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The Politics of Discontent and Social Protest in Durban

SHAUNA MOTTIAR* AND PATRICK BOND**

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ABSTRACT *Social protests in South Africa are frequent, contributing to an average of more than 8000 'Gatherings Act' incidents per year recently, according to the South African Police Service. This paper is focused on discontent and social protest in Durban in 2009–2012, considering emerging trends and tactics within current understandings of social protest in South Africa. It relies mainly on mainstream media articles such as those archived in the Centre for Civil Society Social Protest Observatory. The paper examines various protest activities and protest victories in Durban, arguing that in the light of state failure, protest has been an important mechanism through which Durban citizens have made gains in the struggle for improved socio-economic conditions.*

Introduction

Very high levels of popular demonstrations in South African communities—often termed 'service delivery' protests—suggest a significant amount of social discontent, even if this does not yet mean the rise of a protest 'movement' with similar norms, values, strategies and tactics, nor a transformational political agenda arising from the discontent. The discontent can sometimes rise violently and subside, or can simmer for months or years. Labour and community protest at the Marikana mine in Rustenburg continued for a year before breaking out in a wildcat strike that was so threatening to Lonmin profits that in August 2012 the police were brought in to force workers off a small hill (nowhere near the mining house's property), with terrible consequences.

At other times, protests turn xenophobic, suggesting a backward looking localism rather than a liberatory insurrection with the kinds of scale or geographical visions that past movements have exhibited. Since at least 1998, police have registered several thousands of 'Gatherings Act' incidents per year (Bond, 2010, p. 1). The varied nature of these local gatherings makes them difficult to quantify, resulting in vast differences between the Incident Registration Information System (IRIS) maintained by the South African Police Service when the Gatherings Act (applicable to protests of 15 people or more) is relevant, and the far less frequent

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'Hotspots Monitor' records gathered by Municipal IQ, a private research company (Alexander, 2010).

According to official police 'crowd management' statistics (Alexander, 2012), in the period 2009/2010, there were 8905 incidents, 1008 of them classified 'unrest' incidents. In the period 2010/2011, there were 12,654 incidents, 973 of them classified 'unrest' incidents. In the 2011/2012 period (as of April 2012), there were 11,033 incidents and 1091 of these are classified 'unrest' as opposed to 'peaceful'. In the case of 'unrest' incidents, the police intervene (often using force) where they perceive threats to security or damage to property. 'Peaceful' incidents are defined as those where there is co-operation between the police and the convener and where no police intervention is necessary. The many more incidents of protest where there are fewer than 15 people are not recorded by the police, as such events are not considered applicable under the Gatherings Act (yet in many cases, larger protests occur with participants placing themselves in groups of 14 or more at a 50 m distance in the event they did not obtain police permission).

One of the main studies based on IRIS, by Omar (2007, p. 18), 'confirmed that protest marches between 2002 and 2005 had increased from 6757 in 2002 to a high of 10,162 in 2005—an increase of 50%', with 'violent incidents' peaking in 1998 at 1185 and rising again from 562 in 2004 to 932 in 2005. Given this far a deeper background, it is worth reassessing whether, as the leading scholar of protests, Alexander (2010) puts it, 'Since 2004, South Africa has experienced a movement of local protests amounting to a rebellion of the poor'. Still, Alexander (2010) is correct that protests have 'been widespread and intense, reaching insurrectionary proportions in some cases'. From levels consistently below 10% of protests prior to 2005, the 'violent incidents' or 'unrest' consistently rose about 10% after 2005. However, what is most important is that there is no single break point when protests on this vast scale 'began'; they are a continuity from the apartheid era, and indeed even after 1994 with the Mandela government's 'honeymoon', there were strong movements demanding reforms and wide-scale benefits in virtually all issue-areas where civil society was mobilized (Bond, 2000). Their maintenance of the repertoire of protest activities includes the cultural connections to pre-1994 anti-apartheid activism. This continuity helps explain why protests a decade later did not represent a break in loyalty to the African National Congress (ANC) that might be inferred by accounts of an insurrectionary wave that allegedly 'began' in 2004 (Alexander, 2010, Van Holdt et al., 2011), or in positing that Zevenfontein, Harrismith or Durban protests in 2004–2005 were somehow different than those before, representing a new 'state of emergence' (Gibson, 2008).

This paper examines protest activity in Durban in 2009–2012, drawing from mainstream media articles such as those housed in the Centre for Civil Society Social Protest Observatory[1] in the light of emerging trends and tactics and within current understandings of social protest in South Africa. It begins with an overview of reasons and tactics of protest in South Africa as well as protestor profiles. It then discusses the ways in which protest has been theorized and contextualized. Finally, the paper turns to a discussion of the social protest in Durban.

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Reasons for protest, tactics and protester profiles

Reasons for social protest

Protest activity in South Africa has for the most part emanated from shack settlements and townships rather than the better resourced suburbs (Alexander, 2010). Inadequate service delivery and lack of accountability by local councillors (Booysen, 2009; Alexander, 2010; Ngwane, 2010a) are nearly ubiquitous as justifications for protest, leading some to distinguish between 'service delivery' and 'public service' (Friedman, 2009). This distinction reflects that the delivery of services has already been decided on by politicians and bureaucrats. What is required is a more meaningful incorporation of citizen's needs, so that a 'service delivery myth' (Pithouse, 2011) no longer masks complexities of local political power. What is also required is a scale jump from local to national and in many cases global power dynamics, so as to determine how 'uneven and combined development' transcends grievances expressed regarding municipal councillors (Bond et al., 2012a). Mainstream media articles habitually refer to local complaints over lack of water, sanitation, electricity, housing and infrastructure in general. Protest of this nature is also catalysed by lack of response by local authorities, billing issues, the lack of employment and business opportunities and high crime rates.

