



Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy
in Africa

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SA Elections 2014: The Final Issues – Private Funding of Political Parties, Youth Participation and New Political Entrants

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Editorial Note

This is the final edition of the 2014 series of the EISA Election Update. It provides an analytic article from Ivor Sarakinsky providing an outline of some of the inherent pitfalls and weaknesses in the possible regulation of private funding of political parties as a rebuttal to two earlier pieces arguing for the Regulation of Private funding of Political parties (appearing in Issue 5 and 7 of the Election Update).

The series concludes with two further articles. One examining the nature and level of political engagement of the youth in politics South Africa with a particular focus on election 2014. The last concluding article provides insights into the impact of the new political contestants with a focus on the Economic Freedom Fighters entrance into the electoral landscape and its possible impact on parliamentary politics and the future political climate in South Africa.

We hope you enjoyed this series and that it proved of some use and interest to your work.

Party Political Finance and Multi-Party Democracy in South Africa's 2014 Election

Ivor Sarakinsky – Lecturer, School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand

Introduction

Just as one can calculate the orbit of planets, so too is it possible to predict the return of secret private political funding as an issue in South Africa. Unsurprisingly, it crops up before elections and is pursued by well-meaning civil society organizations which are deeply concerned about electoral transparency in South Africa's maturing democracy. Of course, a bit of programme funding from global philanthropic organizations for cash-strapped NGOs does not adequately explain the frequency of the calls for party political finance regulation in South Africa. Nonetheless, the claims made about the corrosive effect of secret political finance on South Africa's body politic require close scrutiny. What effect would private finance regulation and disclosure have on South Africa's electoral processes, and would they enhance or undermine multi-party democracy? The outcomes of the 2009 and 2014 elections provide evidence that will contribute to a deeper understanding of the issues involved in this controversy.

Overview of Global Experience

In many, but not all, consolidated democracies, there is a regulatory regime for private donations to political parties. Usually, they entail a threshold – meaning that all donations above a set amount have to be declared by the receiving political party. This threshold becomes extremely complicated as it is applied to parties, candidates and local party branches. The justification of such regulations revolves around the claim that large donors can influence the policy agenda of parties and this information needs to be in the public domain so as to allow citizens to make informed choices at the ballot box. Thus, transparency in political finance keeps the democratic system accountable to citizens and contains the ability of special interest groups to influence a country's policy agenda. In this way, democracy is responsive to citizens and elections reflect the will of the people and not the short-term interests of the powerful.

In the overwhelming majority of democracies where private donations are regulated, there are ongoing scandals and criminal trials where politicians and/or their agents have been discovered circumventing the rules. Recently in the United Kingdom, this took the form of donations being accounted for in the financial records of the main parties as non-repayable loans. In the United States, where there is a very complex regulatory regime, the scandal revolved around funding disbursed by third-party lobbyists to politicians' Political Action Committees. In the scandal and legal proceedings involving Jack Abramoff, it emerged that there is a long-standing practice across the political parties of disbursing large amounts of money to politicians without the identity of the donors being made public. Perhaps the most

disturbing development in America's private political donations arena is the emergence of well-funded organizations flighting adverts on TV for specific policies while attacking other candidates for office. These concerned citizens groups are not overtly connected to a political party and they are not regulated by the existing regulatory framework. John Kerry's presidential campaign was derailed by such a group attacking his Vietnam War record. In this way, private donations circumvent regulation and have a significant influence on the political process. Currently, the former French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, is about to be charged for receiving illegal campaign funding as well as attempts to cover such deeds up.

Many more instances of similar abuses of regulatory regimes in other democracies could be documented here. However, these examples support the view that: a) Political parties require significant amounts of finance for their routine operations and periodic election campaigns; b) Regulation, in and of itself, is no guarantor of a transparent and accountable democratic system; c) The flow of private money into the political process will always occur by way of circumventing and or loop-holing existing regulations; d) Regulating private political donations is both complex and imperfect, leading to unintended outcomes; e) Some private donors will innovate in circumventing regulations to buy influence despite a regulatory framework; and f) there are situations, recognized in the literature on private political finance, where regulation and transparency may undermine multi-party democracy. Consequently, calls for private political donation regulation in South Africa require careful consideration in order to ensure that the objectives of transparency and accountability do not undermine or hinder multi-party competition in an election contest.

The South African Context

Political parties in South Africa have access to public funding disbursed by national parliaments and provincial legislatures. This is managed in accordance with the Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act (Public Funding Act) of 1997. A budgeted amount is disbursed proportionally to the percentage of seats each party holds in the house. While not insignificant, the amount of public money allocated to parties is insufficient for the full operation of political parties, which includes, inter alia, office expenses, wages and campaign fees. It is the latter that constitutes the greatest expense facing all parties. Advertising, travel, event logistics and printing are fundamental to the democratic process in presenting citizens with information crucial for their electoral choices. Democracy therefore depends on parties disseminating their manifestos as widely as possible to enable informed voter decision-making. It is in this context that the private political funding, and its secret nature, becomes so important in South Africa.

Private political funding in South Africa is further complicated by the status of donors. Three categories can be identified, each with different implications. First, there are individual donors who donate some of their private wealth to political parties. This can vary from small to large amounts and does not necessarily suggest the buying of influence. Second, public companies make donations and while couched under the rubric of democratic support, may have elements of positioning linked to them. However, the rigours of corporate governance in South Africa result in all public companies having to declare such donations in terms of

transparency and accountability to shareholders. These donations are easy to track and monitor with regard to any possible ulterior motive. The last category of donor is the most problematic in the South African context. It is the unlisted company or small business. There is no possibility of donations made by these entities being made public, and it is in this sector that the possibility of buying influence is at its highest.

The only data that is available on private political funding in South Africa comes from public companies. It is important to present and analyse this data, as it reveals important trends and patterns impacting on the financial standing of all political parties. With few exceptions, most donations in this category follow a proportionality formula for donating funds to political parties. This replicates the formula for disbursing public money to political parties as discussed above. Totalling up the amounts from various public companies over a 15-year period shows that the ANC as the majority party received around 65% of the amounts made available by the companies. The smaller, opposition, parties received significantly less based on the number of seats held in parliament. The exception to this trend is Anglo Gold Ashanti, which aims to support multi-party democracy by attaching “greater weight to the principles of equity and diversity than to the principle of proportionality based on parties’ previous performance in elections”. This is the only public company that has given opposition parties funding at least equal to that given to the majority party. Moreover, in the lead-up to the 2014 election, some public companies publicly stated that they are no longer making political donations, and the pot of public company donations for political parties has therefore decreased dramatically. In 2014, fewer companies made political donations than in earlier elections.

The available data on public company political donations in 2014, excluding AngloGold Ashanti, mirrors the trend noted above, that the majority party receives the lion’s share of available funds. Checking through the most recent annual reports did not disclose the amounts donated by some companies, but this will be available in their 2014/5 financial statements.

| Company | Amount | Disbursement Criteria |
|-------------------|---------------|--|
| AngloGold Ashanti | R? | Amount unavailable – previously larger amount to ANC, and DA and remainder then split with other parties |
| ABSA 2013 | R2.5 mill | Parties with more than 4 seats, probably proportional distribution |
| MTN | R? | For 13 political parties, probably proportional amount not released |
| SAB Miller | R9 mill | ANC R5 mill, rest divided between DA, IFP, COPE, UDM and FF |
| Standard Bank | R13.5mill | Amount is for a five-year electoral cycle and probably proportional distribution |

What the available data shows is that fewer public companies are donating and that the distribution formula favours the majority party. In this sense, the outcome of the distribution of public funding and corporate donations is similar. The implication of this is clear: smaller parties are under-resourced and therefore unable to disseminate information as widely,

thereby limiting their reach and citizens' information and choices. This impacts negatively on democracy, as the larger parties, by definition, are the better resourced and are able to swamp smaller parties thereby undermining political competition and the dissemination of diverse information necessary for voter decision-making.

If this trend of proportionality is extrapolated to a hypothetical situation where all donations above a threshold have to be declared (private, public corporate and unlisted corporate), then there is a real possibility that this practice of proportionality will be to the detriment of smaller opposition parties. This extrapolation would be exacerbated by a perception that donations by (especially unlisted) companies to opposition parties may impact negatively on their prospect of doing business with government. This is a perception, not a claim that it will result in retribution from the governing party. As long as there is a fear of being disadvantaged in competing for government contracts, businesses will be inclined not to donate to opposition parties, even if they support them. There is evidential support of this perceived fear amongst business, as most recently noted by Lance Greyling (ID/DA) in an ISS workshop on private political finance regulation. Furthermore, the IFP and DA stressed this possible outcome in their response to IDASA's 2006 litigation for party finance disclosure.

Donations from public funds and public corporations are miniscule in relation to what all parties spend on operations, travel, advertising campaigns and events. The balance in funding comes from categories 1 and 3 donors noted above, with the latter probably being the most important. Data on spending is hard to come by, but some estimates have been made on advertising time slots on TV. The DA is reported to have had a budget of R170 million for the 2014 election, of which about R13 million is estimated to have been spent on TV advertising alone. The ANC is estimated to have spent just over R17 million on TV slots. These amounts exclude billboards, memorabilia, mass SMSs, newspaper adverts etc. Clearly, significant sums of funding are required to run an effective election campaign where the message is disseminated effectively, thereby allowing citizens to make informed choices.

If the bulk of political donations come from unlisted companies or small businesses, then this creates a number of challenges. First, the buying of influence at local, provincial and national level might be enhanced. However, an examination of corruption trends shows that the media, civil society and state agencies have in the past been the most important source of information on such acts. Regulation in and of itself is no guarantee that corrupt relationships will not be established. Second, it is precisely unlisted companies and small businesses that may rely on government contracts and thereby perceive donations to opposition parties as harmful to their business interests.

