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Mediation and the Contradictions of Representing the Urban Poor in South Africa: ~~t~~The ~~c~~Case of SANCO ~~l~~Leaders in Imizamo Yethu in Cape Town, South Africa

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~~a)~~ *Introduction*

The formal system of local governance in South Africa has the 'ward' as its lowest and smallest electoral level – a spatial unit consisting of between 5,000 and 15,000 voters. The ward is equivalent to the 'constituency' in much of the rest of the world. Notably, the history of South Africa means that the vast majority of people live in 'communities' or neighbourhoods that are far smaller in scale than the ward, and most of these are the site of multiple claims of informal leadership by a variety of local organisations and their leaders. For example, the Cape Town ward, in which our case-study is located, includes at least five different communities, distinguished in racial and class terms.

Existing 'below' and 'within' the formal area of the ward, popular practices of representation are manifested through a variety of community-based organisations, more or

less formalised, regulated and recognised. Some of these community-based organisations are neighbourhood- specific, while some of them are federated into broader, national structures including the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO). SANCO is a national organisation that has relatively independent and heterogeneous branches at the ward level and structures at the metropolitan, provincial and national levels. Notably, at the local level SANCO is typically structured in terms of committees in every street and sometimes at a higher level called the blocks, that meet regularly to deal with issues at the most local of levels. This is a tradition of organising that extends back decades in 'black African' areas,<xen>[1]</xen> and gives the organisation a tremendous potential reach into communities, although not all street committees necessarily see themselves as under SANCO's authority.

Although not formally recognised in the political system of the country, SANCO is an important player in community-level politics because of its significant size and its identification with the ANC alliance comprising the ruling party, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). This relationship between SANCO and the ANC (Zuern 2006, Staniland 2008, Piper 2014), butand also the ANC's own strategy of grounding the party in civil society through its branches at the ward level (Bénit-Gbaffou 2012), contributes towards the dominance of the ruling party over civil society in South Africa, and helps us understand the dynamics around leadership at the lowest level.

In exploring the nature of local leadership, especially in respect of SANCO in our site, we want to focus on the notion of mediation, as the concept invokes the idea of some kind of 'third-party' representation of the politically marginalised. Further, in South Africa, like many of the southern contexts (Chatterjee 2004, Yiftachel 2009, Piper and Lieres 2011,

Journal of Asian and African Studies 2011), there is a strong case that the (black) urban poor struggle to access the state. Indeed, the need 'to remedy the inequality [...][…] in access to the state' is, we argue, particularly important in South African low-income neighbourhoods for at least three reasons. The first is the fragmentation and complexity of the state apparatus and operations, partly linked to its system of three 'spheres' (not 'tiers') of government (national, provincial and local) where overlapping responsibilities are not clearly attributed and hierarchised. This fragmentation of the state has been increased after the implementation of New Public Management principles in local government in the 2000s that have further blurred the roles, functions and responsibilities of multiple parastatal agencies, corporations, and organisations in charge of public service delivery and management.

The second is the dysfunctional and disappointing institutional participatory structures and channels set up at the local government level (Transformation 66/67 2008), often leading to civil society groups 'inventing' other means of getting heard by the state. These include mass protests, thatwhich can turn violent (Alexander 2010; Von Holdt et al. 2011), and using party connections to replace failing and fragmented local government channels (Bénit-Gbaffou 2012). Third are the high levels of popular expectation towards a South African state that has adopted the figure of the 'developmental state' (Van Donk et al. 2008, Parnell and Pieterse 2010), and has engaged since 1994 in ambitious state-driven, mass delivery policies (housing and basic urban services in particular), especially in the formerly disadvantaged areas such as townships and informal settlements.

This context of ineffectual institutional operation and high popular expectation creates conditions conducive to mediatory politics – more specifically a mediatory politics 'from within' – where effective leaders of the people must assume a representative role that is irreducible to the views and interests of either the community or the state, thus establishing

some kind of 'third-party' role, even when of the people. To put the point negatively, local leaders who act as simply delegates of the community, or sections thereof, are much less likely to secure ongoing access to the state, while those who simply do the state's bidding, run the risk of losing popular support. While remaining effective requires never fully pleasing key constituencies, it also means satisfying them enough on key points.