Frustrations of urban township residents were aptly captured in a protest placard during a march by township residents from Gugulethu to Khayelitsha Site B, Cape Town in April 2011 which read 'Welcome to hell: SA townships' (Meyer, 2011) and as a protester in Ficksburg, Free State (where protest leader Andries Tatane was killed on 13 April 2011) put it: 'Ons is gatvol' [*We are fed up*] (Grobler, 2011). Protest related to demands for improved service delivery also highlight the lack of dignity suffered by the urban poor. A march organized by the Social Justice Coalition involving 2000 Khayelitsha residents in the same month incorporated a bucket reading 'Dignity in our lifetime' a reference to a lack of access to sanitation (Nicholson, 2011). During earlier protests in Khayelitsha E Section regarding evictions for defaulting payment, a protesting resident asked the practical question of a family who had been evicted from their home, 'Where must Nomachino's family sleep tonight?' (Hartley, 2011). Mitchells Plain backyarders occupying land in Tafelsig, Cape Town, in May claimed 'They don't do anything for us but they want our vote' (Prince, 2011). Protesters in Schubert Park, Tshwane, in January 2011 argued 'Residents are used to the fact that if they don't do anything violent they will never get joy from the city' (*IOL*, 1 January 2011).

Protest against lack of political accountability further reflects local frustrations and anger. A 1000-strong protest in Pietermaritzburg and a protest at the community hall in Danielskuil, Northern Cape, in June 2011 evoked claims by protesters that they would make the municipality 'ungovernable' (Mokoena, 2011). Articles relating to political accountability protest included complaints about political corruption, mismanagement, the appointment process and election candidate lists. The call to 'ungovernability' harks back to the apartheid era and especially the

1980s when the Black Local Authorities system was opposed by urban township residents. This opposition took the form of boycotting local elections of Black Local Authorities deemed illegitimate, and included physical assaults on those who stood for these elections (Shubane, 1991).

A brief period in mid-2012 is indicative of how these protests continue to make headlines. The beginning of July was marked by demonstrations in Johannesburg's distant Orange Farm township south of Soweto, where residents rose up against city councillors and national electricity officials because of the unaffordable R2000 installation charged for hated prepayment (i.e. self-disconnection) meters, not to mention a 130% increase in electricity prices since 2008. Nearby, in Boksburg's Holomisa shack settlement, 50 activists were arrested after blocking roads with burning tyres. Likewise, in the port city of East London's Egoli township, house allocation controversies led to a brief uprising, and down the coast, high-profile Port Elizabeth road barricade protests again broke out over failing services in Walmer township.

Near the Botswana border close to Northwest Province's Morokweng village, a dozen residents angry about inadequate state services were arrested for arson, public violence and malicious damage to school property, following months of frustrated non-violent protest. In this province, violence was regularly returned (and very often initiated) from above, in the run-up to the Marikana massacre of mid-August. In the provincial capital of Mahikeng, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate began an investigation into a death on 4 July, given that 'The deceased was allegedly shot and run over by a police vehicle during a service delivery protest in the area' (an act allegedly repeated many times by the same police force at Marikana on 16 August).

Demonstrations aimed at making the system 'ungovernable' lend support to the theory that protest is affected by local cultural traditions—the anti-apartheid movement a quarter century earlier—and also that, as revealed by studies of social protest in Latin America, the same socio-economic classes tend to express grievances in roughly similar ways under both democratic and non-democratic regimes. For example, political grievances are often expressed through the ballot as an instrument of defiance in the region. In Argentina, citizens oppose political options by casting blank votes such as in 1960 when the Peronistas opposed the outlawing of their party and in Peru in the early 1980s peasants cast blank votes in defiance of their political options (Eckstein, 1989, p. 28).

According to media reports, besides protest related to service delivery and political accountability, worker demonstrations and student strikes centred on demands for better working/learning conditions. Protest related to community justice often involved citizens seeking out alleged thieves, rapists, muti-killers and perpetrators within their communities and taking it upon themselves to hand out punishment. While community-based restorative justice mechanisms are often laudable, there is the danger of vigilantism, 'a culture tolerant of citizens taking the law into their own hands' (Monaghan, 2008, p. 84).

Media articles also report protests relating to attempts by civil society to highlight a cause, such as environmental problems, homophobia, support for pro-

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democracy protest in Egypt, mining contracts, decriminalization of sex work and campaigns against drug dealing and rape. Protest that turned to xenophobia illustrates South Africans' inappropriate reaction to the material problems (especially unemployment, housing shortages and excess retail market competition) that they face, by blaming the 'Other' (Amisi et al., 2011). These protest reports have regularly included aggression towards Somali shop owners in the townships of Ermelo and Motherwell (*IOL*, 15 February 2011, *IOL*, 13 May 2011), 'foreign nationals' in Ficksburg (*SAPA*, 2011), and Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali business owners in Soweto (*IOL*, 11 May 2011). In 2012 in Free State Province's capital of Bloemfontein, 300 community protesters barricaded a main road with rocks, and in a separate incident, when municipal police began forcibly removing street traders from a shopping centre, a community demonstration shifted targets: from the city council to the nearest 'Other' victims, immigrant hawkers. The protest forced 500 to flee, reviving memories of the deadly copy-cat anti-immigrant attacks of mid-2008 and mid-2010; the police arrested more than a hundred people. Days later, the same thing happened twice in Cape Town, at the huge Mitchells Plains township and close to the International Airport, with community xenophobes targeting Somali-owned spaza shops. The Western Cape provincial ANC executive had fuelled these flames with a blatant proposal to the party's national policy conference aimed at outlawing foreign-owned shops. The fact that xenophobia was alleged often within protests relating to service delivery suggests the divide-and-conquer problem when structural crises affect low-income citizens (Amisi et al., 2011, p. 3).

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Tactics of social protest

Alexander (2010, p. 26) describes various tactics of protest common to South Africa: mass meetings, drafting of memoranda, petitions, toyi-toying, processions, stay-aways, election boycotts, blockading of roads, construction of barricades, burning of tyres, looting, destruction of buildings, chasing unpopular individuals out of townships, confrontations with police and forced resignation of elected officials. Within mainstream media articles for 2011 housed in the Social Protest Observatory, tactics most often reported upon included marching, demonstrating, picketing and rallying. Striking, boycotting and downing tools also featured prominently. Other tactics used frequently were barricading roads and burning tyres. The significance of burning tyres is difficult to ignore in the light of traditions of burning in South Africa, especially during the apartheid era where those believed to be involved in corruption or informants of the apartheid state, that is, traitors or betrayers were sometimes subject to 'necklace' burning (a tyre set alight around the neck; in 1990, it was estimated there had been 428 necklacings since 1985) (Ball, 1994, p. 3). Burning tyres are, however, also practically convenient, in that they combust readily and emit smoke. Latin American social protest studies have shown how traditions of protest tactics endure and evolve. An example is the way the banging of pots and pans has been added to the symbolic repertoire of protest in Chile and Montreal. Opponents of Pinochet's military

government banged them at designated times—although ironically, this method was first used by middle-class housewives opposing the socialist government of Allende (Eckstein, 1989, p. 11)—and Quebecois mass mobilizations in 2012 utilized the same tactic.

