions of enduring racial identity and/or party

popularity, with some recent alternative accounts of protest that look to class-related forms of analysis linked to competing conceptions of citizenship. In what follows in this paper, and in the spirit of Benit-Gbaffou and Matlala, also in this journal, we will look to interrogate these views with evidence of popular views of citizenship drawn from a survey of three wards in the Msunduzi municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

As it transpires the survey evidence suggests that appeals to concepts of race, party and class are only of partial use in understanding citizenship in South Africa, especially at the level of urban politics, and that we need to direct our inquiries in new ways, perhaps informed by experiences of urban governance elsewhere in Africa. In making this case, the following section outlines what is meant by citizenship, especially in the formal design of the political system in South Africa. The paper then relates this formal ideal to the various accounts of actual political practice, and what would count as evidence for these different views, and then briefly outlines the case- study site and the methodology before presenting the findings.

2. Unpacking the liberal-participatory model of citizenship in South Africa

The intention of this paper is to bring mainstream views about politics and citizenship South Africa into collision with insights from two sets of literature. The first, drawn from work on popular agency, mobilisation and public participation in the Citizenship Development Research Centre (CDRC), affirms the value of a citizen-centric view of politics as opposed to the normal institutional and indeed state-centric view of the Political Science mainstream. In this spirit, the paper explores South African politics through citizens' eyes. Notably, the intention is to interrogate both the liberal-participatory model of citizenship encoded in South African law and policy, and the analysis of various 'communitarian pathologies' in light of the lived experience of citizenship. This approach reveals the limited utility of race and/or party to understanding citizenship in South Africa, not least as the basic patterns of what people do, believe and feel about themselves in respect of public authority are either commonly practiced across all groups, or asymmetrically racialised such that one group stands out from the norm. Indeed, race and party apply most usefully to electoral politics only. Thus, once we broaden the view of South African politics from voting to citizenship the significance of race and party-based explanations recedes.

The second set of literature on urban studies in African cities (Robinson, 2006a, 2006b; Simone, 2001, 2004a, 2004b) opens up a sensibility to the importance of the forms of politics perceived as antithetic to the liberal-participatory mainstream model, including forms of clientelism and corruption, but also forms of politics outside of the liberal-participatory imaginary that emerge in the context of weak or failed governance which Simone (2004a) terms constructing 'people as infrastructure', including ongoing practices of information gathering, network-building, competency performance and related forms of 'crisis-management' in unstable and risky inner city environments. An indication of the importance of this

approach is revealed in our survey by the fact that although those who protest are neither White nor especially poor, and are more likely to vote and to participate in 'invited spaces' of local governance than non-protestors. This raises questions over whether these citizens are in fact not some form of insiders linked to power through some clientelistic network rather than members of the most marginalised groups.

First, though, we ought to define citizenship. As Barnett and Scott (2007: p. 291) note, citizenship can be understood in a thin sense as about legal status conferred by membership of a state, or in a thicker sense as also about the various practices citizens engage in with respect to public authority. It is the latter meaning of citizenship that is foregrounded in this paper, although clearly the lived experience of citizenship in South Africa, as in most places, will include reference to the legal entitlements and obligations of citizenship too. Furthermore, this paper is interested in interrogating the imaginary of liberal-participatory democratic citizenship encoded in the Constitution, law and policy, including the design of local governance, and how this relates to the lived experience of citizens in the Msunduzi case. As Gaventa and Tandon (2010) note, citizenship in a globalising world is becoming more complex as political authority shifts away from the state to forms of partnership between state and private companies, and upwards to post-national political processes. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study we shall focus on citizenship in respect of the South African state and, as operationalised below, this includes relationships of four kinds with government, political society, civil society and communities or fellow citizens.

In unpacking the idea of citizenship formally encoded by the South African state, the obvious place to start is with the South African Constitution of 1996. Often described as 'one of the best in the world', the South African Constitution is a quintessential liberal and pluralist document. Hence, Chapter Two, the Bill of Rights includes political rights like the right to vote, to stand for office, to form political parties; civil liberties like the rights of property, equality, religion, speech and academic freedom; socio-economic rights like the right to food, water, shelter as well as children's rights and certain environmental rights. Notably the socio-economic rights are all limited by the qualifier that the state must take 'reasonable legislative and other measures, within its resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights' (Constitution, 1996). In addition to affirming classic individual rights, the Constitution also affirms certain group and language rights, but like the socio-economic rights in relation to political and civil liberties, they are framed less compellingly than individual rights.

Further to the affirmation of individual and group rights the Constitution also outlines a system of multi-party, proportionally representative electoral democracy with various checks and balances typical of the a liberal model, including an independent judiciary, a free press and a (weak) division of powers between executive and legislature. The Constitution also establishes various so-called 'Chapter Nine' institutions like the Independent Electoral Commission, the Public Protector and the

Auditor General amongst others to act as potential counter-veiling forces to the abuse of power by government. Furthermore the Constitution establishes three spheres of government at national, provincial and local level, each with a degree of autonomy in that they each have certain legislative and executive functions, although the degree of devolution of power to provinces is slight, and most limited to implementation on key policy areas of education and health; devolution to the local sphere is not much greater. A small caveat here is that the quality of implementation of policy varies tremendously across the country and provinces such that in many ways policy is made in implementation, thus affirming the importance of the provincial and local in practice. In principle then, the pluralist conceptions of democracy are affirmed in providing regionally-specific opportunities for representation.