This general argument is inspired by the recent work done on the challenges of legitimation that local leaders face in highly competitive political fields (Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura 2012). In particular, Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura explore the relevance of ~~the~~ Bourdieu's concept of 'double dealings' for local leadership – the need to be recognised both by its 'community' through what we understand as a mix of 'identity', 'service' and 'mediation', but also centred on the leaders' ability to solve issues and to 'deliver' on expectations; and by state and/or party (or private donor/global organisations) through what we could summarise here as both a display of loyalty to the institution and an ability to inform the institution on community affairs. More specifically, we trace the practices of mediation in relation to the 'double dealing' required by four sets of challenges that especially SANCO leaders must confront: the contested nature of the 'delivery' vision, 'service delivery' populism, party loyalty and personal interests. As we shall demonstrate below, these general tensions are further exacerbated in our case-study by party-politics, underwritten by the identity politics of race (Map 1.1).

Map 1.1 Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay

Green Belt

Imizamo Yethu

Cape Town

Informal Settlement · Forrest · DISA Primary School · Hout Bay · Cape Town International Airport · Formal Housing · Cape Town CBD

b) *Imizamo Yethu, Hout Bay, Cape Town*

First though, we describe the site. Imizamo Yethu ('our collective effort') is a 20-year-old settlement of black African residents in Hout Bay, Cape Town. It has grown significantly in the last ten years, and includes a substantial and diverse foreign migrant population from the rest of Africa, especially from Angola, Namibia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ironically the growth of Imizamo Yethu after 1994 has turned the picturesque seaside town of Hout Bay into a familiar apartheid-style settlement with three distinct racial groups living in adjacent but racially segregated communities. Thus the so-called black 'African' people live in Imizamo Yethu, 'coloured' people in Hangberg and 'white' people in 'the valley'. Furthermore, these settlements exist in a hierarchy of socio-economic development reminiscent of apartheid, with the luxury of 'the valley' situated alongside the poverty of Imizamo Yethu, and Hangberg located somewhere in between.

Given this, it should not be surprising that much of the politics of Imizamo Yethu, and indeed Hout Bay, centres on issues of race and socio-economic development. Indeed, it is precisely with the controversial construction of a new school in Imizamo Yethu that our story begins. Further, while there are a range of institutions, organisations and individuals that represent the community of Imizamo Yethu to the state (or conversely) in some way, whether it be local soccer tournament organisers, Christian aid organisations, churches or state-appointed community development workers (CDWs), in this chapter we focus on SANCO. A key reason for this is the claim by SANCO leaders to be *the* legitimate representatives of the Imizamo Yethu community in general, a claim generally recognised by the local ANC, state institutions like the police, and many NGOs working in the area.

> **Commented [Q3]:** AU: Please check the change made to community development workers.

c) *The contested vision of 'service delivery'*

In November 2011 the local branch of the ~~South African National Civic Organisation~~ ~~(~~SANCO~~)~~ organised a protest march against the opening of a new school in Imizamo Yethu, the DISA Primary School. The march saw a crowd of around 100 people move through the township to the school. Notably, along the way, the protest stopped at the house of the then SANCO leader, Mr N, as he was a key supporter of the school. According to the protestors, Mr N had not consulted them about the school and they felt that the community needed housing rather than another school. Mr N was at work when the protest happened so he did not directly confront the protestors. He was also missing when the protestors called a new SANCO election for 22 November, at which Mr N and his committee w~~h~~ere voted out of office. Not surprisingly, the new SANCO executive committee was drawn most_ly_ from the leadership of~~from~~ the march against the DISA School.