The 2014 Election

What does the 2014 election tell us about the points raised above? First, the larger parties were notably cash flush in financing their intensive and widespread campaigns. Digging a bit deeper, it is noticeable that the DA had to make some tough choices as to where to focus its resources. It is estimated that it spent R100 million of its budget targeting Gauteng. The

Gauteng result shows that this money was well spent in generating a large amount of support for the DA. However, the opportunity cost is that only R70 million was available for the other provinces. More resources in the Northern Cape, North West and Eastern Cape may have resulted in better results there. Clearly the DA did not have the resources to run intensive campaigns throughout the country. On the other hand, the ANC ran an effective and intensive national campaign with leaders travelling around the country, including isolated and distant areas and towns. This goes some way in explaining how the ANC was able to obtain a 63% election victory at national level in a difficult environment due to a number of scandals and service delivery challenges. This kind of national campaign is premised on a rather large amount of available finance. This supports the argument above regarding proportionality and incumbency enabling the ANC to raise healthy amounts of finance for its operations and campaigns.

Although there is currently no statutory requirement for parties to disclose their financial sources and amounts, some information became available in the 2014 election. It revolved around the proposed merger of the DA and Agang and the claim from both parties that donors were pressing for such. Names of donors in this context were allegedly revealed in the press, but no amounts were reported. However, after the election, it emerged that Agang received donations to the tune of R30 million. This is quite significant in relation to the public funding and corporate donations listed above, of which Agang did not receive a cent, due to it being a new party. As a result of turmoil within the party, this cash windfall did not translate into votes, and only two seats were won in Parliament. Another new party, not eligible for state or public company funding, is the EFF. This party ran an effective and intense campaign and won over a million votes, with 25 parliamentary seats as well as representation in provincial legislatures. In terms of the hostility between the ANC and EFF, it is fair to assume that no business donor to the latter would be enthusiastic about their financial support being made public. Nonetheless, there is no indication where the EFF received its finance from and how much it spent in its campaign. However, the widespread nature of its campaign suggests that it was not short of funds.

The ANC, DA, IFP, NFP, Cope and CDP are now joined by two new parties in Parliament, namely Agang and the EFF. This is positive in terms of the representation of diversity of political views in Parliament. Moreover, this plurality is also an actualization of the Constitution, which declares in Section 1 d that: “South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values; . . . Universal adult suffrage, a national common voter’s roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness.” The issue at stake is stated simply as this: disclosure of political donations will seriously undermine the ability of opposition parties to raise the finance necessary to compete in elections and ensure the sustainability of multi-party democracy.

The Heart of the Matter

Around the world, democratic countries struggle to manage the harsh reality that elections are cash-intensive and that private donations are indispensable to political parties. Many, but not all, established democracies have political donation regulations based on a threshold and disclosure. While secret donations are allowed in Sweden, all other regulatory regimes come into being through legislation passed by a sitting parliament or equivalent. The regulatory regime is the outcome of a democratic deliberative process. While not perfect and often circumvented, circumvention would be much worse if such were imposed on political parties by another branch of government such as the judiciary. This is one of the weak points of IDASA's failed litigation mentioned above. The parties themselves have to formulate and negotiate the rules that they are to be bound by if there is to be the greatest chance of compliance.

In 2007, the ANC's Polokwane Manifesto listed political finance reform as an objective, and proposals have emerged in the public domain for further discussion rather than implementation. The idea of full public funding has been mooted, but with public finance challenges and other policy priorities this is simply not feasible. Another possibility, recently alluded to, is a fund where all private donations would be managed and then distributed to political parties, thereby eliminating the need for particular parties to raise funds. The advantage of this proposal is that it would severely curtail possible influence-peddling. The challenge would be to arrive at a fair formula for disbursement that would avoid the shortfalls of proportionality and a parliamentary presence as outline above. The discussion in South Africa on the challenge of political finance has been underway for some time and it should be strengthened through initiatives and proposals that will enable transparency and accountability without threatening the sustainability of multi-party democracy. This means that a one-dimensional disclosure regime might not be appropriate to the conditions of South Africa and that more creative, innovative, options need consideration.

This is a time-consuming process where there are no quick fixes or "silver bullet" solutions. In the UK, the issue of political finance reform has been on the agenda for many years: discussions between the three main parties broke down in 2007 and have now broken down again and the issue has been shelved until 2015. In the United States, the Supreme Court recently struck down a key feature of the threshold and disclosure regulatory framework. It found that donors could now fund as many candidates as they wished rather than only one previously, as the limitation was an infringement of free speech. The point here is that advanced democracies require time to formulate consensual, constitutional and effective regulatory frameworks. South Africa, as a relatively new democracy, should not be expected to solve a difficult democratic challenge overnight and in isolation from other countries' experience.

In the context of South Africa's challenges and constitutional requirement for a democratic multi-party system, there are a range of mechanisms that might inform such a regulatory system that find the balance between accountability + transparency and sustainability + party effectiveness. As a first step, internal processes for raising and accounting for donations

might be drafted and enforced. Simple things like no individual being permitted to approach and receive donations can be powerful in limiting abuse – the more people in the party who know who donates, the less likely are secretive and collusive relationships. Similarly, the auditing profession can advise on templates for the internal management and reporting on party finances. At the same time, instead of revealing donations, all parties might be required to disclose their audited expenditure, and a cap on expenses might also be considered. This information will provide much-needed information on party finance without undermining the potential fund-raising opportunities of opposition parties.

Elected representatives and parties need to be directly involved in the formulation of a future political finance regulatory regime if it is to be effective through the elicitation of voluntary compliance. External intervention will, in all probability, result in concerted and sophisticated practices aimed at circumventing the rules. International experience shows just how easy this is to do.

Conclusion

Amilcar Cabral famously once declared: “Claim no easy victories”. This is relevant to the debate on party political finance in South Africa. Proponents of a simple disclosure regime underestimate the complexity of the South African environment and the unintended consequences of such an initiative. Furthermore, simple regulatory proposals ignore the challenge of compliance and overlook the importance of “social capital” in contributing to such compliance. Thus, the regulatory regime, to be effective, has to be the outcome of a deliberative process whereby those who are subject to it also design it. Without this important participatory process, any regulatory regime is doomed. In addition to this, any regulatory regime has to be designed to achieve maximum positive outcome (transparency and accountability) with minimum negative and unintended consequence (undermining a competitive multi-party system). Finding the balance with compliance is no easy task and thereby requires the wisdom of Solomon by parties and actors throughout the deliberative process. The 2014 election reinforces a trend noticeable in all earlier elections that parties already represented in Parliament benefit from the practice of proportionality in public and public company donations. Within this environment, opposition parties are at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to fundraising due to a perception that government might act vindictively towards business donors who support opposition parties. Any proposal has to take the complexity of the South African situation into account, and instruments developed in other countries may not be appropriate for South Africa. The challenge of regulating party political finance is aptly summarized by international expert Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, who stated that:

If the US example of a political finance regime . . . has proved anything to the rest of the world, it is the commonsense insight that the flow of money is rather like the flow of water. No obstacle set up for control purposes will stop trickles from flowing and siphons from being applied. As long as human creativity is confronted by legal frameworks, loopholes will be sought, found and used. The more perfect the rules designed, the more perfect the evasion will be.

South African Youth: Politically Apathetic?

Elnari Potgieter and Barend F. Lutz, Independent Researchers on behalf of InkuluFreeHeid

Introduction

“Before the birth of democracy in the country, young people were at the forefront of the revolution, but today, many young people seem to be ignorant about politics”.¹

Before, during and after the South African national elections of 2014, concerns had been raised over the seeming lack of political participation among young South African voters, particularly “born frees”. The sentiment had been captured in statements and headlines such as, “South Africa’s youth is often seen as a ‘lost generation’”,² “Why aren’t South Africa’s born frees voting?”³ “The Young and the Restless: Political Apathy and the Youth”,⁴ as well as, “Born free! But dying young: A post-mortem on youth and democracy in South Africa”.⁵

Is what is being witnessed among the youth merely a matter of voting apathy rather than political apathy? Whatever the reason, the question remains; what are the possible (de)motivators of political participation in the current youth of South Africa? This article aims to investigate whether the South African youth is politically apathetic and explores possible (de)motivators for political participation among the current youth of South Africa.

“Youth”: A Non-Standardised Term

Various definitions exist for the age bracket defining “youth”, invariably generating challenges when conducting comparative analyses.⁶ The United Nations (UN) Secretariat defines youth/young people as those between 15 and 24 years of age, without prejudice to the various definitions of member states and other entities.⁷ The African Youth Charter defines

¹ Chawane, N. “Youth should be better informed.” *Mpumalanga News* (1 May 2014). Online: <http://mpumalanganews.co.za/172157/youth-better-informed/> [19 June 2014].

² Tracey, L. “What can be expected from young voters in South Africa’s 2014 elections?” *ISS Today* (17 September 2013). Online: <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/what-can-be-expected-from-young-voters-in-south-africas-2014-elections> [28 May 2014].

³ Essa, A. “Why aren’t South Africa’s born frees voting?” *Al Jazeera* (07 May 2014). Online: <http://www.aljazeera.com/> [28 May 2014].

⁴ Roberts, B.; Letsoalo, T. “The Young and the Restless: Political Apathy and the Youth”. *South African Social Attitudes Survey*. Online: <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/> [17 June 2014].

⁵ Nxusani, A. “Born free! But dying young: A post-mortem on youth and democracy in South Africa.” Online: https://www.academia.edu/1786824/Born_free_But_dying_young_A_postmortem_of_youth_and_democracy_in_South_Africa [30 June 2014]

⁶ Fakir, E., Bhengu, Z. and Larsen, J.K. “Future Imperfect: The youth and participation in the 2009 South African elections.” *Journal of African Elections*, 9.2 (2010): 100-122.

⁷ UNDESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs). “United Nations Youth: Definition of Youth”. Online: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf> [28 May 2014].

youth/young people as “every person between the ages of 15 and 35”,⁸ while South Africa’s National Youth Commission Act of 1996 refers to all persons between the ages of 14 and 35 as youths.⁹ The latter definition had been acknowledged in South Africa’s National Youth Policy for 2008–2013.¹⁰ Prior to the national elections in 2009, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa defined “youths” as persons in the 15-to-29-year-old age group.¹¹

For the purposes of this paper, the categorisation of youth by the IEC will be used. Given that the voting age for South Africans is 18 years,¹² persons between the ages of 15 and 17 will not be included in the analysis.