Notably, in respect of local government the Constitution makes provision for what are arguably 'more democratic' forms of political institution. Hence the electoral system of local government is 50% constituency-based and 50% the proportional representation party lists system at national and provincial level. Half of the councillors in any municipality are elected as individuals who contest a local area of the municipality, called a ward. The other half are selected by the party and the party is allocated a percentage of seats in proportion to the percentage of votes it secures in the local government election. The idea behind this approach is to make local government more accessible to communities and also more accountable (Booyesen, forthcoming). This is because international experience has shown that while proportional representational systems are good for including all social groups equitably, which is important in deeply divided societies like South Africa, they are not good at accountability as politicians report to their parties not the people. Conversely, constituency-based systems tend to disproportionately reflect the popular choice of parties, but offer greater opportunities to keep politicians accountable as they are directly elected by constituencies not by parties, and must usually live in the area they represent (Mozaffar et al., 2003).

In addition to the above, local government in South Africa is meant to include forms of public participation largely absent from national and provincial government. Thus, Section 152 of the Constitution includes among the objectives of local government (1)(a) 'to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities' and (1)(e) 'to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government'. The Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 requires municipalities to complement their structures of representative government with a system of 'participatory governance'. As argued by Barichievy et al. (2005), there are three substantive aspects to the innovation of 'participatory governance'. First, in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000, the local community is included alongside councillors and administrators in the legal definition of a municipality, a move of great symbolic significance. Second, included are requirements for public involvement in municipal decision-making processes like the annual budget, the development plan review process, the performance management system, service delivery contracting and all by-laws. Last are ward committees. The Municipal

Structures Act provides for ward committees to be established in each ward of a metropolitan municipality, city or town. Chaired by the ward councillor, ward committees are intended to consist of up to 10 people representing 'a diversity of interests' in the ward, with women 'equitably represented'. In respect of their role, ward committees are mostly advisory bodies to ward councillors but may enjoy greater powers if the council sees fit.

In summary then, the law and policy frame citizenship in South Africa in fairly typical liberal ways, but also supplemented with forms of participation at the local level. In this model, the typical South African citizen is someone who would look to advance their interests by participating in four domains governed by quite specific liberal-democratic rules: government, which would include voting in elections and participating in the invited spaces of local government; political society, which would include participating in political parties and their campaigns; civil society, which would include participating in various civil society formations and their activities; and the public realm, which would include engaging in public debates through the media or other forums.

In what follows we explore popular attitudes towards the key aspects of citizenship noted above: (i) what people do in respect of the four forms of political authority, (ii) how they feel about political authority, and (iii) how they imagine themselves in respect of this political authority. If the 'racial census' view of South African politics is correct then we would expect to find citizenship heavily racialised - both in the sense that citizens see themselves and politics in racial terms, and in the sense that differences in practices and attitudes take racial lines. The evidence allows us to explore popular attitudes towards political parties, and especially the assumption about the popularity of the ruling party in terms other than votes. Lastly, the evidence allows us to explore whether protestors are indeed limited to those from historically poor community black communities who have not been as upwardly mobile as their former neighbours. In sum, by exploring citizenship from below we open up the possibility of interrogating some key framings of South African politics.

3. Section two: the survey in Msunduzi

The survey was conducted in 2008 in the municipality of Msunduzi in KwaZulu-Natal as part of the New Forms of Citizenship Project run out of the African Centre for Citizenship and for Democracy (ACCEDE) in the School of Government at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)¹. The case-study site and methodology are outlined briefly in this section.

3.1 Msunduzi: the context

The Msunduzi municipality (KZ225) includes the city of Pietermaritzburg, which is the capital of the province of KwaZulu-Natal (see Fig. 1). The second largest municipality in the province after the eThekweni metro, Msunduzi covers an area of

¹ See <http://www.drc-citizenship.org/>.

approximately 649 square kilometres and with a population in excess of 500,000 inhabitants. There are 37 wards. For a description of the wards and the local names, see Fig. 2.