Notably, the conflict over the school was not new, but reincarnated a long-standing struggle over the space that the school was built on. There is indeed a degree of contest, at different scales, about the use of the 'green belt' that had been planned by the apartheid government when establishing Imizamo Yethu as a site and services scheme in 1991 (Harte et al. 2006). Some civic organisations, such as Sinethemba, a splinter group from SANCO representing 'the original' families having settled in Imizamo Yethu, argued against urban growth and densification of the settlement~~,~~ and wished to see the green belt used for what it sees as 'its original purpose' – community facilities and a greenbelt, but not housing. Sinethemba was supported in this claim by the middle-class and white-dominated Hout Bay Ratepayers Association that also wanted to contain the growth of Imizamo Yethu out of fear of crime and falling property values. In the view of Harte et al. (2006), this view also reflects white desires for a 'buffer zone' between black and white residents of Hout Bay. Against this view, SANCO had been lobbying for many years for the use of this land to build more houses. ~~They~~SANCO also opposed the construction of the school in the name of racial

integration in Hout Bay, arguing that specific services for Imizamo Yethu would consolidate the segregated use of public facilities. ~~They~~It ~~are~~is also suspected of lobbying for houses and urban growth in order to grow ~~its~~their (mostly ANC) membership basis in a DA-~~-~~dominated ward (Harte et al. 2006).

In 2004 SANCO appeared to have won this contest when, in the aftermath of a fire that left many shack dwellers homeless, the (then ANC-led) municipality started removing trees from the 'green belt' so as to construct houses. This move was stopped, however, when Sinethemba and the Hout Bay Ratepayers Association obtained a High Court interdict against the ~~C~~city. While the ~~C~~city subsequently amended the Less Formal Township Establishment Act (n 113/1991) to overturn the High Court ruling, only some of the former green belt land was used to construct houses with the financial support of a private donor funding from the Niall Mellon Foundation. The building of the school in 2010 was led by the municipality, after the DA won the city election in 2006, and returned to the idea of community facilities in the green belt rather than houses.

Notably, in 2009, after Mr N became leader of SANCO in Imizamo Yethu, he decided to support the municipal view when a private donor put up money for the new school. Thus the protest march of 2011 that unseated Mr N from the leadership of SANCO can be understood as much in this broader context of party politics as in terms of the inherent merits of the needs of the community of Imizamo Yethu. Clearly better education and more housing ~~is~~are needed, as both sides on the debate admit, but they tend to justify their respective positions on other grounds.

The 'new' executive committee of SANCO in Imizamo Yethu argues against the DISA School on the grounds of nation-building as children 'ought to go to the same school [as white middle class children] as we are one community in Hout Bay'. The nation-building

discourse was repeated at a recent public performance where a leader aligned to the new SANCO, Mr T, spoke of desiring to overcome the racial divisions of the past and become 'Hout Baynians'. Notably, the old SANCO leadership is quiet on the issue of nation-building – somewhat ironically as they are accused of being too close to the 'white' DA by new SANCO leaders who (double irony) ostensiblye want to overcome racial divisions.

This conflict reflects the challenge leaders face in deciding what form of development to endorse, partly due to the inherently tough nature of certain choices like education or housing, but also given what is feasible when development is driven by outside forces like the state and private donors. Much of the time, the power to set the development agenda simply does not lie with local leaders, and the consequent challenge is one of ~~whether,~~ to what extent and in what way to endorse the substance of development projects for local communities.

d) The challenge of service delivery populism

This dispute over 'school versus houses' in Imizamo Yethu displays characteristics noted in the recent waves of protest around South Africa, in particular an ongoing contest over the framing of 'service delivery' issues. An instructive feature of the Imizamo Yethu case is that the protest was not about the lack of service delivery, but the delivery of the wrong kind of 'service', a school instead of housing, and the alleged lack of proper public consultation in this process. This fact affirms Friedman's (2009) point that public protest in South Africa is about how government engages citizens at the local level, and the tendency of government to impose its view on people's choices. The assertion of rights through protest, especially the right to participate in policy-making around development where people live, appears to echo Holston's (2008) conception of 'insurgent citizenship', a form of popular agency that looks to disrupt the state's policy world- view and demand a radical, perhaps rights-based, alternative.

Thus, on the one hand, the attitude of South African states echoes Chatterjee's (2004) arguments about the dominance of welfarist models of governance in the post-colonial south where people are treated as populations to be managed in terms of their welfare, rather than as rights-bearing citizens entitled to participate in decisions over their own lives. In this case welfare is framed in terms of an obligation to provide services (water, road, sanitation, and housing) to 'the poor'. However, the engagement from 'the poor' invokes traditions of popular protest against apartheid that are, at least in part, informed by notions of rights (Alexander 2010, Van Holdt 2011), and are not simply reducible to instrumental forms of patronage politics that Chatterjee notes with his conception of 'political society'.