Forms of political participation in South Africa

Voting is possibly the most prominent and frequently performed manner of political participation; however, a wide range of activities can be regarded as methods of political participation. The definition of political participation varies, depending on the normative model of democracy held as the standard, but, at its core, the term refers to a citizen’s ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs.¹³ It defines the freedom to assemble, associate and express individual opinions, desires and beliefs in the public sphere, with the intention of influencing the structure of government, policymakers and the policies themselves.^{14 15}

In exploring the various forms of political participation in South Africa, it is practical¹⁶ to separate participation into conventional and non-conventional participation, as Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie proposed in their seminal work on political participation, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*.¹⁷ Conventional participation involves or comprises the activities expected of a good citizen. These activities aim to either support or influence government. In South Africa, these civil duties include, but are not limited to:

- Voting in municipal and/or national elections.
- Volunteering for a political campaign.

⁸ African Youth Charter, 2006.

⁹ National Youth Commission Act, 1996.

¹⁰ National Youth Policy, 2008-2013.

¹¹ Fakir, E., Bhengu, Z and Larsen, J.K. “Future Imperfect: The youth and participation in the 2009 South African elections.” *Journal of African Elections*, 9.2 (2010): 100-122.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Teorell, J. 2006. “Political participation and three theories of democracy: A research inventory and agenda” *European Journal of Political Research* 45: 787–810.

¹⁴ Maan, X.W. 2011. “Social Capital and Civic Voluntarism: A socio-political explanation of political participation” Universiteit Twente. Online: http://essay.utwente.nl/62739/1/Bscverslag_XandraMaan_s0191094.pdf [27 May 2014].

¹⁵ UN Women Watch Publication. “Political Participation” Online: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/Chapter3.htm> [27 May 2014].

¹⁶ Please note that there are various other ways of defining and categorising political participation, which fall outside of the scope of this article.

¹⁷ Verba, S. and Nie, N. H. “Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality” (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 2-3.

- Being involved with national, provincial or municipal (local) government.
- Informal community work.
- Campaigning; making political donations and contributions.
- Belonging to, and participating in, legal activist groups (online or offline).
- Voting in potential referendums.
- Staying up-to-date with government gazettes.

Unconventional participation comprises activities that defy or challenge government and/or the dominant political culture. These activities can be legal or illegal, and are mostly characterised by a mistrust of the political system, a strong sense of political efficacy, and a high sense of group consciousness.¹⁸ These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Staging demonstrations and protests (legal and/or illegal¹⁹).
- Supporting boycotts, occupation movements and strikes.
- Signing petitions.
- Committing politically motivated violence, including assassinations, terrorism, sabotage, vandalism and cybercrime.

Both conventional and unconventional forms of political participation shape South Africa's political system. Participation drives decision-making, ensures government responsiveness, influences and shapes public opinion, protects interests at the individual level, provides legitimacy to government, and frames political discussions.²⁰

Figures: Youth, Youth Registration and Youth Voting

South Africa has a young population. The average age of the country's population is 24.9 years, one of the lowest in the world, and lower than most emerging economies (e.g. BRICS and the developed world). The estimated global average age is 29.1 years.²¹ South Africans younger than 35 years of age constitute approximately 77.6 per cent of the country's

¹⁸ Florida International University <http://www2.fiu.edu/~milch002/CPO3643/outlines/participation.htm>

¹⁹ Please note that one could also argue that legal protests might actually be accepted by the SA political culture and therefore be conventional.

²⁰ Teorell, J. 2006. "Political participation and three theories of democracy: A research inventory and agenda" *European Journal of Political Research* 45: 787–810.

²¹ UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) South Africa. "Young People Fact Sheet." (2013). Online: <http://countryoffice.unfpa.org> [29 May 2014].

population of over 52 million people,²² with 42 per cent of South Africans between the ages of 14 and 35 years of age.²³

Given that young South Africans make up a significant proportion of voters,²⁴ involving the large number of South African youth in the processes of democracy is elemental to embed democracy.²⁵ While bearing in mind that political participation extends beyond voting, the focus here will be on voting, given the essential role of elections as a democratic process.²⁶

How has the South African youth fared in terms of voter registration and voting? Following Fakir *et al.*,²⁷ we first traced the national registration and voting trends (Table 1), where after the registration trends for youth, in particular, were captured (Table 2). Given the above-mentioned various definitions of “youth”, as well as limits in terms of the availability of comparative data for “youth” voter turnout, we can only identify possible trends.

Table 1: National election data: 1994–2014

| Election Year | 1994 | 1999 | 2004 | 2009 | 2014 |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Registered voters | | 18 172 751 | 20 674 926 | 23 181 997 | 25 388 082 |
| Ballots cast | 19 533 498 | 16 228 462 | 15 863 558 | 17 919 966 | 18 654 771 |
| Voter turnout | | 89.30% | 76.73% | 77.30% | 73.5% |
| Valid ballots | 19 340 417 | 15 977 142 | 15 612 671 | 17 680 729 | 18 402 497 |
| Spoiled ballots | 193 081 | 251 320 | 15 612 671 | 239 237 | 252 274 |
| % spoiled | 0.99% | 1.55% | 1.58% | 1.34% | 1.4% |

Source: Table compiled from data sources for each election, listed by year (<http://electionresources.org.za>) and IEA national turnout statistics (<http://elections.org.za>). Data accessed: 27 May 2014.

Table 1 illustrates that voter registration has increased in numbers. However, the number of registered voters, comprising just over 25 million of the 31.4–34.4 million eligible voters²⁸ (the exact number has been a matter of contention), is disappointing. Furthermore, a decrease in voting participation is evident, as the number of ballots cast declined from 19.3 million in

²² Pretorius, S. “Voter stats called into question.” *The Citizen* (20 February 2014). Online: <http://citizen.co.za/130949/steph-idw/> [29 May 2014].

²³ Stanlib. “SA Population is the youngest in the world”. Online: <http://www.stanlib.com/EconomicFocus/Pages/SAyoungestpopulation.aspx> [29 May 2014].

²⁴ Tracey, L. “What can be expected from young voters in South Africa’s 2014 elections?” *ISS Today* (17 September 2013). Online: <http://www.issafrika.org/iss-today/what-can-be-expected-from-young-voters-in-south-africas-2014-elections> [28 May 2014].

²⁵ Malada, B. “South African Youth: A Threat to be Feared or a Future to be Cherished?” *Perspectives: Political Analysis and Commentary from Africa*, Heinrich Böll Foundation Southern Africa 1:13 (2013). 5-19.

²⁶ Milner, H. 2000. “Social Capital, Civic Literacy and Political Participation”, in Dowding, K., Hughes, J. and Margetts, H. (eds.), *Challenges to Democracy: Ideas, Involvement and Institutions*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 91-99.

²⁷ Fakir, E., Bhengu, Z., Josephine K Larsen, J. K. “Future Imperfect: The youth and participation in the 2009 South African elections”. *Journal of African Elections* 9(2). 100-122.

²⁸ Pretorius, S. “Voter stats called into question.” *The Citizen* (20 February 2014). Online: <http://citizen.co.za/130949/steph-idw/> [29 May 2014].

1994 to 18.6 million in 2014. In addition, voter turnout declined from 89.3 per cent in 1999 to 73.5 per cent in 2014.

Table 2: Nationally registered voters from 18–29 years of age

| Election Year | 1999 | 2004 | 2009 | 2014 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Age band | | | | |
| 18–29 | 5 834 918 | 5 877 131 | 6 283 630 | 6 376 383 |
| All | 18 172 000 | 20 674 926 | 23 174 279 | 25 335 265 |

Source: Table compiled from IEC South African Registration Case Study (24 October 2007) and IEC registration statistics, as on 27 May 2014 at <http://elections.org.za>.

Table 3: Registered voters (18–29 years) as a percentage of the total eligible voting population

| Age group | Eligible voting population ISS Aug 2013 Data | Registered population (Jun IEC data) | Percentage registered |
|-----------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 18–19 | 1541875 | 629997 | 40.85 |
| 20–29 | 7552955.385 | 5740187 | 75.99 |

Source: Table compiled from ISS Policy Brief: Forecasting South African election results at <http://www.issafrica.org/> and IEC registration statistics, as on 27 May 2014 at <http://elections.org.za>.

Table 2 illustrates that the number of 18-to-29-year-olds who registered to vote increased slightly from 5.8 million in 1999 to 6.3 million in 2014. However, it should be noted that, although voters in South Africa in the 18–29 age group represent about 34 per cent²⁹ of all potential voters in the country, only about 41 per cent of these eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 19 registered, while 76 per cent of eligible voters between the ages of 20 and 29 registered. At the time of publication, data on youth voter turnout for the 2014 elections had not officially been released. However, a survey by the IEC indicated that the biggest decline in intention to vote was among 18-to-19-year-olds, 20-to-24-year-olds, 25-to-35-year-olds, as well as among eligible voters in informal settlements, residents from Limpopo, the Free State and Western Cape, and among coloured adults. The intention to vote declined by at least 10 per cent from the previous elections, five years earlier.³⁰

From data observable above, the identifiable trends are a decline in national voter turnout, as well as a worrying low percentage of registered eligible voters, particularly young registered voters in the 18-to-19-year-old age group, starkly contrasting with the 76 per cent of 20-to-29-year-olds that registered, but did not necessarily vote.

²⁹ Cilliers, J. 2014. Forecasting South African election results. *Institute for Security Studies Policy Brief*. Online: <http://www.issafrica.org/uploads/PolBrief53April14.pdf> [27 May 2014].

³⁰ Struwig, J., and Roberts, B. IEC Voter Participation Survey 2013/2014. *HSRC*, February 2014.

The following section will offer possible explanations for the trends indicated above, while also embedding these findings within a broader context of political participation among the South African youth.