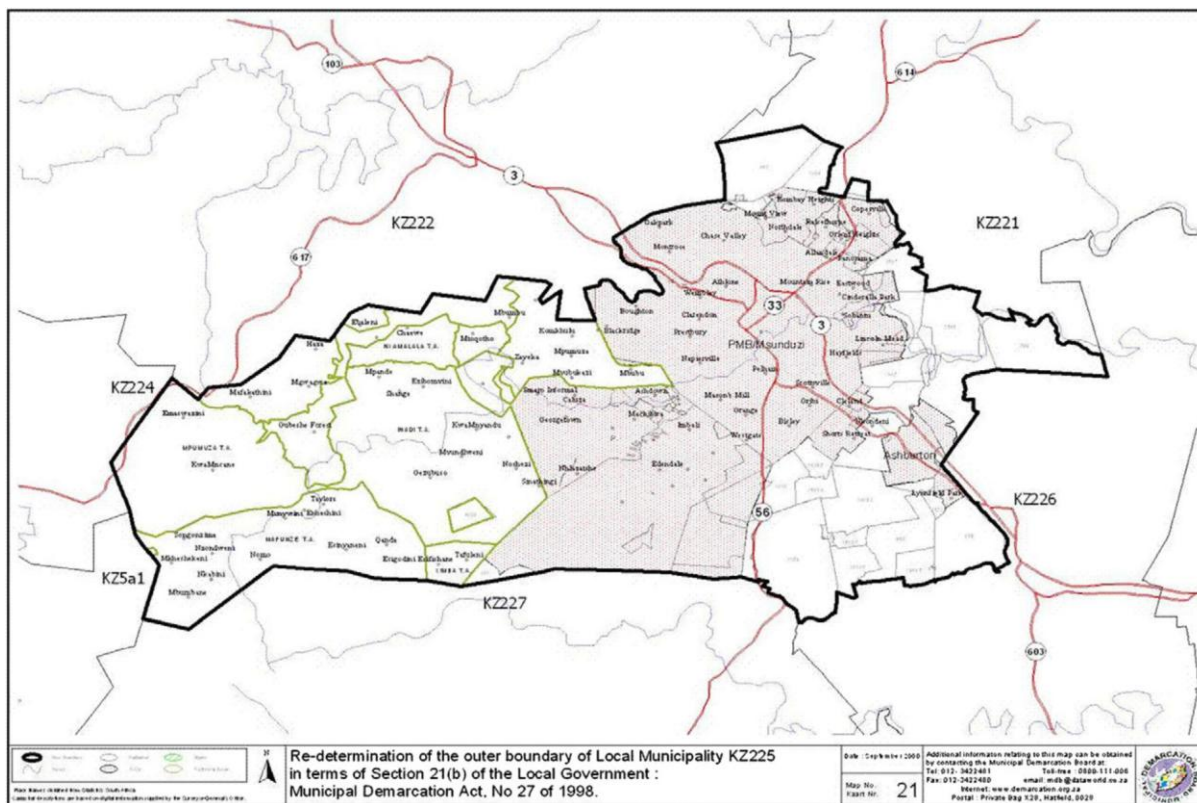


Fig. 1. The Msunduzi municipality (KZ225) in KwaZulu-Natal. Source: National Demarcation Board (see http://www.demarcation.org.za/pages/default_new.html. Accessed 16 June 2011.)

In terms of demographics Msunduzi closely reflects the province. Nearly 80% of the population are black African, and the vast majority of these (over 90%) are isiZulu-speaking. Indian South Africans constitute the second largest group at around 12%. White South Africans constitute some 8% and coloured South Africans around 3%. In economic terms, it is also clear that Msunduzi is, on the whole, not a wealthy city. The median income level is to be found in-between the 'poor' and the 'low' category, which in the 2001 census data cited by the Demarcation Board lies between the R6000 (US\$860) and R50 000 (US\$7 150) per annum². In terms of political life, Msunduzi is a longstanding ANC city, with the party winning some 60% of the vote in the 2006 local government elections to the Inkatha Freedom Party's (IFP) 17% and the Democratic Alliance's (DA) 15%. Moreover, if one looks at the distribution of party support as illustrated in Fig. 2, it is clear that ANC support is found in the traditional black townships - urban areas historically located some way out of the city - and

² At the time of the survey the US\$/Rand exchange rate was approximately R7 to 1US\$.

distinct from the more rural wards where IFP supporters live, and the historically White and Indian areas close to the heart of the city.

In respect of governance, Msunduzi is formally recognised as a Category B municipality (a local town or city as opposed to a metropolitan area), but with aspirant metropolitan status. The annual budget of Msunduzi is in the region of R1.9 billion and the municipality spends about just less than R40 million on salaries. Unfortunately the quality of governance in the city has suffered since 2006 due to ANC factionalism and the rapid change of officials, although corruption and incompetence also contribute to instability in office. In 2010 the municipality failed to account for R150 million, a fact officials did their best to keep out the public eye. In response the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) of the ANC fired the senior political leadership of the city, and appointed an administrator to root out corruption amongst senior officials (The Witness 29/03/2010), only to allow the reinstatement of most of the same politicians after the ANC did even better in the 2011 Local Government Elections (The Citizen 03/06/2011). In the end the city has had to write off a bad debt of some R400 million (anonymous: pers com). In short Msunduzi is a good example of a municipality where the ANC has been returned to office despite mismanaging municipal governance.

3.2 The survey: methodology and implementation

The surveys were conducted in late 2008 using the same instrument and methodology. Based on the Afrobarometer instrument, which has been extensively tested across a number of countries, the instrument was amended slightly to include questions of the 'invited spaces' of participatory local governance, specifically ward committees, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and Community Policing Forums (CPFs), as well as incorporating questions on the 'invented spaces' created by civil society and communities, and some social capital measures. Methodologically the intention was to randomly sample 200 households in each of the three selected wards. While these wards are typical of different parts of the city they are not a complete microcosm of Msunduzi. In addition, they provide enough of a sample across the major communities or populations (emic and etic categories) that comprise the city. The main idea behind this sampling was to test for key differences in the understanding and practice of citizenship across the major social divides of race, class, age, gender and language, but also to look for ward-level variance.

We managed to secure the following numbers of respondents in each ward: Ward 26, 199 responses; Ward 30, 181 responses, Ward 19, 170 responses for a total of 550. The profile of respondents from the survey largely matches the 2001 census data on most counts, most obviously on race and language. Assuming no changes from 2001, there is a slight under-sampling of women in Ward 30 and Ward 19, and possibly an under-sampling for informal settlements although 5% in Ward 30 is approximately right. What is perhaps most notable from the data on the profile of respondents is the relative homogeneity and stability down time of the Ward 19 Imbali population, even

when compared to Wards 26 and 30. The latter two wards have had much more demographic change, which is probably due to in-migration by black African people.

4. Analysis

As noted above citizenship is understood in substantive terms as various practices citizens engage in with respect to public authority where, in the design of the system as encoded in law and policy, public authority in the South African context is taken to mean four things: government, political society, civil society and communities or fellow citizens, and the relevant practices are understood as (i) what people do in respect of the four forms of political authority, (ii) how they feel about political authority, and (iii) how they imagine themselves in respect of this political authority. These three practices structure the following analysis.