This noted patronage does play a role in local politics in our case, but not in the terms of votes for rewards model of Chatterjee's political society or accounts of politics in Latin America (Fox 1994, Gay 1999, Taylor 2004). Rather, patronage is mostly contained within party boundaries and underwritten by a race politics that defines access to the local state for local leader. Consequently, the most intense forms of competition for office occur now within party lines rather than across them and a key challenge for local leaders is to secure their positions against rivals from within the same camp. This all occurs outside the realm of formal competition through elections in a more informal, insecure and murky political universe. It is this reality that has led Van Holdt et al. (2011: 11) to observe the phenomenon of 'protests within protests', that is, local leaders using protests to assert their legitimacy at the same time as 'subaltern crowds' protest their marginalisation and demand services.

Hence, in relation to this last point, while service delivery protest is often about issues of citizenship, this does not mean it always has a constructive purpose – and there is evidence too that protests are often *also* a means through which local leaders struggle about positions at the community or at the party level. Indeed, the many accounts of protestors destroying

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state property, albeit sometimes from a well-founded justification of state unresponsiveness or mal-responsiveness, suggest a form of violent politics aimed at punishing authority and seeking recognition through the threat of violence rather than directing some kind of positive change. This form of protest politics we term 'service delivery populism', and it constitutes a key resource used by leaders in the competition for office. This description of protest we reserve for those actions intended to punish the state and perhaps force recognition for new actors, rather than construct substantive pro-community political agendas or affirm some kind of rights-politics.

The theoretical as well as practical line between populism and popular contestation is slight. There are obviously *always* elements of deep collective contestation that are at the core or ideas of 'insurgent' or 'active' citizenship, and elements of personal political leaders' agenda in any form of collective mobilisation – that Bourdieu's concept of 'double dealings' helps us understand outside of any normative framework (see Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura 2012). Thus in Imizamo Yethu the protest against the school had deeper community roots and some degree of collective meaning, but the fact that in Imizamo Yethu the protest occurred at this time with the school already built, therefore with limited political efficacy other than contesting Mr N's leadership, tends to show its aim was more of an individual, populist nature.

The mobilisation of popular prejudice to disrupt is not the only form of negative politics in our case, however. Thus the day we entered Imizamo Yethu to begin our research we were confronted with a road blocked by the local taxi association, and saw evidence of significant damage to the vehicles of those informal taxi drivers who operated outside of the association's recognition. Upon enquiry it transpired that the formal association had decided that there were 'too many' taxis in Imizamo Yethu. In defiance the 'informals' continued to

operate, and even in greater number, until the violence broke out. One person was shot in that conflict, and many cars damaged, and while tensions endured for some time, both SANCO leadership teams reportedly played a role in brokering some kind of peace.

However, in recent times tensions have re-emerged after an agreement to open the formal association to the informal taxi drivers was allegedly shunned by a handful of individuals who continue to operate outside of the association and its rules. This practice has led one prominent taxi owner to predict another round of violence. He also attributes this to the meddling of the ex-SANCO leader Mr N and his people who he alleges are encouraging this rebellious activity. 'Violence will break out again any day now.' he predicts. If true, it is not hard to see how such conflict would undermine the new SANCO and enhance the standing of Mr N and company. Thus the ability to prevent rivals from getting things done, whether through populist mobilisation or other forms of negative politics, is a key resource in the local struggle to lead.

e) The challenge of party politics

As already suggested the conflict over DISA School is not simply a case of leadership rivalry for office but is underscored by elements of party politics too. Thus in explaining itstheir opposition to the school, the new SANCO committee not only alleged that Mr N had consistently failed to consult the community on a number of issues but also accused him of becoming too comfortable with the DA (read 'white')-run city and provincial government when he was meant to be representing an ANC (read 'black')-aligned community. This allegation was pushed to the point where new SANCO executive members raised question about where Mr N got the money to build his double-storey house. (Notably, most of the key leaderships we encountered in Imizamo Yethu live in the nicer houses in the settlement.)