(De)Motivators

The question here is not only what motivates young South Africans to participate in politics, but also, what demotivates them from participating. Numerous theories and models had been advanced to find these (de)motivators, one of which is the “Civic Voluntarism Model” (CVM) by Verba, Brady and Scholzman.³¹ Although not without its imperfections, it offers guidance on possible indicators for participation.³² In looking to answer the question of who participates, the authors asked both who does not participate, and why. They subsequently offered three answers:

1. Some people cannot participate, i.e. they do not have the resources to do so. Here, factors such as education, income, employment and status have often been used in research.
2. Others do not want to participate. In this instance, factors such as political attitude and political interest play a role.
3. Some people had never been asked to participate. Here, recruitment networks and social capital come into play.³³

Using the CVM as a point of reference, we look at some of the motivators/demotivators that may impact on the political participation trends of the South African youth.

“Bread-and-Butter” Constraints

Lauren Tracey, for the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), writes that some of South Africa’s youth have decided not to participate in elections, given that the realities of poverty, inequality and unemployment are held against the promises of a bright future,³⁴ which is thus found wanting. What are the economic realities of the South African youth?

The Global Youth Wellbeing Index (compiled by the International Youth Foundation and The Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington) found that South Africa ranks poorly as a nation looking after the wellbeing of its young people, particularly in terms of economic opportunities.³⁵ The Index looks at 40 indicators across six domains, which

³¹ Verba, S., Scholzman, K. & Brady, H. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. 1995. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

³² Potgieter, E. “Predictors of Political Participation in New Democracies: A Comparative Study”. 2013. Stellenbosch University.

³³ Verba, S., Scholzman, K. & Brady, H. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. 1995. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

³⁴ Tracey, L. “What can be expected from young voters in South Africa’s 2014 elections?” *ISS Today* (17 September 2013). Online: <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/what-can-be-expected-from-young-voters-in-south-africas-2014-elections> [28 May 2014].

³⁵ Goldin, N., Patel, P. and Perry, K. “The Global Youth Wellbeing Index.” *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)* (2014). Online: <http://www.youthindex.org/full-report/> [28 May 2014].

include Information and Communications Technology, Safety and Security, Health, Education, Citizens' Participation, and Economic Opportunity. The index was compiled for 30 different countries. South Africa ranked 23rd overall and worst in terms of economic opportunities, with youth unemployment and the number of youth not in training, employment or education playing a large role in the latter ranking.³⁶

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Risks 2014 Report, South Africa has the third highest unemployment rate in the world for people between the ages of 15 and 25. It stated that more than 50 per cent of South Africans from 15 to 24 years of age are unemployed.³⁷ Furthermore, South Africa's Gini coefficient (at around 0.7) is indicative of the limited progress that has been made in terms of income equality in the country since the end of apartheid.³⁸ Thus, not only do young people in South Africa grapple with unemployment and little economic opportunity, they do so within a highly unequal society.

But what do these economic realities have to do with low voter turnout? According to the above-mentioned WEF Global Risk 2014 Report, "[M]uch of the younger generation lacks trust in institutions and leaders ..." and "... the generation coming of age in 2010 faces high unemployment and precarious job situations, hampering their efforts to build a future and raising the risk of social unrest ..."³⁹ Disillusionment among the youth of South Africa with the formal institutions of democracy is probable, given that these institutions and their leaders have yet to cater for the needs of young South Africans, particularly in terms of employment. In the words of a young South African, Asanda Mkhwane (19), "I realised, what am I going to vote for? I don't believe in our government leaders and their empty promises."⁴⁰

Thus, a combination of a lack of resources necessary to participate (given the high unemployment rates and poverty), as well as disillusionment with political leadership to grapple with these problems, may influence the political participation choices of young South Africans.

Education concerns

A more comprehensive definition of personal resources would factor in education, given that it enables citizens to understand and process information, foster self-confidence and the sense that individuals have the capacity to control their own circumstances, while also empowering them to pursue certain goals and take part in deliberative processes to achieve certain objectives.⁴¹ Some scholars assert that education does not directly impact on political

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Risks Report 9* (2014). Online: <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/> [28 May 2014].

³⁸ *OECD Economic Survey* March 2013. Online: <http://www.oecd.org> [28 May 2014].

³⁹ SA youth unemployment 3rd highest in the world. *Fin24* (20 January 2014). Online: <http://www.fin24.com/Economy/SA-youth-unemployment-3rd-highest-in-world-20140120> [28 May 2014].

⁴⁰ Essa, A. "Why aren't South Africa's born frees voting?" *Al Jazeera* (07 May 2014). Online: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/05/why-aren-south-africa-born-frees-voting-20145617536762389.html> [28 May 2014].

⁴¹ Kitschelt, H. & Rehm, P. Political Participation, in Caramani, D. (ed.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2008. 446-472.

participation, but rather on political interest and knowledge,⁴² as well as on employment opportunities and thus the available resources to participate in political activities.⁴³ So how is South Africa faring in terms of education?

The South African government spends abundantly on education, with 5 per cent of the country's GDP made available for education. A diagnostic overview by the National Planning Commission (NPC) indicated that the overall gross enrolment ratio in the country is 92 per cent. However, not all learners manage to stay enrolled and complete schooling. Furthermore, despite this financial investment in education, the quality of education provided by state schools in the country is poor.⁴⁴

The apartheid regime brought about an unequal education system that has been difficult to rectify.⁴⁵ The South African government has struggled to maintain quality education while improving access to education.⁴⁶ Furthermore, a research report by Servaas van den Berg *et al.*, "Low Quality Education as a Poverty Trap", states that the current education system in general delivers outcomes which reinforce patterns of poverty and privilege, instead of addressing or changing them.⁴⁷ Thus, low-quality education is possibly exacerbating the above-mentioned personal resource constraints, which hinder participation in political activities.

In a study on the predictors of political participation in new democracies, it was indicated that it is important to consider not only the level of education of voters, but also the content of what is learned.⁴⁸ Considering the low registration rate of 18-to-19-year-old citizens, the need for greater education in preparing first-time voters for their roles in democratic processes is crucial to improve registration and voter turnout.⁴⁹ As a 22-year-old student from the Eastern Cape expressed in an interview with ISS Africa, "I've decided not to vote because I feel I do not know enough to make an informed decision".⁵⁰

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Hopolang, S. *Short-Changing South Africa's Youth: the Collapse of an Education System?* ISS Africa (18 April 2012). Online: <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/short-changing-south-africas-youth-the-collapse-of-an-education-system> [7 June 2014]

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Crouch, L. & Vinjevold, P. 2006. South Africa: Access before Quality, and what do we do know? *Profesorado. Revista de currículum y formación del profesorado*, 10, 1. Online: <http://www.ugr.es/local/recfpro/Rev101ART6ing.pdf> [12 July 2013]

⁴⁷ Van den Berg, S., *et al.* "Low Quality Education as a Poverty Trap". Stellenbosch University (2011).

⁴⁸ Potgieter, E. "Predictors of Political Participation in New Democracies: A Comparative Study". 2013. Stellenbosch University.

⁴⁹ Tracey, L. "SA Elections: first-time voters need more effective education." ISS Africa (5 May 2014). Online: <http://www.polity.org.za/article/sa-elections-first-time-voters-need-more-effective-education-2014-05-06> [7 June 2014].

⁵⁰ Ibid.

However, personal resource constraints limiting some of the youth do not render all South African youths apathetic or uninterested in politics. In a democracy, active citizenship involves exercising democratic rights in holding public representatives responsible.⁵¹

Group Membership

Group memberships and networks can be relevant enhancers of political participation, particularly for citizens with fewer resources. Memberships of religious, cultural, regional, social civic, issue-related or work-related organisations (among others), and even family life, may bring about social communication, which may, in turn, bring about opportunities for collective action. Furthermore, association groups may attract those citizens who linger on the margins of political life into political activities.

Participation in association groups may further develop skills of members, enabling them to take part in political activities. These groups may even manifest as reference points for citizens to discern whether they deem political activities to be worthwhile.⁵²

Youth participation in elections might be worrisome; however, service delivery / community protests, which will be discussed in more detail below, debunk the myth of political apathy among the South African youth. Not only has the mounting frustration with socio-economic realities led to the mushrooming of street protests countrywide,⁵³ but young South Africans are often “involved in, if not instigators of, protest activity”, as was discovered through a survey by the Institution for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR).⁵⁴

Concurrently, lower levels of youth membership in labour unions (which had previously been primary sites for political socialisation) and low rates of participation in student council elections at tertiary institutions were recorded.⁵⁵ This may indicate the inability of agents of social and political socialisation to include the youth of South Africa in particularly formal political processes, such as elections.⁵⁶

However, young South Africans continue to be politically active, particularly in groups. Interest in elections among the youth may be moderate, but other forms of political activities and/or political expression (such as volunteering, cultural channels including theatre and

⁵¹ Malada, B. “South African Youth: A Threat to be Feared or a Future to be Cherished?” *Perspectives: Political Analysis and Commentary from Africa*, Heinrich Böll Foundation Southern Africa 1:13 (2013). 5-19.

⁵² Kitschelt, H. & Rehm, P. 2008. Political Participation, in Caramani, D. (ed.), *Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 446-472.

⁵³ Fakir, E. and Benghu, Z. *The future of youth participation in elections*. SA Reconciliation Barometer Blog. Online: <http://reconciliationbarometer.org/volume-eight-2010/the-future-of-youth-participation-in-elections/> [27 June 2014]

⁵⁴ Malada, B. “South African Youth: A Threat to be Feared or a Future to be Cherished?” *Perspectives: Political Analysis and Commentary from Africa*, Heinrich Böll Foundation Southern Africa 1:13 (2013). 5-19.