A closer look at protest reported in the media suggests that certain tactics are favoured for specific protest reasons. In the case of protest related to service delivery and political accountability, burning tyres and barricading roads seemed to be the most favoured tactics of protest. Workers favoured strike action, marching, demonstrating and picketing. Likewise student protest utilized tactics of strike and boycott, as well as marching, demonstrating and picketing but also included destroying property and vandalism, as well as intimidation and disruptions. The most common tactics used in protest relating to highlighting a cause were marching, demonstrating and picketing, including the use of petitions and memoranda. With respect to demanding justice, the preference of protest method was sometimes physical assault against perceived perpetrators and the chasing of perceived perpetrators from their homes. Protests that take a xenophobic turn were recorded by journalists as including looting, property destruction and vandalism.

Although further research is required, a repertoire of protest tactics has emerged which varies according to militancy, and which is linked to the specific types of protests and protester demands. Social protest repertoires in India, for example, have a similar gradation, whereby 'hartal'—cessation of all public activity, is used to put pressure on a public or private entity to concede to demands, 'dharna'—refusal to clear an area, is more coercive and used to draw attention to a cause, 'gherao'—encirclement of managerial staff, is used to achieve 'quick justice' and 'jail bharo'—violation of laws/courting arrest, and 'rasta roko'—blocking of traffic, are used to clog the wheels of law and order (Mitra, 1992, p. 9). In India, this repertoire of social protest is widely accepted as part of normal politics and viewed as a way of contacting politicians and bureaucrats.

Profile and numbers of protesters

The profile of protesters, once again according to media reports drawn from the Social Protest Observatory, indicates that local residents are the main protestors recorded by journalists, followed by civil society organizations, unions and private as well as public sector organizations. Students and workers also protest regularly as do members of political parties. This is also reflected in research studies of protests, where protest is described as enjoying broad support and involving a large section of the community (Ngwane, 2010a, p. 6). 'Community uprisings' led by these protesters are also sometimes described as 'spontaneous', as they are not linked with a specific organization or leader, although research suggests that the protests have an element of organization and leadership (Ngwane, 2010b, p. 7). Indeed some protesters, described as 'community leaders' had a good command of strategy and tactics (Alexander, 2010, p. 33).

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Notwithstanding their vast number, the individualized protests in South Africa do not constitute a movement, in terms of organizational coherence, shared analysis and similar strategies and tactics. The myriad of local protests are not coordinated, nor are demands formulated in ways that bring together the various sporadic outbursts, despite sometimes sparking off other protests (Ngwane, 2010a, p. 5). Nor are community protests linked with general student protest or worker strikes. A recent study carried out by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (Van Holdt et al., 2011) revealed that in some case, protest is generated as an opportunity to oust political opponents and so reconfigure ANC power relations. Sometimes protests are associated with opportunities to access lucrative council business, and one protester interviewed claimed, 'It is not service delivery, but people are just fighting for tenders, but using the community to do so' (Van Holdt et al., 2011, pp. 9–12). Political party dissatisfaction with the ANC, according to media reports, show tactics of protest carried out openly against the ANC by the party's own members, especially with regard to political appointments and the formulating of election candidate lists. In Durban, for example, grievances associated with election lists were the main cause for the murder of ANC leader Sibusiso Sibiya in July 2011, and there are many other cases of political and community leaders being assassinated in Durban (Bond and Meth, 2009).

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Understanding social protest: from participation to rebellion

Are protests an indicator of insurgent sentiment, comparable to the mass actions of Tunisia, Egypt and other sites in 2011, which also had profound socio-economic roots (Bond, 2011)? Alexander (2010) argues that recent protests stem from a belief that demands framed in protest action would be more likely addressed under the new ANC administration of Jacob Zuma. Booysen (2009) has shown that public participation in South Africa comprises assembled layers of participatory actions among which is 'protest participation'. Sinwell (2010, p. 68) argues that indeed, the preferred form of participation across South Africa has become protest and resistance, in short, what Miraftab and Wills (2005) term an 'invented' space of participation, as opposed to an 'invited' space of participation (Cornwall, 2002). The former refers to formal channels of participatory democracy and the latter to those of 'self-activity' citizens create for themselves, of which direct action is an example. Grassroots activity within 'invited' spaces is geared mostly towards providing the poor with coping and survival mechanisms and is legitimized by donors and government. Grassroots activity within 'invented' spaces challenges the status quo, resisting dominant power relations and advocating social change. This activity is more often than not criminalized by the state and mainstream media (Miraftab, 2004).

The formal channels for municipal participation are the ward committee and ward councillor systems, but the former have been criticized for failing to remain non-partisan and independent of political parties (Oldfield, 2008) while ward councillors have been dismissed as subordinating constituent accountability to party accountability (Pithouse, 2007). By contrast, 'self-activity'—for example,

in the form of social movement mobilizations—has generated a degree of power and influence over the state (Ballard et al., 2006, p. 413). Based on a study of 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of participation in KwaZulu-Natal, Piper and Nadvi (2010) conclude that '... until there is a shift in the broader patterns of social mobilization for the poor and marginalized ... invited spaces will remain meaningless or co-opted spaces' (p. 234).