In response, Mr N rubbished the claims about a lack of consultation saying there were careful negotiations between the community, city and the school's financial backers over many years in the mid-2000s, and that the issue was settled then. He claimed that Mr T, the ~~Community Development Worker (~~CDW~~)~~ for the ward, was the main instigator behind the protest although according to him Mr T was 'clever' enough not to actually go on the march~~,~~ and arguing that it was a 'simple power struggle. It has nothing to do with the school'. Notably, new SANCO leaders disagree, repeatedly claiming that there is significant dissatisfaction with the choice of the school over housing.

Mr N and his leadership team argued further that the SANCO election was rigged by moving forward the election date when they 'were away in the field' so that they would be outvoted. They appealed the matter to the SANCO hierarchy, but the provinc~~e~~ial and national levels are also split into rival camps, so the ability of the higher structures to resolve the issue satisfactorily is hugely diminished. They further accuse Mr T and company of corruption with regard to the administration of the housing lists, in particular in the allocation of the 484 houses donated by the Irish philanthropist Nial Mellon in the mid-2000s. Of course, Mr T returns the allegation against Mr N and his team.

SANCO, and in particular Mr T, w~~ere~~as indeed the central community partner in the project, and Niall Mellon Foundation itself recognises that

~~'~~the community group that NTT entrusted to lead the housing project had other agendas ~~[...]~~ […]. There were claims that plot-owners who did not share their political views were mysteriously left off the housing lists, and plots were illegally sold to 'newcomers' into the community (who allegedly did share the leaders' political views).~~'~~ (Ranjasami et al. 2007)~~.~~

More recently, Mr N attempted to organise a meeting in~~for about~~ the remaining 50 Niall Mellon Foundation houses to be delivered, still claiming to be the legitimate SANCO chair, but was stopped by a member of the new SANCO executive who accused him of wanting to garner 'support for himself'.

Mr T, supporter of the new SANCO executive, points out that as a consequence of his opposition to the building of the school, he was personally targeted by the DA-led provincial government (as CDWs are employees of the province). Perceived by the Premier's Office to be meddling in the issue for party-political ends he faced formal dismissal, as CDWs are forbidden from playing an explicitly partisan role. In the event, he was able to avoid the attempt~~ed~~ at dismissal, on technical grounds linked to the lack of formal correspondence around public participation: this allowed him to question the public participation credential of the school project. For Mr T the attentions of the DA provincial government confirmed the larger partisan project of governance in the city, and Mr N's team's increasing co-option by a political party most of the community do~~es~~ not support.

Th~~ise above~~ narrative draws attention to the relationship between community leadership, political parties and race in South Africa, and the challenges this might set for a developmental and democratic politics of representation. Two ~~sets of~~ points are to be noted here. The first is that in many urban black settlements, the mantle of community leadership is claimed by the ~~South African National Civic Organisation (~~SANCO~~)~~. As argued in more detail elsewhere (Piper 2014), SANCO falls under the hegemony of the ANC such that, although it aspires to be a mass-based social movement representing the urban poor, it is ideologically committed to the same National Democratic Revolution of the ANC and it recognises the ANC's entitlement to rule. The consequence of this identification is that, while

SANCO has relative access to the 'party-state' where the ANC governs, it has so on compromised terms that limit the scope for challenge.

This is true even when community-based organisations other than SANCO dominate community politics as the ability to reach the state and get access to its resources goes mostly through ANC rather than local government channels and networks (Bénit-Gbaffou 2012). The formal alliance and/or informal sympathy of community-based organisations to the ANC also allow them to claim a special right to represent the community. It might be the case that the more formal link to the ANC, the stronger the claim. Thus widely commented upon by respondents, not least the foreign residents of Imizamo Yethu who brought a refreshing outsider's perspective to these local dynamics, was the claim that SANCO was the 'little brother' of the ANC, and a key way for South Africans (only) to begin a career in politics.

Critically however, Imizamo Yethu is in the City of Cape Town that has been ruled by the DA since 2006. In this context, the association with the ANC is a disadvantage for accessing the state, as SANCO is perceived as ANC aligned, and the DA insists on non-partisan form of community representation when engaging with communities around development projects. This model is echoed in the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading Projects model of community engagement too for instance (Piper 2014). However, despite the insistence on non-partisan community representation in state-sanctioned projects, the DA is quick to claim credit for the state that delivers such projects at election time. Non-partisanship applies only at the moment of community engagement it appears.