4.1 What citizens do

4.1.1 Government

| Name | Wards | Political Affiliation, March 2006 | Socio-economic profile |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vulindlela | 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 3,4,5,6 | IFP ANC | Historically black African, rural, poorest communities. Very little business or industry |
| Edendale and Imbali | 10, 11, 12, 14, 15,16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 | ANC | Historically black African, urban townships, working class and unemployed poor communities. Some business and industry |
| Pietermaritzburg City Centre | 27, 33, parts of 23 & 36 | ANC/DA | Historically white, traditional city centre of Pietermaritzburg, mixed residential and business |
| Suburbs | 18, 24, 25, 26, 37, parts of 36 | ANC/DA | Historically white suburbs (wealthy areas: Montrose |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | Chase Valley, Scottsville, Hayfields, Wembley), and some business and industry |
| Woodlands and Eastwood | 32, 34 | ANC/DA | Historically coloured area, mostly residential, some industrial |
| The Northern Areas | 28, 29, 30, 31, 35 | ANC | Historically Indian areas, mostly residential, some business |

Fig. 2. Descriptive overview of Msunduzi by Ward.

In terms of democratic government, the most obvious form of participation is voting. In this case some 55% of the sample reported voting in the last national election, which appears low given that the percentage poll at the election was 76%, but as McKinley points out (2004) only 56% of eligible voters took part in the 2004 election, which places our sample almost at the national average. Further, the levels of turnout were roughly the same in terms of race, with the exception of White respondents, 65% of whom reported using their ballot. In terms of age, the turnout was lowest amongst younger voters, with those over 40 years of age recording their preferences at well over 70%. Given the proportionally older profile of the White population in our sample, and indeed across the country, this will account in part for the higher turnout of White voters.

In terms of the invited spaces of local governance, the most commonly used institution is the Community Policing Forum (CPF), but this is probably distorted upwards by the relatively high percentage of White respondents (20%) who reported belonging to one of these. The responses for other racial groups were around the 10% mark, and indeed this was the participation rate reported across the whole sample for School Governing Bodies (SGB) and ward committees too. Notably these levels of participation in invited spaces are the same if not lower than reported levels of protest for African and Indian respondents (14% and 11.6% respectively). In this regard it is remarkable that almost no White people reported protesting at all (1.6%). Lastly, in terms of levels of bribery, an informal mechanism of engaging government, only a few percent reported bribing government officials for a public service across all races, but over 15% reported having bribed a police officer at some point, ranging from 11% for White respondents to 20% for Indian respondents. These respondents were mostly those in the 30-50 year age range.

4.1.2 Political and civil society

In terms of participation in political society, around one third reported feeling close to parties, with the exception of Indian respondents who reported just 10%. Participation levels in civil society were higher though, especially in faith-based organisations with membership of the whole population at over 50%, with White respondents reporting at 62.7%. Attendance at community meetings was around the 40% mark, with membership of community groups around the 20% mark, with Indian respondents slightly higher at 25%. Membership of street committees was universally low at less than 10%.

Fig. 3 lists these results by race group, in rank order from most to least common forms of agency, following the norm set by African respondents, as they constitute the majority of respondents in the sample, the city and the country. Those figures which differ from the sample norm by more than 10% are highlighted. In addition, the rank order and relative weighting of the different components of agency in respect of government, political society, civil society and community will tell us something about the nature of agency too.

At first glance it does appear that race matters to citizenship in our study. Thus if we look at the agency totals in Fig. 3, White South Africans do appear to enjoy higher levels of agency than other groups, although interestingly African respondents outperform Indian. Notably, though the difference is not massive, with some 15% covering the spread, but there is a 10% gap between White respondents in first and Africans in second. Further, if we look at the weightings of the various components, and identify those that are 10% or greater from the African norm, then it does appear that White South Africans are more likely to vote, to participate more in faith-based organisations, to attend Community Policing Forums in greater numbers, and not to protest. Indians in turn are much less likely to identify with a political party, and somewhat more likely to join a community-based organisation. In sum then, there is an asymmetry in terms of racial differences, in that White respondents behave differently from both African and Indian respondents, who are generally more similar.

This noted we should beware overstating this asymmetrical difference. Thus, if we consider the rank order of citizen agency in the sample, then we see that the pattern is remarkably similar across races. Taking African respondents as the norm, and looking for rank ordering more than two places out it appears that there are two differences for White people, who rank CPFs fifth instead of ninth, and protest tenth instead of seventh. The rest is much of a mushiness. Similarly, for Indian respondents, party identification would be ranked seventh instead of fourth, and membership of community organisation fourth instead of sixth.

Further, when one considers that the bulk of citizen agency is captured for all groups in the first three categories (voting, FBO membership and community meetings), and that these are in the same rank order, then the differences between agency patterns start to look less significant. Indeed, if we look at the population as a whole and ask

the question, how is it that citizens of our three wards act in respect of public authority, it seems fair to conclude that they have more in common than not. The citizens of Msunduzi tend to act in respect of public authority in the same general ways: firstly, around half vote and join faith-based organisations; secondly, around one-third attend community meetings and feel close to political parties; thirdly, one-fifth engage in bribery and belong to community organisations; and lastly around 10% use protest and invited spaces to try and get their way. While there are some racial differences within this larger pattern, these differences are asymmetrical and most about White people behaving somewhat differently from the norm on a few points.

| | White | African | Indian | Sample |
|------------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| Voted | 65.3% | 54.9% | 46.8% | 55.0% |
| FBO | 63.7% | 46.7% | 46.5% | 51.0% |
| Community meeting | 33.9% | 38.6% | 41.2% | 38.3% |
| Party | 34.4% | 31.8% | 10.4% | 26.4% |
| Bribery | 11.3% | 17.8% | 19.9% | 16.8% |
| Community organisation | 18.5% | 14.1% | 22.1% | 17.2% |
| Protest | 1.6% | 14.0% | 11.6% | 10.4% |
| SGB | 6.5% | 8.7% | 7.8% | 8.0% |
| CPF | 20.2% | 7.8% | 9.0% | 11.1% |
| WC | 8.9% | 4.3% | 8.4% | 6.5% |
| Total | 264.3% | 238.7% | 223.6% | 240.6% |
| Ratio | 100% | 90% | 85% | 91% |

Fig. 3. What Msunduzi citizens do. The highlighted figures are those that deviate more than 10% from the sample norm.