Alexander (2010, p. 25) has labelled social protest in South Africa as a 'rebellion of the poor', although Sinwell (2011, p. 63) observes that given the fragmented nature of current protests, there is a danger that they are 'romantically' understood, and that radical tactics are not necessarily underpinned by revolutionary politics. Local battles for service delivery which have won limited concessions may lead to further support for the ANC rather than the development of a movement against neoliberalism, he argues, claiming that slogans such as 'No House, No Vote' or 'No Land, No Vote', sound militant, but imply that with state concessions of houses (often poorly constructed RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses), activists will vote (for the ANC). In response Runciman (2011), drawing from Scott's (1985) *Weapons of the Weak* (p. 292), argues that there is a false dichotomy between 'real' organized resistance on the one hand, and on the other, supposedly 'token', unorganized resistance without 'revolutionary consequences'. She distinguishes between analysts' conceptualizations of resistance and interpretations held by activists themselves. For activists, the meaning of resistance may well be widened to include a counter hegemonic challenge from long-standing community institutions where 'people are able to penetrate the common sense' (quoting Polletta, 1997, p. 435).

Scale is an important barrier, for the current wave of protests in South Africa has been described as 'intensely localized and self-limited in its politics' (Bond et al, 2012b, p. 1). Protests are often geographically and politically isolated from each other, lack an ideological orientation and have no common programmes or bridging organizational strategies, sometimes because of a truncated, reformist politics, by which movements criticize neoliberal policies but engage 'within the box' of these very policy frameworks in order to negotiate demands. The inside-the-box mentality prevents dissection of national financing flows to municipalities or national neoliberal policies in housing, water, electricity and related areas, instead mostly concentrating on local government officials or politicians to vent grievances. Protest limited to the local scale reduces its transformative potential.

Moreover, leadership deficiencies have also generated divisions within movements and their support networks. The role of constitutionalism and of conservative non-governmental organizations (NGOs) influence can also be discerned in some cases. Overall, in spite of the huge number of protests, very little can be claimed by way of sustained victories, and in the highest profile cases, such as Khutsong, a victory to move a township's municipal demarcation from one province to another does not ensure that the state's neglect of poor residents is resolved (Bond et al., 2012a).

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Social protest and state failure

These problems make theorization of the current protest conjuncture very difficult. To identify a common thread across the periodization of protests, many draw upon the Polanyian 'double-movement' tradition to suggest that social protests reflect the distorted character of 'growth' that South Africa witnessed after adopting neoliberal macro-economic and micro-development policies following the demise of apartheid in 1994; such policies date, after all, to the late 1980s and informed many of the early 1990s community protests of the South African National Civic Organization, for example (Mayekiso, 1996), as well as protests that continued in the immediate post-apartheid era (Bond, 2000). This general urban uprising has included resistance to the commodification of life—for example, commercialization of municipal services—and to rising poverty and inequality (Bond, 2010, p. 1). Indeed in most provinces, many Gatherings Act protest incidents concerned rising costs of (or even gaining basic access to) water, sanitation and electricity. Even after 'Free Basic Services'—typically a tokenistic 6000 l of water and 50 kWh of electricity per household per month—were provided, the sharply convex-up shape of water/electricity tariffs meant the rise in the second block of consumption had the impact of raising the entire amount, resulting in higher non-payment rates, higher disconnection levels (affecting 1.5 million people/year for water, according to officials) and lower consumption levels by poor people, such as in Durban where the doubling of real water prices led the poorest third of residents to drop consumption from 22,000 to 15,000 l per month from 1998 to 2004 (Bond and Dugard, 2008). Of Eskom's four million customers, fully one million registered zero consumption, reflecting their disconnection from the grid—although many if not most would have illegally reconnected (Bond, 2010, p. 1).

A related debate is between those who understand the protests in terms of structure, in the form of neoliberal policies (e.g. fiscal austerity and cost-recovery) and deep-rooted systems of exploitation and marginalization, versus those who emphasize agency on the part of the municipal state, particularly the well-recognized problems of corruption, lack of capacity and political party manipulation of the electorate. In September 2010, a Parliamentary Committee—the Ad Hoc Committee on Coordinated Oversight on Service Delivery (2010)—reported based on its mandate 'to specifically investigate the underlying reasons for the often violent protests for services'.

According to the structuralist line of argument, Members of Parliament who prepared the report accepted a biased explanation about the causes of protest—mainly malgovernance—without considering the two deeper roots of the problem: inadequate finance and neoliberal public policy. Dating to the time service delivery protests began in earnest, when Mbeki became president in 1999, a common refrain from politicians was policy-denialism: avoid blaming the national executive (where policies are made) and the legislature (where they should be vetted and oversight provided). Instead, it is politically easier to claim that provincial and municipal government officials simply refuse to properly

implement the central state's otherwise laudable policies, programmes and projects. Consistent with this narrative, the Committee (2010, p. 4) concluded with these explanations for the country's high levels of protests: 'The interface of politics and administration, the quality and frequency of public participation, [and] responsiveness to citizens override all other factors'.

This is subjective, of course, and permits the neoliberal orientation of the state—including funding cuts and decentralized 'unfunded mandates' for municipalities—to be disguised. The restrictive fiscal policy imposed by Trevor Manuel when he was finance minister (1996–2009) and maintained by his successor Pravin Gordhan goes unquestioned. With this bias, the Parliamentary Committee could not comprehend problems caused by policies which stress 'cost recovery' and as a result, refused to consider recommending the transfer of adequate funding for infrastructure and services required by poor people. The Committee is not entirely wrong, because naturally, malgovernance accompanies neoliberalism, and local versions of crony capitalism replaced the social democracy promised by the ANC in the 1994 RDP. As the Committee (2010, p. 51) put it, 'The tender system in municipalities needs to be tightened to close gaps that allow corruption to flourish'.

One city where these gaps are widest is Durban, yet the Committee's (2010, p. 50) parachute tour allowed only a positive top-down view of Durban management, which is allegedly 'performing well in service delivery including housing, long-planning, building partnerships with the private sector to provide services and build catalysts for development' [*sic*]. Durban social protesters would disagree, judging by the past decade's worth of major protests. And in 2012, a forensic audit revealed widespread improprieties in Durban's housing construction, which peaked at more than 20,000 units delivered in 2006, but then fell to fewer than 10,000 per year as the Moses Mabhida Stadium's construction took precedence. In spite of the Parliamentary Committee's misimpressions, the city is a bellwether for protest, and deserves a closer examination.