Notably, one of the reasons that SANCO is treated as a junior partner of the ANC is because of its dependence on the party-state for resources to function. Barely a few months after their electoral triumph, one of the new SANCO leaders confessed concern that 'nothing was happening' in Imizamo Yethu, in the sense that there were no new development projects

underway, and specifically no project-related jobs for SANCO to be seen to be delivering. A recent interview confirmed this implosion with ANC failing to secure more than 200 paid-up members, and SANCO in an even worse condition. 'The guys just do not want to admit that they have failed…' A key issue here may be the unwillingness of the new SANCO to be more pragmatic in engaging the local state for fear of being seen precisely as the sell-outs they accused Mr N of becoming.

Conversely, one of the striking features of our case is the way the old SANCO leadership, and Mr N in particular, has embraced the DA state's discursive framing of 'community representation'. This includes absorbing some of the key language such as 'representing the whole community regardless of political party' (a commitment that the new SANCO executive made too), only being concerned about 'local development and not party politics' and being 'pragmatic' in engaging with 'all opportunities to advance the interests of Imizamo Yethu' from the ward forum, to the Hout Bay Development Forum, to the introduction of the DISA school. The language and behaviour of Mr N raises the question whether, in order to access the state, he has replaced the partisan loyalty discourse required of the party-state with the 'non-partisan' loyalty discourse required by DA rule.

One clear implication of Mr N's attempt to access the state in new ways has been to make him vulnerable to allegations of being a sell-out and to paint his preference for the school as a representation of 'white'/DA interests over 'black'/ANC community interests in more housing. While the reality is more complicated, the party politicisation of the role of the developmental state, and the challenges this poses for representing poor black communities, is demonstrated profoundly. On the other hand, the broadening of such discourses of non-partisanship and of such pragmatic attitudes of working with the state, whatever party is in power (in a context where the DA seems to be gaining power at the municipal and provincial

levels), might indicate a shift away from identity politics and an emerging representation of the state that is disentangled from partisan clientelist logics.

This latter claim concurs with a number of other, minor but multiple, observations in other contexts. See, in Johannesburg, Matlala and Bénit-Gbaffou (2012) on social movement activists negotiating their ANC loyalty, Sinwell (2014) on a social movement leader joining the DA branch to put pressure on the ANC councillor, and Bénit-Gbaffou (2012) on a leader working with a DA councillor in spite of her ANC membership; and on the temptation of a civic leader to sympathise with the IFP to put pressure on the local government. The key point is that the change of party in Cape Town has brought with it a different attitude from the state towards political representation of poor and marginalised communities, and some local leadership has begun to respond and engage in these new political terms. At the moment in Imizamo Yethu it seems like the old ANC ways are holding firm, but given their lack of success and the popular desire for state-driven service delivery, a more pragmatic shift in attitude to 'non-partisan' forms of popular representation is now a real possibility.

f) The challenge of state dependency

This point brings us to the significance of dependency on the state for development, and the implications for mediatory leadership at a personal level. Thus even in a context where political parties were entirely absent, community leadership would confront the problem of what Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura (2012), based on Bourdieu, term 'double dealings'. 'Double-dealing' commonly means 'duplicity, deceit or treachery', and is associated with pretending one set of feelings while acting in a contrary way. It is also commonly associated with politicians, and seen as some form of moral failing. However, Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura use the concept of double-dealing in a different way that frames it not as a moral

problem but as a problem of negotiating opposing rationalities. In brief 'double dealing' refers to the tensions faced by local leaders between representing their constituencies and being recognised by state institutions and agents – and working to keep and extend the latter. This often puts leaders in contradictory positions~~,~~ and~~,~~ in South Africa~~,~~ generally leads him/~~or~~ her to 'betray' the former for the latter – the community for, in this case, the state; become 'co-opted', 'sedated', or 'sold out' to the state that his/her community mandate sometimes requires him/her to engage in and often to challenge.