Lastly, what do these results tell us about protest? First, while there is an asymmetrical relationship between race and protest in that White people do not protest, the difference between Indian and African respondents was small. Second, 73% of those who reported protesting also reported attending meetings but just some 25% of meeting attendees participated in protest, which suggests that protestors are a sub-set of meeting attendees. This is more evidence for the 'brick and ballot' model of citizenship. Further, the data suggests that protestors are not especially poor, contrary to Alexander's (2010) 'rebellion of the poor' argument. If we cross tabulate attending protest with the lack of food and income, as revealed in Figs. 4 and 5, then there appears no significant difference between protestors along these lines. Van Holdt et al's arguments about the link between protest and class-formation mediated through some sense of citizenship are more promising explanations of the Msunduzi results. Hence, those who participate in protests are not anti-system or anti-government per se. Some 51% of the all protestors

also trusted the President. Virtually the same percentage (52%) of meeting attendees trust the President, and both figures are practically the same as the average for the whole population. More strikingly, of those who attended meetings some 68% voted the 2004 national elections, and of those who attended protests some 67% voted. This is in contrast to the population average of 56%. In sum then, protest was not the practice of the politically marginalised but the practice of the politically engaged. If this insight is correct, then it seems that protest is much more likely to be about the terms of inclusion in the system than about outsiders demanding some kind of systemic change. While consistent with Holdt's general theory the evidence is too thin to fully redeem it.

4.2 What citizens think of authority

4.2.1 Government

As regards national government, questions around performance produced largely negative responses across the sample, while questions of trust in particular offices produced more mixed, and racially variable, responses. Simply put, most respondents felt that national government was not doing a particularly good job, but Africans felt much more inclined to trust office bearers nonetheless whereas Whites felts the converse. Indeed, this pattern was repeated in the responses to questions on local government too.

| lack of food | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------|
| | never | once or twice | several times | many times | always | don't know | Total | |
| attended protest | never | 231 | 26 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 275 |
| | | 57,10% | 40,60% | 35,50% | 40% | 18% | 100% | 52,70% |
| | would do if had chance | 129 | 29 | 14 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 182 |
| | | 31,90% | 45,30% | 45,20% | 30% | 63,63% | 0 | 34,90% |
| | once or twice | 16 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 22 |
| | | 4% | 3,10% | 6,50% | 10% | 9% | 0 | 4,20% |
| | several times | 19 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| | | 4,70% | 9,40% | 0 | 10% | 0 | 0 | 5% |
| | often | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | | 1,20% | 1,60% | 3,20% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,30% |
| | Don't know | 5 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| | | 1,20% | 0 | 9,70% | 10% | 9% | 0 | 1,90% |
| Total | 405 | 64 | 31 | 10 | 11 | 1 | 522 | |

Fig. 4. Cross tabulation of 'attending protest' with 'lack of food'. The highlighted boxes are frequent protestors who go without food.

| lack of income | | never | once or twice | several times | many times | always | don't know | Total |
|----------------|------------------------|-------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------|------------|-------|
| attend protest | never | 217 | 30 | 17 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 275 |
| | | 59,1% | 44,8% | 38,6% | 19,4% | 30,0% | 100,0% | 52,8% |
| | would do if had chance | 115 | 24 | 20 | 19 | 3 | 0 | 181 |
| | | 31,3% | 35,8% | 45,5% | 61,3% | 30,0% | 100,0% | 34,7% |
| | once or twice | 12 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 22 |
| | | 3,3% | 4,5% | 11,4% | 3,2% | 10,0% | 0,0% | 4,2% |
| | several times | 15 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 26 |
| | | 4,1% | 7,5% | 0,0% | 16,1% | 10,0% | 0,0% | 5,0% |
| | often | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| | | 1,1% | 1,5% | 2,3% | 0,0% | 10,0% | 0,0% | 1,3% |
| | Don't know | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| | | 1,1% | 6,0% | 2,3% | 0,0% | 10,0% | 0,0% | 1,9% |
| Total | 367 | 67 | 44 | 31 | 10 | 2 | 521 | |

Fig. 5. Cross tabulation of 'attending protest' with 'lack of income'. The highlighted boxes are frequent protestors of low income.