Durban social protests

Durban is a city of 3.5 million people (with a racial division of 63% black, 22% Indian, 11% white, and 3% mixed race/coloured) living within 2297 km^2. Political history was made here with the initial resistance—and then capitulation—by the Zulu King Shaka to British settlers in the early 1800s and a century later with Mahatma Gandhi's (1928) political innovation, *Satyagraha*, truth-force civil disobedience used to advance Indian ethnic rights. Anti-apartheid mobilizations continued until early 1960's repression, but perhaps most significantly, South Africa's modern trade union movement began in Durban in Africa's largest harbour with the 1973 dockworker strike. The rise of the country's 'new urban social movements' began in the Chatsworth community in 1998 (Desai, 2002). Over the past 15 years, South Durban activists have led the way on environmental justice activism, with the closure of the Umlazi landfill a major 1996 victory for activists.

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Shack dwellers emerged as a major movement when in 2005 Abahlali baseMjondolo was founded at Kennedy Road (Kell and Nizza 2011).

There have been other high-profile international activist critiques, given the presence of the continent's largest meeting hall, the International Convention Centre (ICC). The UN World Conference Against Racism was held in Durban in 2001, and at least 15,000 people demonstrated against the UN at the ICC, opposing Israeli racism against Palestine and the West's refusal to offer reparations for slavery, colonialism, and apartheid. Other protests were held regularly at the Durban ICC against World Economic Forum sessions and against Pretoria's neoliberal 'New Partnership for Africa's Development' when the African Union replaced the Organization of African Unity in 2002. In June 2000, the ICC hosted the International AIDS Conference, where South Africans and global allies forcefully demanded access to anti-retroviral AIDS medicines, defeating Big Pharma, the World Trade Organization, and the Bill Clinton and Thabo Mbeki governments by 2004, so that today more than a million South Africans have access to medicines that a decade earlier cost $15,000 per person per year. Indeed, the first high-profile martyr of this cause was Durban community educator Gugu Dlamini (stoned to death in Umlazi in 1998), and the first sustained critiques of Mbeki's AIDS denialism occurred in 2000 at the ICC.

The city is rife with contradictions and social conflict, beyond the standard South African conditions of world-leading unemployment, poverty and inequality. For example, in relation to the Durban Conference of the Parties 17 in December 2012, it was evident that by gambling that the city's future will be based on tourism, construction of a second world class yet 'white elephant' money-losing stadium was authorized for major sports events (the World Cup in 2010 will very likely generate an Olympic bid for 2024). Moreover, the 10-fold expansion of international trade anticipated from 2010 (two million containers annually) to 2030 is extremely dubious, given volatile world markets and, to save the climate, the need for national and global carbon taxes, the rationalization of shipping (and much more localized productive/consumptive linkages), and ultimately bans on fossil fuel consumption. Durban's vast petro-chemicals complex—including the largest set of refineries in one location in Africa—is also anticipated to expand notwithstanding sharp conflicts with surrounding residents, as a R250 billion Back of Port and Dug-Out Port expansion gets underway. The city's failure to fund genuine climate jobs, public transport and the just transition away from fossil fuel addiction is another reflection of municipal mismanagement, in the wake of a string of bungled projects and missed opportunities, including the Point and ICC, the loss of Blue Flag status designating clean beaches, the attempted razing of the Early Morning Market, failed bus privatization, mass electricity service disconnections and a ballooning housing crisis, evictions of fisherfolk from the port, non-consultative street renaming and vast cost-overruns at the unneeded Mabhida Stadium.

Seen in chronological terms in January 2009, the Qadi people at Inanda Dam revolted over their uncompensated land claim, and were denied permission to protest at the Dusi Canoe Marathon (by early 2012 they had eventually won

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their struggle for land). Durban University of Technology (DUT) staff and students went on strike over salary and fee grievances. In February, DUT was joined by University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) students, while there were municipal service protests in Ntuzuma and protests against police violence in Umlazi. In March, the DUT students protested again, as did bus commuters and the South Durban Community Environment Alliance (SDCEA), angry at the lack of state regulation of the oil industry. In April, community activists tackled inadequate housing in KwaMashu and Lamontville, while traders at the Warwick Junction Early Morning Market put the city on notice that a shopping mall would not displace their century-old institution. In May, there were protests against forced removals and inadequate housing in Siyanda, Marianhill and Lamontville, while SDCEA tackled Shell Oil, and Warwick traders continued their protests. In June, there were demonstrations by victims of electricity disconnections and shack fires at Kennedy Road and of substandard housing in Lindelani, as well as conflicts over conditions in the Umlazi hostels. The local chapter of Zimbabwe's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) protested at Home Affairs and won concessions.

In June–July 2009, the Early Morning Market protests grew more intense, until finally victory was won. Public sector doctors were on strike. And National Union of Mineworkers members fought for higher wages from Mabhida Stadium building contractors, as did Durban bus drivers who demanded the retention of routes that the failed privatization threatened to close. Residents joined the bus drivers protesting Durban transport in July, and South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) struck the municipality. Hungry, the South African Unemployed People's Movement protested in two major downtown food stores, eating while sitting-in, suffering more than a hundred arrests but making a visceral point. In August, Warwick traders continued their struggle against eviction. Other public sector workers on strike included the Communications Workers Union against the Post Office, Telkom workers versus Telkom, and social workers against the provincial government. There were protests by Lamontville residents against poor housing, while nearby, Clairwood and Bluff residents protested truckers. In September, Durban's tow truck drivers protested against the Johannesburg competitors in the context of weak regulation. In October, the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement—evicted from Kennedy Road the previous month—won a court victory over the provincial Slums Act. In Chatsworth, communities protested the toxic Bulbul dump, eventually leading to prosecution of the corporation running the landfill and ultimately winning closure in 2010. Mangosuthu University of Technology students protested fees, and ratepayers associations complained about electricity price increases. In November, residents of Wentworth and other South Durban communities marched in central Durban against low-quality, high-priced service delivery, while residents of Hammarsdale and Mayville also demonstrated for better services. Mariannridge activists demanded housing, and Phoenix residents were in up in arms over poor treatment at the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital. UKZN workers began regular protests against labour broking.