In this regard it is clear from our engagement that the older politicians across the political divide (specifically Mr N *and* Mr T) displayed a much greater degree of knowledge of the state system and pragmatism in engaging with the authority than the younger politicians who tend~~ed~~ to be much more dogmatic and ideological in their articulation. This is probably not surprising, but it does affirm the significance of understanding the formal system, how to access it and even how to secure various opportunities and resources from it for those who want to build a legitimacy as effective as ~~well as~~the popular leaders' legitimacy, especially if they reinforce the framing of leadership ~~as~~ around 'delivery' – ~~the~~ channelling the public resources into the neighbourhood, on a collective or individual basis.

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Whil~~st~~e one sees alternative forms of constructing local legitimacy (more radical social movements seek to build legitimacy outside any expectations from the state, or at least in much more autonomous ways), the dominant form of legitimation that a local leader invokes before his/her constituency is usually around the ability to channel and redistribute resources to the community, according to some kind of local 'moral economy' (Staniland 2008, Berman ~~&~~ and Lonsdale 1992). This raises the issue of ~~the~~ co-option by the state in the process of representing the community – and of the thin line that exists between a politics of mediation – representing and advocating for the community's claims in the state – and the

politics of double dealing, where the risk is always high of the leader 'betraying' his/her constituency in order to secure and reproduce his/her network and privileged access to the state.

The challenges of leadership are aggravated by party politics and service delivery populism, but more generally for local leaders in cities of the south, by the multiplicity of would-be leaders competing for positions (and the economic opportunities these might provide) in contexts marked by informal livelihoods and fluid opportunities (Simone 2004), and by the informal nature of their representativeness that makes it easy to be challenged by rivals, and constantly questioned in a variety of local political arenas. Examples include the use of service delivery populism, sponsoring conflict in the local taxi association, securing recognition as leaders in the eyes of the state such as the ward forum, and through representation on state-sponsored development projects such as the DISA School.

Indeed the extra-institutional nature of community leadership means that their standing is always informal, especially outside of communities that are led by SANCO, as at least SANCO's community leadership status is underwritten by ANC ideology. This informality is clearly a weakness in securing office, but a strength in accessing it. Thus, although Mr N was not elected as the new SANCO leader, he is far from a spent force in the community, and is able to contest the legitimacy of the new SANCO both by claiming irregularities in the election process – 'they brought the election forward without informing us' – and by his enduring connections to the state and key networks around the state that give him privileged ability to get things done.

One of the reasons that this conflict has been able to endure for over a year is that the local divisions that typify SANCO in Imizamo Yethu are repeated at metropolitan, provincial and national levels. Indeed both sides invoked the authority of the provincial structures of

SANCO to support their claim to legitimacy, but it turned out that these were different factions at provincial level. Notably, the one structure that is not contested is the SANCO region (at the metropolitan level), but here Mr T is a leading figure and so his authority over the local dispute is called into question. The irresolution of the SANCO conflict is widely recognised by other local players including the local police, the ANC, the DA Wward Ccouncillor and the school leadership. Most have adopted a wait-and-see attitude, and are reluctant to engage SANCO while the dispute continues – in a sense affirming the perception that SANCO leaders are accepted as the legitimate community leaders. This unsupportive attitude from the DA Wward Ccouncillor was a source of much frustration to Mr N and company, the current Imizamo Yethu representatives on the Wward Fforum, as they felt it betrayed a weakness on her behalf. Despite many years of courting relationships with the DA state, at some political risk to himself, Mr N has not found the political protection he feels he deserves.

g) *Conclusions*

This in-depth reflection on the challenges facing SANCO leaders in Imizamo Yethu sheds some light generally on the informal politics of representation in poor, urban neighbourhoods of the Gglobal Ssouth. In particular we draw attention to the likelihood that local leaders are likely to confront a range of different challenges that require some form of 'double-dealing', including at a personal level. Further, in South Africa's case, the framing of community leadership around issues of 'service delivery' by SANCO creates a series of specific challenges in relation to the lack of power of local leaders in deciding the substance of development, and their vulnerability to the politics of service delivery populism, not least given the informal and contested nature of SANCO's political and legal standing. Lastly, in

Cape Town more specifically, SANCO must confront the additional challenge of a state that is controlled by the DA, a party in opposition to its ally, the ANC. Cashing out its leadership credentials in terms of service delivery *and* ANC loyalty thus places Imizamo Yethu's leaders on the horns of a legitimacy-efficacy dilemma. The result, at the moment, is paralysis.