⁵⁵ Fakir, E. and Benghu, Z. *The future of youth participation in elections*. SA Reconciliation Barometer Blog. Online: <http://reconciliationbarometer.org/volume-eight-2010/the-future-of-youth-participation-in-elections/> [27 June 2014]

⁵⁶ Malada, B. “South African Youth: A Threat to be Feared or a Future to be Cherished?” *Perspectives: Political Analysis and Commentary from Africa*, Heinrich Böll Foundation Southern Africa 1:13 (2013). 5-19.

music, direct action and protest, as well as through social media platforms) remain pronounced and appear to be gaining traction among young South Africans.⁵⁷

Dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the current South African political system

We would argue that the above-mentioned factors are among the issues that could lead to dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the current South African political system. This dissatisfaction and disillusionment has the potential to impact on overall and youth political participation, as it can lead to citizens not wanting to participate politically. This relates to the second aspect of the CVM⁵⁸ discussed above, and in the run-up to the 2014 elections, and was the topic of many heated debates.

There are multiple factors that come into play in determining why certain people do not want to participate in political activities. Verba *et al.*⁵⁹ use the idea of “engagement” to highlight some of the motivations behind political participation. Engagement in this sense represents a variety of psychological predispositions, such as political interest, political trust, identification with a political party, and commitment to specific policies and parties. If a citizen is “engaged”, he or she is normally motivated to participate. However, if this engagement is broken, for example by the belief that voting or political activities are of no influence, the motivation to participate is also diminished. This seems to be the case among many of the youth voters in South Africa.

There are factors that could lead to the broken engagement of certain citizens, including the youth. These factors broadly fall under the term “voter apathy”. Apathetic citizens are not only those who do not care about politics, but are also those who have more profound concerns flowing from feelings of indifference, insignificance and inconsequence.

Beyond the factors of education, bread-and-butter constraints and group membership discussed above, voter apathy is arguably the most prominent challenge to political participation in South Africa. In the next section, we will examine two key factors influencing voter apathy in the country.

Perceptions of structural flaws

Firstly, a large section of the South African society holds perceptions of structural flaws pertaining to the government and other political institutions in the country. The 2013 South Africa Survey⁶⁰ by the SA Institute of Race Relations (IRR) indicated that only 54 per cent of South Africans believe that the government performed well in 2012.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Verba, S., Scholzman, K. & Brady, H. Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics. 1995. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁵⁹ Verba et al 1995 http://essay.utwente.nl/62739/1/Bscverslag_XandraMaan_s0191094.pdf page 19

⁶⁰ SA Institute of Race Relations. 2014. Opinion polls take SA’s temperature: people losing Confidence. Online: http://irr.org.za/reports-and-publications/media-releases/Politics%20and%20government%20Press%20Release%20-%20Opinion%20polls%20take%20SAs%20temperature%20-%204%20March%202014.pdf/at_download/file [18 June 2014]

This perception of dysfunction is further described in the survey. It found that only 55 per cent of South Africans have confidence in Parliament, 52 per cent in provincial government, and 49 per cent in local government. The IRR survey indicated that 35 per cent of South Africans are generally not interested in politics and elections. Furthermore, focusing specifically on the youth, a July 2013 opinion poll⁶¹ by the market research company, Pondering Panda, found that almost a quarter of South African youths did not intend to vote in the 2014 national and provincial elections. The 18-to-34-year-olds polled⁶² had two key reasons for not voting. These were the beliefs that, “things would stay the same no matter who won the election” (44 per cent) and that, “there was no party worth voting for” (31 per cent).

Although the accuracy and representativeness of these results are open to debate,⁶³ it is hard to argue that these results do not at least hint at a serious underlying dissatisfaction and disillusionment within citizens’ perceptions of government and government institutions in South Africa.

The Institute of Justice and Reconciliation’s 2013 South African Reconciliation Barometer also looked at these issues in its section on political culture.⁶⁴ This survey found that, of all the largest public institutions in the country, South Africans had the lowest confidence in political parties (46.2 per cent), the police (47.9 per cent) and local government (48.6 per cent).

Furthermore, since 2012, confidence in all the measured government institutions has been declining, as can be seen in the graph below. The survey also examined the perceptions of political inclusion, voice and participation, and showed that citizens’ sense of agency to influence institutions is also low. As many as 62.3 per cent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the sentence, “Leaders are not concerned with people like me”. Similarly, 51.6 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with, “[There is] no way to make disinterested public officials listen” and 48.3 per cent with “[I] trust leaders to do what is right”.

⁶¹ News24. 2014. Study: SA voter apathy worrying. Online: <http://www.news24.com/elections/news/study-sa-voter-apaty-worrying-20140304> [29 June 2014]

⁶² Note that most of this polling was conducted via social media and on cell phones, which could influence results.

⁶³ Africa Check. 2013. Why social network surveys don’t necessarily reflect the views of SA youth. Online: <http://africacheck.org/reports/why-social-network-surveys-do-not-necessarily-reflect-the-views-of-sa-youth/#sthash.pYP5wuoR.dpuf> [3 June 2014]

⁶⁴ Wale, K. 2013. Confronting Exclusion: Time for Radical Reconciliation. SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2013 Report. Online: <http://reconciliationbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/IJR-Barometer-Report-2013-22Nov1635.pdf> [3 June 2014]

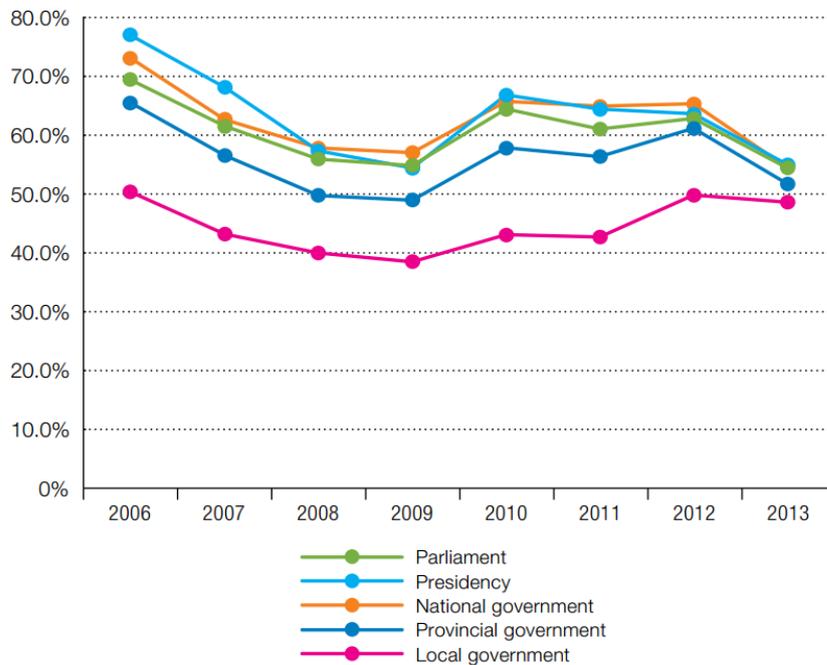


Figure 1: Confidence in governance institutions, 2006-2013

Source: Figure from SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2013 Report at <http://reconciliationbarometer.org>.

Another issue highlighting the perceptions of structural flaws is the seemingly large support for not voting or for actively spoiling a ballot. Focusing on the ballot spoilers, this issue was perfectly encapsulated by the Sidikiwe Vukani (Vote No) campaign led by the former intelligence minister, Ronnie Kasrils. Kasrils called on voters to vote for small parties or to spoil their ballots by writing ‘NO’ across them. He stated⁶⁵ that the aim of this tactic was to, “scare large parties, especially the governing African National Congress (ANC), to make them change their ways.” According to Kasrils, the broad aim of the campaign was to “stop the ANC getting a 66 percent majority”. He called on leaders to address the serious concerns facing the country, namely corruption, nepotism, inequality, police brutality and disregard for the environment.

An online survey by Business Day Live⁶⁶ further illustrated this issue: 5.67 per cent of respondents said that they would consider spoiling their vote in protest, and 6.64 per cent of respondents said that they were not going to vote at all.

This relatively high support for not voting was also seen in the 2014 elections. Although it is concerning that only 73.5 per cent of the registered voting population voted, a bigger issue is perhaps that, as discussed in the results section of this paper, it is estimated that only 59 per cent of the eligible voting population in South Africa actually voted. The ANC has been elected by about 11.437 million voters, which is only 36.4 per cent of the voting public. However, it should be noted that there is no way of indicating what proportion of non-voters did not vote out of protest, or did not vote for other reasons, such as logistical problems.

⁶⁵ Magubane, K and Melaphi, Y. 2014. Old guard in anti-ANC spoilt ballot drive. Business Day Live. Online <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/politics/2014/04/16/old-guard-in-anti-anc-spoilt-ballot-drive> [20 May 2014]

⁶⁶ Business Day Live. 2014. Voter turnout win for South Africa. Online <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/politics/2014/05/08/voter-turnout-win-for-south-africa> [25 May 2014]

Ultimately, this can be regarded as a warning sign for the health of the South African democracy.

Spoiling a ballot or not voting as an act of protest falls outside the ambit of traditional voter apathy. These individuals have legitimate concerns which they choose to express through these actions: a spoiled ballot or a person not showing up to vote could be more than just a clerical or logistical error, but could be indicative of an underlying societal issue.

It should be noted that certain countries have officially tried to address this issue in their ballots. India,⁶⁷ for example, has implemented a ‘None of the Above’ (NOTA) ballot option in recent years. The idea behind this is to tally up votes from those who are unhappy with the political system and the parties represented within it.

Potential problems with the representative democratic system

Secondly, there is growing scholarship which indicates that, globally, people might be becoming disenfranchised with the level of participation and direct influence that they believe they have on the political system. This concern has also been raised in South Africa and other developing countries by authors such as van Beek⁶⁸, Kurlantzick⁶⁹ and Mair.⁷⁰

At the core of a representative democracy, such as South Africa, are popularly elected leaders, who then make key decisions for the population. If the population loses the belief that these leaders can represent them effectively, this can be detrimental to the democratic system as a whole.

South Africa lacks a more direct approach to democracy, such as a constituency-based system, and there is a perceived lack of accountability that has a negative impact, not only on aspects such as service delivery, but also on perceptions about the functioning of the system generally. The ISS and the 2003 Van Zyl Slabbert commission of inquiry recommend the implementation of a mixed-member proportional system to enhance representation. Another option would be to move even further away from representative democracy, towards a semi-direct democracy wherein citizens would have more power.