In 2010, protests were even more intense, given labour unrest mainly over wages and outsourcing. In January, Mangosuthu University of Technology and DUT students demanded lower tuition fees. South Durban residents protested municipal regulation of truckers, while Umlazi hostel residents demanded urgent upgrading. In February, the students continued demonstrating. In Verulam, traders attacked the municipality over rental policy. In the south, SDCEA began national protests against the $3.75 billion World Bank loan to Eskom. Inner-city flat dwellers and bus commuters also protested municipal policies. In March, there were outsourced labour protests against UKZN security and transport operations and against food prices at the DUT, as well as by Abahlali baseMjondolo against state repression. In April, these were joined by UKZN students demanding better accommodation and an end to financial-based exclusions, while SAMWU embarked on a strike and the South African Communist Party marched against rampant state corruption. In May, South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) had a successful strike that paralysed the harbour, leaving hundreds of boats at sea, unable to unload. In June, there were two protests against the World Cup: by Stallion Security companies over pay at the first match held in the R3.4 billion Mabhida Stadium, and then by Durban communities against the white elephant stadium. In July, communities gathered to protest xenophobia (and its causes in state and business policies) and fisher-folk were arrested after being denied access to the main piers. In August, the massive public sector strike began, affecting especially health facilities and schools, as well as Home Affairs. There were also protests against sweatshops in the vicinity of Durban, and in Umlazi there were service delivery protests. In September, UKZN accommodation protests were followed by South Durban environment demonstrations in November and December, the latter as part of the '1000 Cancuns' called by Via Campesina.

Student protests over fees and exclusions began the 2011 year in Durban, compelling a DUT shutdown in early February—repeated in July–August—and ongoing protests at several UKZN campuses. By late March, police action against students (tear gas and rubber bullets) led to scores of injuries, and the escalation continued for another week. In April, water cannons and rubber bullets were also used against Mangosuthu University of Technology students in Umlazi. In March–June, numerous mass protests were registered in relation to the May municipal elections, including the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) against the breakaway National Freedom Party (NFP) and ANC, as well as internecine ANC battles. In June, KwaDukuza was the site of major protests by—and repression of—commuters angered by rising transport price hikes. There were 155 arrests and police killed one protester. In July, hundreds of fisher-folk protested against municipal and provincial restrictions on fishing, and thousands of metalworkers and Congress of South African Trade Unions activists marched against police brutality and workplace exploitation in Pinetown and central Durban. In July–August, not only were there SAMWU wage-related strikes and marches characterized by spilled rubbish bins, protests over municipal disconnections of electricity occurred at Sea Cow Lake near the N2 highway (leaving one municipal

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subcontractor dead), at Kennedy Road in Clare Estate (with police shootings) and in Chatsworth, where Westcliff flat dwellers succeeded in reversing a downgrading of electricity from 60 to 40 amps.

To illustrate the tensions thus created, by mid-2012, Durban became South Africa's most active protest site, ranging from high-profile middle-class demonstrations close to the town centre—a peaceful march against rhino poachers and a picket against animal abuse at the Brian Boswell Circus—to working class revolts. The city's most disruptive recent demonstration was the occupation of a key spine road, Umgeni by furious residents of Puntan's Hill shack settlement. One protester was killed and two others injured, run over at 4 a.m. by a motorist who was charged with culpable homicide. The incident was sparked by community ANC loyalists victimized by the ANC-run municipality's disconnections of illegal electricity hook-ups to their shacks. They also complained of non-delivery of housing notwithstanding their councillor's repeated promises. As a result of the protest, Puntan's Hill activists received a new commitment from authorities that new houses would be fast-tracked and that some families would be relocated to a long-promised housing project, Cornubia, near the city's wealthiest new suburb, Umhlanga.

Another mid-2012 Durban protest march—by AIDS treatment activists—ended at City Hall, but was aimed mainly against Barack Obama, who cut the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS, thus cancelling life-saving treatment for thousands of local residents at two downtown hospitals and an NGO clinic in Umlazi township. Another Durban protest, on 6 July, entailed tyre burning and a road blockade in Mariannridge, as residents blamed yet another local councillor for lack of adequate housing. Two other manifestations of social unrest occurred the same week in South Durban, starting at the petro-chemical complex of Jacobs, where FFS Refiners, specialising in waste oil recovery, was targeted by seventy five protesters. The company's chief executive, Don Hunter, long denied that FFS emissions were the source of an awful 'cats-wee' (methanethiol) stench, but was finally caught by the lethargic municipal environmental health department (the smell began nearly two years earlier). Racial integration of this protest, in a much divided, neo-apartheid urban context, occurred with the arrival of 'Occupy Umlazi' and Abahlali baseMjondolo activists. The same solidarity was offered nearby a few months earlier, when truck transport firms' irresponsibility—for example, 70 deaths documented in 7000 collisions in one year in the province—compelled 400 mainly working-class white protesters to invade the main Solomon Mahlangu (Edwin Swales) Drive that links South Durban to the M4 highway. The broader challenge these particular activists face is to retake the South Durban Basin's sprawling valley from ecologically poisonous emitters and an uncaring municipality. These include Clairwood, where Indian and African residents, ranging from the middle-class to shack dwellers, have been oppressed by illegal trucking and toxic petro-chemical operations for years. Just a half year following Durban's hosting of the UN Climate Summit, the extreme emissions associated with port and petro-industrial expansion contradicted the city managers' claims to be environmentally conscious.

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About 15 minutes' drive south of the port, Occupy Umlazi was launched in July 2012 on bush land taken in the huge township's Ward 88, not far from the infamous Max's Lifestyle Club frequented by local black elites. A large tent was erected next door to the office of ANC councillor Nomzamo Mkhize, who initially tried to ignore the protest. In the nearby Zakhele shack settlement in late June, Occupy Umlazi activists Noxolo Mkanyi and Mkhayi Simelani were shot and hospitalized in a late night raid by political thugs. A few kilometres further south, in Folweni Reserve township, teenager Mxolisi Buthelezi was fatally shot in the back with an R5 rifle while running away from police, during the 1 July 2012 service delivery protest of 1500 people. A few days before that incident, 43 people were arrested in a similar protest. Their efforts at least managed to reverse a 25% taxi price increase. The policeman who allegedly killed the youth, Msizi Chiliza, committed suicide a few days later.