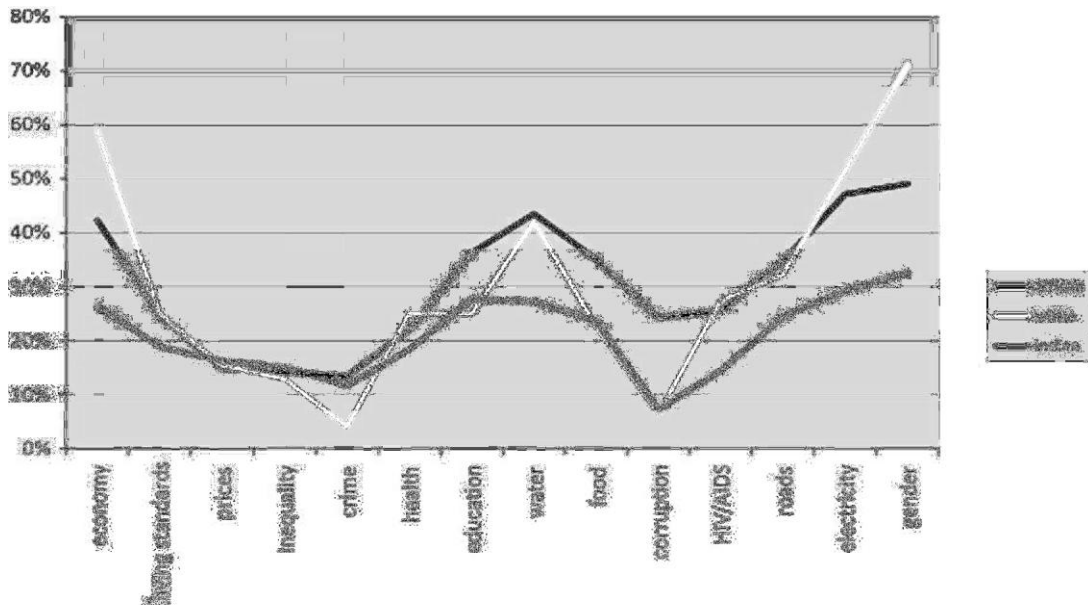


Fig. 6. Attending protest, lack of income

As illustrated by Fig. 6, massive majorities of respondents felt national

government's management had performed poorly in respect of the economy, living standards (70%+ range), inability to bring prices down (80%), inability to reduce inequality (80%), poor performance in fighting crime (80-90%), poor performance on health (70-75%), education (60-70%), water (50-63%), food (60-70%), fighting corruption (73-86%), HIV-AIDS (65-78%), roads (61-65%), and electricity (48-71%). The one

variable where the sample was positive on government performance was equality for women which received a 53% overall, with significant variance between racial groups, with White people more impressed at 71%, Africans at 37% and Indian respondents at 33%. While there were differences in assessment along racial lines the most significant ones have been noted above, and the rest were within a few percent. In short, the respondents were remarkably like-minded and parsimonious in their assessment of the performance of national government.

Despite this practically identical assessment of performance, respondents differed markedly by race when it came to trust in national offices. Fig. 7 illustrates that when asked if they trusted the President, 54% of African respondents replied in the affirmative compared to just 38% of Indian respondents and 26% of White. When asked if they approved of the President, we received almost exactly the same scores again (A55%, W36%, I30%). A similar pattern emerged around the same question asked of the national assembly, with 50% of Africans trusting it, compared to just 33% of Indian and just 17% of White respondents. Notably this was the most racialised finding of the survey. Interestingly, as soon as the questioning returned to a question related to performance these racialised perceptions quickly narrowed. Thus, when asked about corruption in the above offices, vast majorities across race said some or more of the President and his cabinet were corrupt and even higher levels reported for the national assembly and for government officials. On all three measures less than 10% felt that there was no corruption in these offices and around 40% across race perceived there to be some corruption.

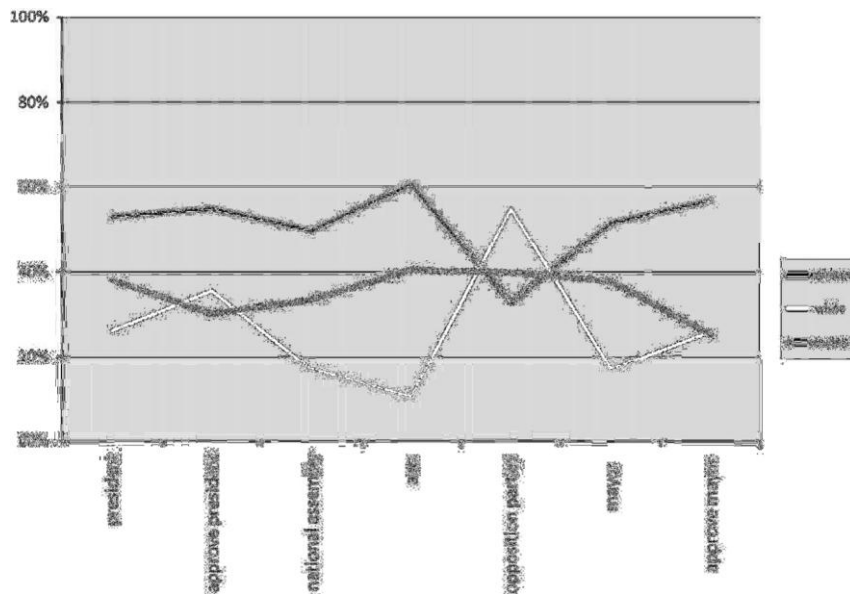


Fig. 7. Trust in government office bearers.

In terms of the legitimacy of other national government institutions, there is some ambivalence across the sample. Thus while most feel that courts ought to have the power to enforce decisions (A72% W79% I62%), trust levels are lower across the board (A58%, W69%, I47%). Further, over 50% of respondents regardless of race felt that judges are corrupt - a figure higher than that given when asked about the police! Similarly around 70% of respondents regardless of race feel that police are entitled to enforce the law, half of the sample also say that some police are corrupt and 20% feel that most are corrupt. Indeed, when asked whether they trust the police, only a majority of 60% of White respondents reported trusting the police, whereas only 46% of Africans and 40% of Indians trust the police. Significant differences emerged regarding the right of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) to raise tax, with those in the affirmative ranging from 85% for White respondents, through 52% for African respondents to 42.5% for Indian respondents. Lastly, traditional leaders received the lowest positive approval ratings around the 30% mark. Thus, trust in institutions needs to be disentangled from trust in key office bearers.