Forecast of potential outcomes and consequences of the youth apathy

Given the apparent growing level of voter apathy in the country, and the fact that this apathy is potentially prominent among the youth, there are a number of forecasts that can be made for South Africa in the near term.

⁶⁷ Khara, J. 2014. How will None Of The Above affect India poll result? BBC. Online: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27370444> [25 May 2014]

⁶⁸ Van Beek, U., 2012. *The Crisis that Shook the World*. In: van Beek, U. and Wnuk-Lipinski, E., (eds.) 2012. *Democracy under stress: The Global crisis and beyond*. Berlin: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

⁶⁹ Kurlantzick, J. 2013. *Democracy in Retreat*
The Revolt of the Middle Class and the Worldwide Decline of Representative Government. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

⁷⁰ Mair, P. 2013. *Ruling The Void: The Hollowing Of Western Democracy*. London: Verso.

Firstly, one should address the practical issues, such as public disorder, civil unrest and crime concerns. We have stated that political participation can take many forms, and one of those forms prevalent in South Africa is the more unconventional participation in civil unrest. According to crime statistics released by the South African Police Service (SAPS) in September 2013, there were 12 399 “crowd-related incidents” reported in the country between April 2013 and March 2013.^{71 72} These incidents included demonstrations, protest marches and rallies, none of which were sanctioned by municipal authorities. The majority (10 517 cases) were peaceful, but violence was reported in 1 882 of these incidents. Furthermore, these figures indicate an increase of approximately 85 per cent in recorded cases of violent public unrest, when comparing the figures from 2008/2009 to those of 2012/2013.

This growth in violent civil unrest is illustrated in Figure 3 below. As stated above, youths are often the primary actors in these protests. The growth in violent unrest should be seen as an indicator of deeper underlying issues and that these issues are partly driven by the above-mentioned factors.

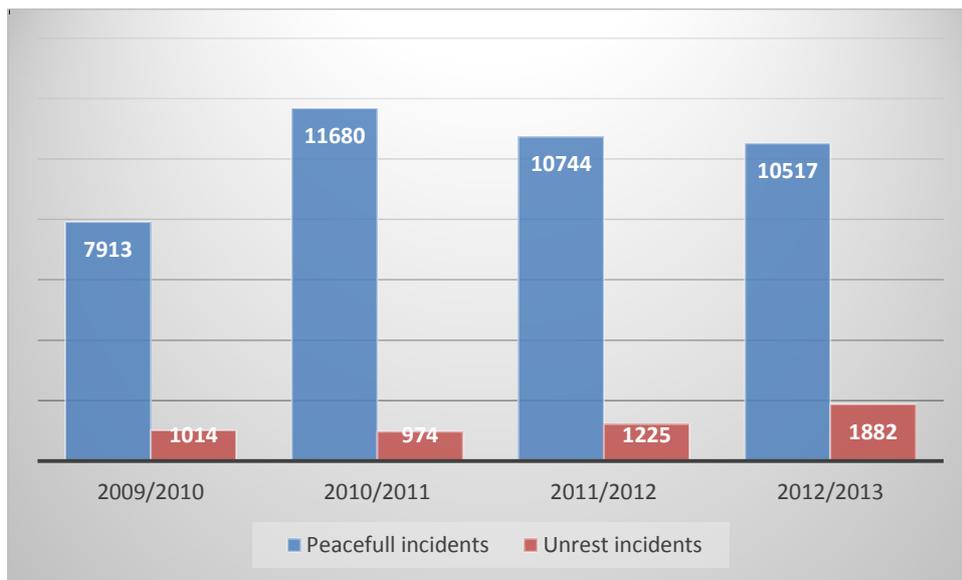


Figure 2: Public order incidents in South Africa, 2010-2013

⁷¹ SAPA Strategic Management. 2013. SAPS’s Analysis of the national crime statistics 2012/13 report. Online: http://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/publications/statistics/crimestats/2013/downloads/crime_stats_analysis.pdf [18 June 2014]

⁷² SAPS. 2013. Crime Situation in South Africa. Online: http://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/publications/statistics/crimestats/2013/crime_stats.php [18 June 2014]

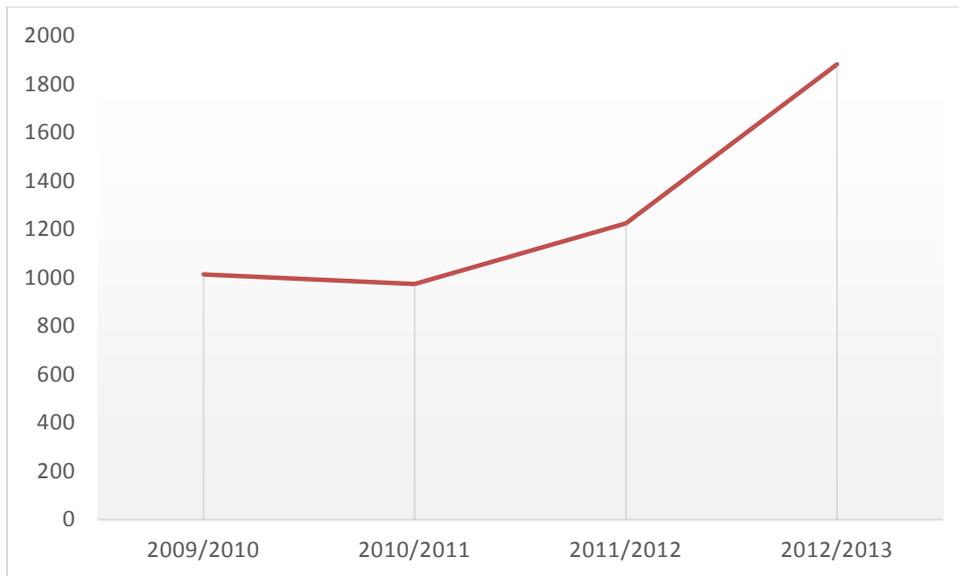


Figure 3: Unrest incidents in South Africa, 2010-2013

Source: Figure 2 and 3 compiled from data from the SAPS's Analysis of the national crime statistics 2012/13 report at http://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/publications/statistics/crimestats/2013/downloads/crime_stats_analysis.pdf.

In the near term, incidents of violent civil unrest are expected to continue countrywide. Furthermore, these incidents have a detrimental effect on economic growth and prosperity in the country, which will only serve to further exacerbate the socio-economic concerns.

A potential longer-term negative effect that youth apathy could have is to the validity of democracy in the country. Firstly, lower election participation levels among the youth directly affect the embeddedness of democracy in the country. A section of society is effectively not being represented. Secondly, as discussed above, there are indications that South Africans, specifically the youth, have issues with the current functioning of our representative democracy. If these concerns are not addressed, they could also cut away at the basic support for the democratic process as a whole.

Identified areas to enhance and embrace youth political participation to embed democracy in South Africa

We have identified a few possibilities to enhance the political participation of young South Africans. Firstly, in order to enhance participation in informal ways, it is necessary to empower the youth to participate constructively. "Bread-and-butter" constraints were identified as a limitation to participation, for their impact on limited personal resources to participate in formal election forms, as well as their impact on disillusionment with government and democratic processes. Effectively addressing socio-economic constraints (such as unemployment and health care) might impact on youth participation in formal political activities.

Furthermore, a lack of voter and/or political education (particularly among first-time voters) was identified as a possible demotivator to participation. Although many efforts have been

made to educate voters, the emphasis should be on furthering political interest and knowledge, and not merely information-sharing. Efforts to educate young voters should also extend to include more than just formalised spaces, and should creatively reach young South Africans through avenues that are relevant to them. Possibilities include utilising spaces in which the youth are already expressing themselves, such as volunteer groups, issue-based groups, social media networks and even service delivery protests.

Considering the various avenues through which young South Africans express and pursue their political interests will enhance democracy and offer the opportunity for officials to narrow the gap between young citizens, policymakers and politicians.

In order to address the issue of disillusionment – of young South Africans increasingly becoming disenchanted with the promises made by officials – we refer to the Reconciliation Barometer⁷³ in stating that political parties (as well as governmental officials) should desist from committing to outputs that are unlikely to be achieved. Furthermore, when looking specifically at elections, there are a number of options that could be considered to potentially enhance participation and reduce voter apathy, specifically among the youth. As discussed above, one option would be to combine mandatory voting (with a NOTA option) with a mixed-member proportional system or a semi-direct democracy.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have investigated whether the South African youth is politically apathetic, and explored possible motivators and demotivators for political participation among the current youth of South Africa. Furthermore, we have forecasted potential outcomes for continued youth political apathy, and identified possible strategic areas to address in order to enhance youth participation. We argue that young South Africans' participation in formal political activities might be worrisome, but this does not render the youth politically apathetic. Twenty years into democracy, it might be wise to explore and consider various avenues of active citizenship to reduce potential unrest and ensure the consolidation of democracy for the future.

⁷³ Wale, K. Confronting Exclusion: Time for Radical Reconciliation SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2013 Report. *Institute for Justice and Reconciliation*, 2013. Online: <http://reconciliationbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/IJR-Barometer-Report-2013-22Nov1635.pdf> [28 June 2014]

SA Elections 2014: Performance of New Parties

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Introduction

In the months running up to the 2014 South African elections there was much speculation about whether this poll would bring with it a grand realignment in South African politics to counter the dominance of the governing ANC. As Aubrey Matshiqi highlighted, such realignment would also entail a challenge to the dominance the Democratic Alliance (DA) continues to hold over opposition politics.⁷⁵ The entrance of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Agang into the political landscape was touted as a development that would bring this much-anticipated shift. As happened with the Congress of the People (COPE) before them, these parties were expected to have a far greater impact on electoral politics than is realistic for new parties of their size.