Durban retains its violent character, remaining rife with internecine political rivalries settled by the bullet. By 2012, bodyguards were required by leading municipal officials—including the police chief—who were justifiably frightened by how high the stakes became after an anti-corruption investigation, the Mamase Report, fingered not only former mayor Obed Mlaba and municipal manager Mike Sutcliffe, but numerous councillors and allied businesses. Several well-connected construction firms still get housing contracts in spite of past work that is of such low quality that hundreds of their structures collapse during stormy weather. The culture of violence is characterized by the unsolved murder of regional ANC leader Wandile Mkhize on 2 July 2012, immediately following the ruling party's controversial policy conference. Mkhize's last SMS—to former ANC Youth League leader Fikile Mbalula—included the confession, 'The stories and lies we fed as members to some of you in leadership further served to deepen the contradiction', that is, between the youth and ruling party's national executive. Party infighting is also blamed for the July 2011 hit on Durban's leading ANC official, Sbu Sibiya, shortly after ANC councillor Wiseman Mshibe was shot dead. Several leaders of a small breakaway from the IFP—the NFP—were also executed in cold blood last year. At the Cato Manor Police Station, dozens of recent police staff—including General Johan Booysens—are under investigation for involvement in the station's alleged hit squad, reported to be responsible for more than 50 murders in recent years.

The nature of protest in Durban

These conditions make activism highly dangerous, but the need to challenge power to effect changes is also overwhelming. The South Durban township of Chatsworth is the site most often named as the epicentre of post-apartheid mass democratic community unrest. In 1999, Fatima Meer's Concerned Citizens Forum arrived there to promote the ANC in the 2000 municipal elections. Soon realizing that ANC officials worsened not lessened the socio-economic problems of both Indian and African 'poors', Meer switched sides to civil society and a new, critical way of relating to the government was born (Desai, 2002). Since then,

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Durban service delivery protests have regularly broken out against various state departments for a range of reasons. Approximately, 100 documented since 2009 in the Centre for Civil Society's Social Protest Observatory represent only a fraction of the demonstrations, but are illustrative. The protests in Durban occurred in several issue-area categories, and in a wide variety of residential areas (though mainly African townships), workplaces and institutions of higher education:

- Housing and services: Hammarsdale, inner-city, Kennedy Road, KwaMashu, Lamontville, Lindelani, Marianhill, Mariannridge, Mayville, Ntuzuma, Siyanda, Umlazi community, Umlazi hostel-dwellers, Wentworth, Clare Estate, Chatsworth.
- Land: Qadi people displaced from Inanda Dam.
- Food: South African Unemployed People's Movement.
- Students: DUT, Mangosuthu University of Technology, UKZN.
- Environment: Chatsworth's toxic Bulbul dump, SDCEA against climate change, petro-chemical regulation and World Bank loan to Eskom.
- Transport: city-wide bus commuters, Clairwood residents v trucks, KwaDukuza commuters.
- Police violence: Umlazi.
- Informal trading: Warwick Junction Early Morning Market, Verulam.
- Health care: Phoenix victims of Gandhi Memorial Hospital.
- Anti-FIFA: Durban Social Forum.
- Home Affairs: MDC, anti-xenophobia network.
- Labour: Mabhida Stadium building contractors, Durban bus drivers, SAMWU, Communications Workers Union against Post Office, Telkom workers, social workers in provincial government, SATAWU v Transnet, Stallion Security v FIFA.
- Municipal elections: IFP, NFP, ANC.
- Restrictions on fishing: Durban fisher-folk.

Noticing just one of these protests, in Wentworth over the Barracks housing, the Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee (2010, p. 48) recorded how the

> community was furious about the condition of the new housing development because there was clear poor workmanship which the Metro and residents should have resolved amicably by forcing the contractor to fix the defects. It was clear that the municipal leadership was not aware of the frustration and concerns of residents.

Yet *The Mercury* newspaper had extensive coverage of this site of struggle over several years. Most of the problems raised in these protests could easily be addressed with increased funding untainted by corruption, or more explicit redistribution from wealthy to poor municipal residents. To illustrate, when Durban's water department raised prices so high on consumers during the late 1990s and early 2000s (doubling the real water price within six years), the lowest-income third of Durban residents cut back their consumption by 30%. Then, recognizing that such neoliberal water policy caused debilitating protests and lawsuits in Johannesburg, Durban officials remedied their mistake in 2008 with a 50%

increase in the amount of free water, a 9 kl/household monthly 'lifeline'. The visiting MPs never recognized this obvious strategy, even when the Committee (2010, p. 25) reports observed that Durban 'opposition parties complain that senior administrators are pursuing their own agendas and depriving them of information'. But instead of honing in on the problem associated with so many services (unaffordability) and the solution (more subsidies), the Committee only remarked upon the 'need to strengthen communication between councillors and communities'. This is a way of claiming that there is no structural problem, only a municipal state agency problem. And it means the many underlying reasons for protest will not be addressed.

Are there any formal victories to be claimed by protestors in Durban? Tracing back 18 years, South African civil society activists periodically scored substantial accomplishments, including an end to the apartheid state and the provision of HIV/AIDS treatment in public healthcare facilities. Victories for Durban protestors since 2004 are captured in Box 1, but a closer focus on four particular struggles between 2009 and 2012 are revealing in terms of the tactics employed and the protesting communities.

Box 1: Post-apartheid victories for social protest in Durban
1994, contribution to defeat of apartheid by many Durban progressive organizations
1997–1998, closure of the Umlazi toxic landfill and Mondi's hazardous ash dump in South Durban by SDCEA
1998, pollution cuts by Engen after SDCEA pressure (including earlier Mandela visit)
1999, SDCEA's reversal of municipal Strategic Environmental Assessment displacement of South Durban residents
1999–2000, Durban Concerned Citizens Forum and Chatsworth mobilizations unite African and Indian activists and win temporary water rights and prevent evictions
1998–2004, Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) advocacy from Gugu Dhlamini's AIDS education efforts, to protest at Big Pharma and finally winning medicines access
2005, Clairwood Ratepayers and Residents Association defends against municipal Link Road highway through neighbourhood
2008, SATAWU refuses to unload An Yiang ship of ammunition for Zimbabwe regime and sparks port solidarity across the region
2008 and 2010, resistance to xenophobia by broad civil society coalitions and return of immigrants to townships
2009, Warwick Junction defence of informal trading against municipal shopping mall
2009, Abahlali baseMjondolo won Constitutional Court rejection of provincial housing bill
2009, Zimbabwean activists overturned Home Affairs passport requirements
2010, SATAWU wage raise (6% after inflation) prior to World Cup
2011, Chatsworth activists close Bulbul toxic landfill
2011, Qadi people gain compensation for land lost under Inanda Dam
2012, Umlazi Occupy defends Ward 88 and takes over Ward Committee

In 2009, the eThekwini Municipality announced plans to replace the city centre Warwick Market with a shopping mall geared towards a middle-class clientele. This would effectively displace hundreds of poor traders and eradicate their

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means of a livelihood. Durban citizens from across the spectrum came out in opposition and the result was the holding over of plans for the development of the mall on the part of the municipality pending the outcome of a court process.