This pattern of a common negative perception of government performance and racially divergent attitudes of trust towards office bearers was repeated in the responses around local governance too - although one clear difference was substantial evidence that many respondents were ignorant of whom their councillor was and how they were performing. They were much better informed about national politics than local. Thus, in respect of a range of questions about how well local government is engaging the public responses were negative and uniform across race. A clear majority thought council was doing a poor job making its programme known to residents, making its budget known, allowing citizens to participate, consulting leaders and handling complaints from the public. Indeed on all of these questions, the 'don't know' category was the most common response.

On questions of trust in office bearers (Fig. 7), racial differences came through more clearly. Thus some 52% of Africans trust the mayor compared to 28% of Indian and 20% of White respondents. Approval ratings of the mayor peaked at 57% for Africans and 26% for both Indians and Whites. Asked whether they trusted the city council, 44% of Africans responded positively, compared to 31% of Indians and 27% of Whites. Asked whether they thought their councillor was doing a good job, 45% of White and Indian responded positively compared to just 31% of Africans. On the question of how many of the council was corrupt, there were similar levels of suspicion across race with around 45% saying 'some' and one-third saying 'most' or 'all'. Racial differences re-emerged on the question about the extent to which taxes were used for private rather than public ends by the council with those in the firmly negative category topping out at 71% for White respondents, 50% for Indian and 44% for African.

Lastly, on the question of the invited spaces of local government, views did not follow a single pattern. Thus whereas the sample generally trusted School Governing Bodies with the partial exception of Indian respondents (W58%, A51%, I41%), there were quite divergent views on Community Policing Forums with White people reflecting high levels of trust (64%), Africans reporting at 40% and Indians at just 28%. Views of ward committees were more uniform and tending to the negative (I47%, A40%, W40%).

4.2.2 Political and civil society

Asked whether they trust the ANC, 61% of African respondents responded positively compared to just 40% of Indians and 11% of Whites. Not surprisingly, trust in opposition parties was highest for Whites at 55%, followed by 40% of Indians and 35% of Africans. Notably, despite this clear racialisation of preferences - at least between African and White respondents as Indians are perfectly divided on these questions - the majority of respondents do not feel close to any political party (W64%, A43%) and 65% of Indians responding 'don't know'. One reading of this may be that while citizens vote for parties, most do not feel like participants in these parties. Notably, respondents clearly affirmed their belief in political rights across the sample. Thus around 80% think South Africans have the right to freedom of speech; 90% feel South Africans have freedom of association, and the same percentage feel South Africans have a free vote. Nearly 80% feel citizens should question leaders, and large majorities felt opposition views should be expressed, although Indian respondents were the lowest here at 58% and Whites the highest at 92%. Notably, White people (51.6%) were more concerned about media criticism hurting the image of the country than Indian (18.2%) or African (25.9%) respondents. On the whole though, some democratic political values were widely affirmed. The above section has reflected membership levels in faith-based organisations and community-based organisations, so this section focuses on the question of whether people trust each other. Once again, as with all the questions on trust, the answer was racialised such that White respondents felt remarkably positive about their fellow citizens at 64% in some contrast to Indian and

African respondents at 29% and 28% respectively.

In sum then, respondents share clearly negative impressions of government performance at both national and local levels, including corruption, but have racially divergent and variable views when it comes to trust from the top offices in the land through to their fellow citizens. This pattern breaks down when it comes to other government institutions, but there are also some interestingly divergent opinions of the efficacy of some invited spaces, with SGBs enjoying some legitimacy generally and CPFs enjoying great legitimacy amongst White respondents. In many ways this secondary normative pattern around trust and parties is widely observed and informs the race and/or party voter loyalty understandings of South African politics. Less commonly noted however, is the fact that all citizens share very similar assessments of the performance of government, and do not feel directly involved in formal invited spaces of local governance nor in political parties - with the possible exception of a significant minority of African voters.

It could be argued that this is indeed more evidence for the idea of voter loyalty - those voters retain their faith in parties despite knowing better - giving credence to the idea of South African politics as identity-based around race and/or party. This is a powerful point, but makes two assumptions, that voters feel that they have a real alternative choice, and that substantive meanings of citizenship are largely exhausted by voting, partisan and interest group politics. In respect of the former, there are some powerful arguments about whether 'effective' opposition parties exist in local areas in South Africa, and especially in Msunduzi where one party tends to dominate one geographical area due to the history of apartheid and then IFP/ANC violent conflict (Piper, 2000). Although it is now possible for parties to enter most areas and campaign, question marks still remain over how free local people feel to live and work as opposition party activists in these areas. This will be a constraint on capacity to mobilise and organise in an area and build up a network of effective local activists who can contest power. While this is not the only way electoral politics works - that is, it is theoretically possible to win power through media work rather than local organisation - the history of politics in the region points to the importance of local institutions and networks to securing popular support.

As regards the second assumption, if one adopts a broader conception of citizenship as about agency in respect of public authority, and examines the myriad ways in which citizens look to secure their Constitutional rights then clearly voting and parties is only part of the story. Conceding that race matters to voting is not the same as saying that the fundamental patterns of citizenship are primarily racialised. Indeed, as noted in the above section, we would suggest that this is not the case. Further, the above results confirm the limits of formal institutions of local governance and party membership for most citizens, suggesting instead reflecting on other informal ways in which they seek to secure their rights.