In light of the above, we argue that effective leadership by SANCO in Imizamo Yethu would require a particular kind of mediation that can master the challenges of 'double-dealing', that is becoming an honest broker, by identifying and resolving the hard questions of the development vision largely determined at higher political levels; seeing off populist and disruptive rivals; managing the different 'sedation' pressures from competing parties; and resisting co-option by the state and the temptation to betray (contested and heterogeneous) community claims. This is not a politics of popular delegate or elitist trustee, but of the sophisticated balance of enough but not too much – a 'just-right' Goldilocks politics that is nothing short of Herculean. Notably the high risk of failure for the mediator translates into a failure of effective and legitimate representation for poor communities in urban South Africa. In this case then, it is thus not hard to see the link between mediation and the limitations of representation for the poor that typifies the global south.

While the challenge of the substantive vision of development is rarely something that, of itself, threatens the legitimacy of leadership, the problem is how to go about the process of popular authorisation of an externally- imposed development vision by the state or donors, especially given the threat of service delivery populism. Indeed, the challenge of populism is particularly acute in the context of informal leadership, with no formal, legal or electoral mandate that opens the way for constant challenge to leaders' legitimacy. This may reach the

point of blocking the developmental process by crystallising leaders' energies around destructive political battles.

For SANCO leadership, the constant competition for office also increases the necessity to demonstrate their ability to deliver and redistribute to the community, and, in particular, in contexts of developmental states with mass public resources being directed towards low-income neighbourhoods, their ability to capture and channel public resources. It further sets up the terrain for leadership battles around projects and development. The challenge here is to find the right balance between addressing genuine or deep internal community divisions that need to be dealt with democratically, and discarding populist and destructive mobilisation that often serves rival's personal interests (these two dimensions are always both present, but with different balances).

The third challenge is the navigation of party politics. It might be particularly the case in a dominant party system, where state-party boundaries are blurred and political behaviour is dominated by identity politics. Most studies of the politics of cities of the south highlight the volatility of party allegiances, out of the need for pragmatism and seizing opportunities, at the same time as stressing the importance of identity politics in popular neighbourhoods. In the South African context, almost two decades after the liberation, an analysis in terms of identity politics is still relevant, but there are signs that pragmatic approaches are developing beyond political partisanship, and ANC-aligned leaders engage with the state even if not dominated by their political party, adopting a discourse of non-partisanship and working with the state to improve the lives of their communities. In some cases, leaders have even been able to play on political rivalries to put pressure on the state or the dominant party for a more democratic process of delivery. This raises the possibility that the South African condition is

normalising, although more work is required on the intersection between identity politics and manoeuvring of party competition for increased community power.

Fourthly, and maybe more generally, mediation always runs the risk of co-option of leaders, in a myriad of complex state structures and processes, including many state-sanctioned projects by public—private and private players that open opportunities for leaders to put themselves ahead of representing the marginalised. The informal nature of leadership requires personal rather than institutional networks to be established and maintained – shaping the nature of leaders' politics of mediation in a clientelistic way that reinforces the importance of loyalty to the 'hand that feeds', rather than critical engagement with the state for the benefit of the leaders' constituency. This risk is at the core of the politics of mediation, but cannot be avoided in the attempts to construct democratic engagements between civil society and the state. More remains to be researched on the conditions that would minimise this risk for civil society organisations, between a politics of formalisation of engagements diminishing the need for clientelistic networks capturing leaders in contradictory loyalties; and a politics of autonomy where alternative views of development find a space to emerge and to consolidate.

<en-group type="endnotes">

<en><label>1</label>In this chapter we follow the popular convention of describing the residents of Imizamo Yethu in racial terms as 'black', although official government practice is to follow the apartheid-era categorisation of 'black African', 'coloured', 'Indian', 'white' and other. For example see Census 2011 (http://www.statssa.gov.za/Publications/P03014/P030142011.pdf). This is in contrast to the anti-apartheid movement's categorisation of 'African', 'coloured' and 'Indian' as 'black'.

Chapter Two

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