Despite these predictions, these elections have not led to a major realignment of South African politics. The ANC won the election with 62.15 per cent, receiving an overwhelming mandate to govern the country for the next five years. The DA consolidated its position as the official opposition with 22 per cent of the vote, a five per cent increase from 2009. It made in-roads in Gauteng's metropolitan municipalities, which potentially bodes well for the party's ambitions to govern the City of Johannesburg or Tshwane municipality in coalition after the 2016 local government elections. Many observers are keeping a close eye on developments in the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) in anticipation of the formation of a worker's party to the left of the ANC that seems to be the best chance of a recalibration of party politics.

Nevertheless an examination of the impact of new political parties in the 2014 elections on the political landscape in general is a valuable exercise to understand the context within which any new party bringing promise of a political shift would have to operate. This paper seeks to do just this by focusing on the effect of the EFF in particular. It argues that the EFF has had a marked impact on the South African political landscape that transcends mere rhetoric and theatrics. After presenting an overview of the impact of new entrants to electoral politics in general, the paper appraises the campaign of the EFF and the effect of youth participation on the party's electoral showing. It then compares the EFF's performance to that of new entrants in previous elections. It closes with some remarks on the prospects for the party's longevity.

⁷⁴ The author would like to thank Kelly-Jo Bluen for her comments on early drafts of this article.

⁷⁵ Matshiqi, Aubrey. "Figment or Fragmentation? – Focus on the Governing Alliance and Political Opposition" SA Elections 2014: Political Opposition - Cohesion, Fracture or Fragmentation? EISA Election Update Four (2014): 8

Overview of the impact of new entrants on the political landscape

The EFF, Agang and the National Freedom Party (NFP) were the notable new parties in the general election. The NFP is technically not a new entrant in the political landscape, having contested the 2011 local government elections. However, this was its first general election and its first opportunity to contest beyond its home province of KwaZulu-Natal. The party received 1.5 per cent of the vote nationally and six seats in Parliament. It also received 7.31 per cent of the vote in KZN and seven seats in the provincial legislature. The NFP's greatest impact is in its erosion of the support base of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) from which it broke away in 2011. The IFP is in steady decline, and saw its support fall from 4.55 per cent in 2009 to 2.4 per cent in these elections. In KZN it lost half of its support, falling from 20.52 per cent of the vote in 2009 to 10.27 per cent in 2014. This loss of support can in part be attributed to the NFP's existence as an alternative for those voters who are disgruntled with the stagnation of the IFP, but do not want to shift political allegiance to the ANC.

In retrospect it seems absurd that Agang was expected by some to be a game changer in South African politics. The party revealed itself as an 'also-ran' early this year with its brief merger with the DA and subsequent unravelling as a contender in these elections. It is now so weakened by the ego of its founder Mamphela Ramphele and its internal squabbles that it is unlikely to continue as an independent political formation for much longer. Recent reports of the party's intentions to suspend its founder Mamphela Ramphele seem to support this.⁷⁶ A notable impact of the Agang-DA marriage was to dent the reputation of DA leader Helen Zille. The bungled merger revealed the inconsistency in her stated commitment to non-racial politics and raised questions about her judgement. This didn't seem to hurt the DA's electoral performance: the party won 22.3 per cent of the national vote. However, the long-term effects of the short-lived marriage may emerge in future leadership battles in the party.

The EFF as the winners

The EFF has emerged as the real winner among the new entrants in this year's elections. It managed to attain 6.35 per cent of the vote, giving it 25 seats in parliament, and it is the official opposition in Limpopo and North West. When it burst onto the scene the EFF captured the public imagination and visually transformed the political landscape. Because of the public persona of its leader, Julius Malema, and the high profiles of other party leaders like Andile Mngxitama, the EFF dominated the media and public discourse far more than would normally be expected for a party that has been in existence for less than a year. The red beret became ubiquitous at political meetings, township funerals and urban streets across South Africa. While much is made of the EFF's support among disenfranchised, economically marginalised black (male) youth, the party's message resonated with a sizable portion of the (mostly) young black middle class who live in closest proximity to white South Africans and experience racism in their workplaces and leisure and living spaces daily. This is the constituency that witnesses the degree to which economic transformation has not been

⁷⁶ SAPA. "Agang SA suspends Mamphela Ramphele". *Sowetan* 29 June (2014), <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2014/06/30/agang-sa-suspends-mamphela-ramphele>

achieved from the vantage point of corporate boardrooms, newsrooms and university lecture theatres. The EFF recognised this, and made a commitment in its election manifesto to improve the working conditions of black professionals like doctors, academics, lawyers and engineers, who face racial discrimination in the workplace.

Yet despite this triumph of form and imagery, the substance of the EFF's politics remained unclear for much of the election campaign. Steven Friedman dismissed the party as being 'a case of media hype over substance', arguing that the party's theatrics were being confused for actual influence over the electorate.⁷⁷ While there is merit to Friedman's caution about the tendency of the commentariat to be attracted to political drama rather than attempting to understand political realities, the EFF's campaign and performance in Parliament in the month since the election indicates that imagery can be and has been a powerful force in challenging the substance of a political dispensation. The EFF has been able to adapt old struggle language and visual cues to the present context with great effect. After the election EFF MPs wore bright red overalls and domestic workers' uniforms to the opening of Parliament, arguing that they were 'sending a message to say that the Parliament for the people is not a Parliament for the elite'⁷⁸. Regardless of how disparaging they have been of the new party's appetite for spectacle, both the ANC and DA introduced their own berets in response to the ubiquity of the EFF red beret.⁷⁹ The EFF's dress in parliament was not merely a provocative sartorial choice but a challenge to the colonial-era parliamentary norms and customs whose continued use, it can be argued, is a result of the negotiated end to apartheid. This notion of challenging the foundations of the 'elite pact' that resulted in the present democratic order was expounded upon by Malema in response to the SONA address. Malema was kicked out of the house for refusing to retract a remark made in his response to the SONA accusing the ANC of murdering Marikana miners. The rest of his party's MPs walked out with him in support, whistling and hurling comments as they exited. While this could all be dismissed as a series of publicity stunts they have had the effect of focusing public attention on Parliament and establishing the EFF as vocal opponents to the status quo. In addition, the content of Malema's speech – denouncing white supremacy, and emphasising the similarities between the ANC and the DA – demonstrated that the party intends to be relentless in questioning the structure of South Africa's political economy.

In spite of this, it is already clear that maintaining a consistently revolutionary stance will not be easy for the new parliamentarians. After EFF MPs refused to use parliament's medical scheme, arguing that all government officials should use public services, it was revealed that Malema's son would continue attending a private school instead of moving to a public one. He was defended by the party's national spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, who argued that the party remained committed to its policy, and he further clarified that, "our commitment to EFF public representatives using public services is subject to EFF being elected into

⁷⁷ Friedman, Steven. "EFF frenzy a case of media hype over substance". *Business Day* 5 March (2014)

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2014/03/05/eff-frenzy-a-case-of-media-hype-over-substance>

⁷⁸ Makinana, Andisiwe and Glynnis Underhill. "EFF shakes up Parliament on first day". *Mail and Guardian*, 21 May (2014) <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-05-21-eff-shakes-parliament-up-on-first-day>

⁷⁹ Du Plessis, Carien and Sabelo Ndlangisa. "ANC wears red berets 'to confuse the enemy'". *City Press*, 8 January (2014) <http://www.citypress.co.za/politics/anc-wears-red-berets-confuse-enemy/>

government".⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Ndlozi claimed that the EFF would table a motion to institute legislation requiring all public representatives to use public services. Clearly, the party's stated intention and the action of its leadership show the challenges of staying true to their radical message. While their rhetoric may remain revolutionary, the trappings of power and comfort will be difficult to resist. The extent to which EFF can negotiate between these two poles will have a significant role in deciding the future of the party. Julius Malema's reaching an agreement with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) to settle his tax debt of R16 million and his apologising for accusing the taxman of acting on the instructions of the ANC is another example of the limitations of radical rhetoric and the ultimate necessity of playing by the rules of the system in order to have any chance of acquiring real political power within it.

Moving forward: a delicate balance between rules and revolution?

The EFF's greatest challenge will be in how it navigates the dull everyday work of parliament away from the spotlight of the National Assembly Chamber. The three functions of the South African parliament are oversight over the executive, representing the views of South Africans and making and passing laws. While all four democratic parliaments have performed the first two functions with varying levels of efficacy, they have all been proficient at the third. The process of debating and amending laws introduced by the executive is a key responsibility of parliamentary committees. Various pieces of South African legislation have been fundamentally transformed through the committee process, often for the better, with parliament acting to counter the whims of a sometimes overzealous executive. Prominent examples from the fourth parliament include the Protection of Personal Information Bill and the Protection of State Information Bill, which emerged from parliament in a far better state than they did when they were introduced. The EFF's ability to develop research capacity, to work with knowledgeable interested parties and to adhere to the discipline of committee structures will be critical to determining their success as a parliamentary opposition.

Appraising the EFF's electoral campaign

The EFF's election campaign had an impact both in terms of using innovative tools to communicate the party's message and also because it revealed the party's view of itself and its role in the political landscape.

The EFF was formed in July 2013 after its leader Julius Malema was expelled from the ANC in 2012. While it started as a breakaway ANCYL faction, it merged with like-minded political formations, including the black consciousness organisation the September National Imbizo (SNI) and the African People's Convention (APC). The EFF launched with limited financial resources and sought to raise funds through membership fees, sales of merchandise (like the red beret) and donations. A result of being under-resourced was the party's adoption of what could be called 'guerrilla' campaign tactics like participating in community 'service delivery' protests. The party was able to mobilise young people, attracting large numbers to

⁸⁰ SAPA. "EFF defends Malema's school choice". IOL News, 4 June (2014) <http://www.iol.co.za/news/special-features/eff-defends-malema-s-school-choice-1.1698774#.U7HBhfmSwwk>

its rallies in townships across South Africa. An Ipsos survey from November 2013 revealed that EFF supporters were younger than average, with 44% falling between the ages of 18 and 24, and 29% between the ages of 25 and 35.⁸¹ Those who claimed to support the party were predominantly male (77%), black (99%) and unemployed (40%).