4.3 What citizens think of themselves

The last element of citizenship considered in this paper concerns citizen's sense of their own status and agency. As already noted above most citizens vote, participate in some form of civil society formation, and affirm some basic political freedoms, suggesting a significant degree of interest in democratic politics. This is confirmed by a series of questions which reveal that a majority of African and White respondents follow the news on a daily basis, albeit in slightly different ways (newspapers: W57%, A49%; TV: W61%, A50%; radio W50%, A41%). The significant contrast here is with Indian respondents who reported much lower levels of daily news following as follows: newspapers 22%, TV 18%, radio 12%. This asymmetrical racial difference was confirmed by reported interest levels in public affairs with White and African respondents reporting 72% and 66% respectively, compared to Indian respondents at 50%.

Last were questions that probed respondents' explicit sense of agency. In response to the question how easy is it to get heard between elections, answers were asymmetrically racialised in that 74% of White respondents felt it was difficult to be heard compared to 50% of African and 48% of Indian respondents. In response to the question about whether ordinary people could improve their circumstances, the largest group of respondents felt they could not. Notably again, these responses were asymmetrically racialised such that Africans and Whites had similar levels of pessimism at 47% and 49% respectively, but were outstripped by the moroseness of 66% of Indians.

When asked questions about the likelihood that they would make use of various courses of action, most across race were disinclined to engage the media (10-20%), complain to officials (13-20%) or write to officials (7-10%). Significant differences emerged when asked whether they would engage the ward committee if there was a problem, with just 29% of Indian respondents responding positively, and double that number at 58% of White respondents answering in the positive. Given that they reported similar levels of actually using ward committees, this response reflects divergent attitudes rather than practices. Asked whether they would join with the community to solve a problem, 60% of African respondents replied in the positive with the rest at 20-25%. Given that the levels of participation in invited spaces were not significantly different, as noted above, and this difference is much higher than the level of protest, this response again suggests that attitudinal differences do not translate into differences of practice in simple ways.

In sum then, a picture begins to emerge of another racial asymmetry, this time of an Indian community somewhat negative in its assessment of citizen power and politics more generally, in contrast to both White and African respondents. Perhaps the one place where African respondents stand out as different is in their inclination to collective action and positive belief in its power to bring change between

elections. Similar levels of self-belief were evident among White respondents but only in relation to engaging the ward committee, and mostly around election time.

5 Conclusion

From the evidence of the survey in Msunduzi we can conclude that citizenship is not racialised in a discrete and consistent sense that different race groups act differently, and hold different beliefs about, and see themselves differently in respect of, public authority. Instead, we found that respondents tend to act in very similar ways across racial lines where around half vote and belong to faith-based organisations, around one-third attend community meetings and feel close to political parties, one-fifth engage in bribery and belong to community organisations, and around one tenth use protest and invited spaces to try and get their way. In terms of beliefs, overwhelming majorities endorse political and democratic rights, and hold low opinions of the performance of both national and local government on the key policy issues of the day. Lastly, while interested in politics, most believe that they have a limited capacity to bring about change.

Already it is clear that the racial lens adds nuance to a more basic pattern of citizenship in Msunduzi. It does not differentiate the most important from least important actions for citizens, or even the rank order of actions aside from a few instances for a group here and there. Only when it comes to party politics and trust in key political offices, does race come into its own. Otherwise when race did matter, it did so asymmetrically, that is, one racial group tended to behave differently to the rest of the sample. Thus, in terms of what citizens do, White people tend to vote more, belong to faith-based organisations more, use Community Policing Forums more and tend not to protest. In terms of citizens' attitudes to public authority, African respondents tended to have much higher levels of trust of national and local leaders and institutions, and are more inclined to turn to collective action. In terms of how citizens feel about their own agency, Indian respondents stood out as being disinterested in the news and political discussion, and more pessimistic about their capacity to change things.

These findings picks up Robinson's (2006b: p. 254) point about how while new developments in South African cities may 'entrench the racial division of the past; they also gesture towards the emergence of new kinds of social and political relations'. It also invites us to explore an intriguing alternative world of local politics beyond simple assumptions of race and party. In this regard the findings as regards protest are notable. Thus we illustrated that those who protest are not any poorer than the sample more generally, suggesting that protest is not simply a 'rebellion of the poor'. Further, those who protest are more likely to know their ward councillor and to vote than the sample as a whole, suggesting that this is not the tactic of the political outsider. These findings are consistent with van Holdt's suggestion that the protest is caught up with a politics of citizenship

around new forms of inclusion and exclusion in local governance which is cross-cutting formerly homogenised communities. Notably though, our evidence suggests that this is a politics practised by a small minority.

While the current findings can only take us so far, they do gesture at the importance of forms of politics not linked to liberal conceptions of party competition for understanding a changing urban landscape. Urban studies from elsewhere in Africa points to the importance of various other forms of practice linked to enduring social structures, migration and transient populations, network-building under conditions of state weakness and marginality, and the intersection of these varying practices with formal institutions and policy processes in South Africa in often unpredictable, and spatially complex ways (e.g., Ballard et al., 2007). Perhaps more importantly, our findings also affirm the importance of new framings of this politics both in Robinson's (2006b) sense of transcending restrictive binaries, for example participation versus protest or modern versus traditional, but perhaps more importantly, in an ontology that takes seriously both the liberal mainstream focus on formal and procedurally-defined decision-making spaces and the post-structuralist concern for 'the disruptive energies of contestatory spaces' (Barnett, 2008: p. 1643). Indeed Barnett's invocation echoes the affirmation in the participatory literature of the importance of both the 'invited spaces' of state-sanctioned engagement and the 'invented' or 'organic' spaces of popular creation, some in oppositional frame some not, to understanding power (Cornwall, 2002). Notably, in later versions (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007) the simple opposition between formal and informal or invited and invented breaks down in light of practices that transform these spaces' original character. These are precisely the sensibilities that need to inform future work around popular politics in South Africa.

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