One of the major criticisms of the EFF has been its apparent ideological confusion. The party manifesto describes the party as a “socialist, Marxist-Leninist, Fanonian” organisation that aims to redistribute South Africa’s wealth in order to address poverty, unemployment and inequality. This despite the fact that the purely class-based analysis of Marx sits uncomfortably with the racial nationalism EFF expounds. The party’s rhetoric is part radically socialist, part Black Nationalist and part anti-colonial, tailored in response to any popular grievance or desire. This seeming confusion is explained by a closer look at the various groups that make up the party. It includes the African nationalist foundations of the ANCYL elements, the black consciousness and ‘blacks first’ socialism of the SNI and the influence of other black nationalist-aligned groups. As time has gone on and the party has had to state its positions more clearly on more issues, it has emerged very clearly as a black-nationalist party whose allegiance to socialism is to advance the interests of black South Africans. However, it remains unclear where the EFF lies in the typology of political parties. Is it a mass-based, patron-based or electoralist party? Or is it something in between?⁸²

The EFF’s nascent ideological identity as well as a distinctive rhetorical and symbolic position enabled it to run an effective campaign. The EFF has effectively used both traditional and non-traditional modes of campaigning for this election. It put up election posters featuring the leader Julius Malema, did door-to-door campaigns, held big rallies and took advantage of the free airtime offered by the SABC to create a TV ad that was banned by the broadcaster for inciting violence because it called for the physical destruction of e-toll gantries. The party used the ban itself as a campaign tool by marching to the offices of the SABC to protest the decision. Julius Malema and other leaders accused the SABC as acting as a mouthpiece of the ANC instead of a public broadcaster and emphasised how the EFF was being victimised by an increasingly Orwellian ANC.

The use of protests is an example of the EFF’s atypical campaigning, most prominently taking up the causes of communities engaged in service delivery protests against the ANC. For example, in February, Malema addressed residents of Moretele in the North West province after police had shot at protesters. The EFF was also involved in the protests at Bekkersdal in Gauteng who were protesting for housing, street lights and sanitation. According to media reports about 300 Bekkersdal residents joined the EFF march to the SABC.

Like other parties, the EFF used social media platforms to spread its message. Julius Malema participated in various interviews on Twitter and Facebook, and the party had an active

⁸¹ Ipsos South Africa. “Profiles of the supporters of the three biggest political parties in South Africa”. (2014) <http://www.ipsos.co.za/SitePages/Profiles%20of%20the%20supporters%20of%20the%20three%20biggest%20political%20parties%20in%20South%20Africa.aspx>

⁸² Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond. 2003. Species of Political Parties: A New Typology. *Party Politics*. 9:167

profile on both platforms. However, the most social media campaigning for the party was done by high-profile leaders and supporters. Andile Mngxitama and Fana Mokoena were two in particular who publicised the party's activities and defended its position on Twitter.⁸³

The EFF used rallies to good effect. Its election campaign launch at Mehlareng Stadium in Tembisa attracted, according to some estimates, 50 000 supporters. The party held several big rallies across the country. There were reports of its activities being sabotaged, with municipalities cancelling bookings for public venues and in an extreme case campaign materials being torched before an event in Thokoza. As in the case of the SABC ban, the EFF used these incidents to build its campaign narrative of itself as an underdog whose rise posed a threat to the ANC's dominance and that was being undermined by an authoritarian regime.

Now that the election dust has settled, the hazards of using community protests as an election tool may be revealing themselves. The EFF in Mamelodi has been accused by officials from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) of being behind attacks against Somali shop-owners in the township, mobilising youth to intimidate the foreigners and destabilise the township. While these allegations have been denied by the party, they point to the consequences destructive means of election campaigning can have.⁸⁴

Youth voter registration and turnout, and its impact on the EFF's performance

Given that 2014 was the first election in which those born after 1994 were eligible to vote, there was much anticipation of the effect that the 'born-frees' would have on the results. Would they participate in the election and influence the political landscape or would they choose to opt out of the electoral process? These questions were especially relevant in attempts to predict the performance of the EFF, which has a predominantly young support base. Despite the party's apparent ability to mobilise young people to participate in rallies and protests, it was unclear whether it could get them to register and vote. Expectations of high youth participation are a long-standing part of the political discourse. In the 2009, as in 2004 before it, the IEC and political analysts stated their anticipation that young people would participate in unprecedented numbers in the respective elections.

Defining the 'youth' in South Africa is challenging because of the inconsistent definitions applied to this demographic. The National Youth Policy 2008-2013 defines youth as those aged between 14 and 35. The IEC has shifted its definition of youth from 2009 to 2014, from those between the ages of 18 and 35 to the 18 to 30 cohort. In 2014 the Commission launched a voter registration campaign featuring young celebrities to encourage South Africans under 30 to register and vote. Statistics SA defines youth as falling between the ages of 15 and 34. According to the mid-year population estimate there are approximately 15 million (14,968,990) South Africans between the ages of 15 and 34. That is 28 per cent of the population.⁸⁵ The inconsistency of definitions of youth and data from different elections

⁸³ See EISA Election Update Four for more on different parties' use of social media for campaigning

⁸⁴ Makhubu, Ntando. "EFF behind Mamelodi attack- UN agency". IOL News. 24 June (2014)

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/eff-behind-mamelodi-attacks-un-agency-1.1708293#.U6k6sfmSwmk>

⁸⁵ StatsSA "Mid-year population estimates 2013" (2013)

<http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022013.pdf>

makes it difficult to make accurate long-term comparisons. Nevertheless it is possible to see some patterns.

Statistics available from 2004, 2009 and 2014 show that there was an incremental increase in voter registration among those aged 18 to 29 years old. The IEC's registration figures show that 6.32 million youth registered in 2014 compared to 6.28 million in 2009 and 5.8 million in 2004. Only 669 421 (or a third of voters born after 1994) registered to vote, making up a mere 2.64 per cent of registered voters.⁸⁶ According to the IEC 4.68 million of those who voted in the 2014 election were under the age of 30. This accounts for only 25 per cent of the total turnout. Approximately 75 per cent of youth under 30 who registered came out to vote, which compares favourably to percentage turnout as a whole, which was 73.48 per cent. These figures indicate that youth participation and turnout were generally proportionate with the size of the demographic in the population as a whole and relative to total voter turnout.

Given the lack of exit poll data and voter turnout figures disaggregated by age at voting district level, it is not possible to say whether the EFF was able to mobilise its young supporters and whether this had any impact on its electoral performance.

We can conclude that expectations for young people to come out to vote in large numbers and to sway the election results were unfounded. The 'born-frees' in particular proved to be uninterested in participating in elections, which makes them no different from their peers in other parts of the world. As Fakir et al. have argued, South African youth have always been politically active albeit through social protests and other spaces outside of formal political structures.⁸⁷ The EFF took its campaigning into these spaces, but the extent to which this paid off in electoral dividends is unclear. It is beyond the scope of this paper to conjecture on why there was low youth voter turnout. However, there is a need for greater investigation of this issue to enable political parties and the IEC to develop targeted strategies to encourage youth participation in future elections.

Concluding remarks: comparing the EFF to new entrants in previous elections

It becomes clear just how well the EFF performed when it is compared to the major new entrant in the 2009 elections, Cope. Both parties broke away from the ANC. Cope was formed by the faction of the ANC that lost power of the party at the Polokwane conference in 2007 and was disgruntled by the recalling of former president Thabo Mbeki in 2008. Both Cope and the EFF claim to represent the real ANC and to adhere to the principles espoused in the Freedom Charter. Cope's leaders did this by choosing to name the party after the event at which the Charter was adopted. The EFF's leaders have done so by promising to implement all the demands of the Freedom Charter, including the nationalisation of mines. Both parties benefited from greater media coverage than would be expected for new parties because of their controversial beginnings, and, in the case of EFF, the high media profile of its leader. However, there are some significant differences between the two parties. Cope was led by

⁸⁶ Coetzee, Cobus. "Million born frees won't vote on May 7". IOL News, 22 April (2014)

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/million-born-frees-won-t-vote-on-may-7-1.1678476#.U63WAvmSwmk>

⁸⁷ Fakir, Ebrahim, Zandile Bhengu and Josefine K Larsen. "Future Imperfect: The youth and participation in the 2009 elections". *Journal of African Elections* 9(2): 100-120

politicians who had held senior positions in government, among them Mosiua Lekota, Mbhazima Shilowa and Mluleki George. It was also supported by wealthy businesspeople from its initiation, which gave it access to substantial material resources. This enabled it to host its founding convention at the Sandton Convention Centre and put together an election campaign five months before the election. It had a ready constituency in the form of the losing faction at Polokwane and the mainly black middle class that was alarmed by Jacob Zuma's taking control of the ANC.

In contrast, the EFF launched with limited financial resources, raising funds through membership fees, sales of merchandise and donations. While the EFF had an existing constituency in the form of Julius Malema supporters, it had to mobilise to form a large enough support base to compete in the elections. The point, then, is that Cope and EFF entered the political landscape from different positions. Cope had an advantage in terms of resources, goodwill and constituency. The EFF has managed to perform extremely well with a fraction of the resources of Cope, and appears to have built an organisational structure that bodes well for its continuation as a serious player in the political landscape.

Cope was undoubtedly the biggest casualty of the 2014 elections, even more than Agang. Due to its internal divisions and leadership battles, the party squandered a considerable amount of goodwill in the years following the 2009 election. The party haemorrhaged over one million votes from the previous election, and went from receiving 7.24 per cent of the vote in 2009 to cobbling together a meagre 0.67 per cent in 2014. This dismal performance represents a resounding regression for a party which had aspirations of building on its encouraging debut performance.

The experience of Cope holds lessons for the EFF if the new party wants to achieve longevity. The primary one is that electoral performance is not a substitute for building an organisation from the grassroots up. One of the great strengths of the ANC is its sophisticated party machinery and internal democratic processes (however flawed) that have proven a source of resilience amidst all the political storms the party has faced. The EFF has yet to hold an elective conference, and it is unclear how much the party is investing in grassroots structures. It is this, more than parliamentary spectacle that will determine whether the party grows in 2016 and 2019, or whether it is reduced to another footnote in the story of ANC dominance.