Tactics employed in opposing the development included a petition and a peaceful march to the city hall to hand over a memorandum. Protesters gathered with banners reading 'Save the market we feed the poor' and 'This 2010 mall will starve us' (Comins, 2010). Also discussed among protestors and protest organizations was that of 'noticing tactics other countries have used, like long sit-ins which would make it extremely difficult for the municipality to evict you under South African law' (Comins, 2010). There was, therefore, a strategic engagement with protest tactics and this also had something to do with the profile of protesters. Opposition to the mall saw participation from the traders and street vendors affected, but also from more organized entities, including unions, NGOs, architects, planners and academics (Maharaj, 2010). Opposition took on a united front involving Durban citizens.

Also in 2009, Abahlali baseMjondolo, the shack dwellers movement, won a landmark judgment in the Constitutional Court against the provincial government when the KwaZulu-Natal Slums Act was struck down. The Act allowed municipalities to evict illegal occupants from state land and derelict buildings and Abahlali baseMjondolo made the case that this was inconsistent with the Constitution, national legislation and instruments such as the Prevention of Illegal Eviction Act, the National Housing Act and the National Housing Code. The leader of Abahlali baseMjondolo stated

> Shack dwellers have been recognized as humans by the Constitutional Court and its findings that there needs to be more engagement between government and the poor. Hopefully this judgment will also see the end of forced removals to transit camps and temporary relocation areas. (Tolsi, 2009)

Relief from the courts was a tactic successfully employed by the TAC paving the way for the public provision of anti-retroviral treatment. For Abahlali baseMjondolo, it was a tactic following years of protest activity and boycott action by a self-organized shack community, much of which resulted in violent responses by local authorities and the police.

In 2011, the hazardous Bulbul landfill site in Chatsworth was shut down. The landfill was used to dispose of toxic waste from Engen, Sappi and other chemical factories around the province. High levels of toxicity in the area are linked to various health issues suffered by nearby communities, these include asthma, bronchitis and allergies. Commenting on the impact of environmental injustices on the poor and marginalized an environmental health campaigner stated that 'the closing of the Bulbul landfill site is a perfect example that demonstrates when people come together and fight for what they believe in justice will eventually be served' (Groundwork Press Release, 2011). Using a full range of protest tactics over two decades, including organized marches and rallies, petitioning and formally engaging through the Environmental Impact Assessment Process,

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the closure was a hard earned victory for the Chatsworth community and environmental organizations such as Groundwork and the SDCEA.

In 2012, Umlazi residents of Ward 88 weary of their service delivery demands not being met and of the failure of representation and engagement by their ward councillor embarked on an occupation of the space outside the councillor's office. The 'Occupy' resulted in the ward councillor being officially disciplined and a large representation of 'occupy' residents on a newly elected ward committee. The 'Occupy' inspired by international occupy movements, followed screenings of the film 'Occupy Wall Street'. The screening and the occupied space were described as creating a 'space for the people to strengthen their power by discussing the issues that face us and how to take our struggle forward' (Combined Statement of Abahlali base Mjondolo and Unemployed Peoples Movement, 2012). 'Occupy' as a tactic signalled frustrations by Ward 88 residents following a total lack of response on the part of local authorities to a memorandum of demands handed to them during a protest march earlier in which they were given seven days to respond. A break from protest tactics such as burning tyres is discernible in the Umlazi 'occupy': 'There were youth who were pushing to burn tyres on the street, but we said this is not the answer. We needed to find an alternative by formulating our own programme to see our ward being developed' (Asmal-Motala, 29 June 2012). Also interesting about the 'Umlazi Occupy' was the way in which community leaders saw it as a way to unite Umlazi communities and eradicate divisions caused by the ward councillor who they accuse of distinguishing local residents on the basis of ethnicity and political party affiliation (Ngubane, 22 August 2012). Ethnicity did not seem to be a factor among occupiers—one of their most active leaders is a Zimbabwean national.

Conclusion

Protest in Durban is rife and varied, reflecting South African protest trends in general. Reasons for protest are centred on discontent of Durban residents regarding services, the pace of development and the ways in which local authorities engage with and respond to them. The various tactics employed by protestors suggest a parallel with national trends in that localized outbursts of protest include tactics such as burning tyres and barricading roads while protest of a more organized nature typically involves tactics such as marches presenting memoranda to local authorities. There is, however, evidence of shifts in tactics influenced by international 'occupy' movements and a sense that current methods of protest do not serve their purposes—the 'Umlazi Occupy' is an example of this. Whether this will evolve and become entrenched in a South African repertoire of tactics remains to be seen. Protesting communities in Durban, as in South Africa in general, stem mainly from townships and informal settlements although opposition to the destruction of the Warwick Market reflected a coming together of small traders and vendors with the middle-class framing the struggle as one which affected Durban and not a particular affected community. This trend seems to continue and is evidenced by a series of recent (mid-2012) community

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meetings by South Durban activists attended by hundreds of residents concerned about the Durban port expansion. Residents represented Durban citizens across the spectrum crossing geographical, racial and class boundaries.

Future research on protest in South Africa will need to ascertain whether protest is achieving notable gains or instead, more repression and hopelessness. The Marikana protests ended not in defeat by massacre, but in several thousand mine-workers securing a 22% raise, thus creating a groundswell of confidence that inspired numerous other wildcat strikes, with nearly a quarter of all miners on strike in September 2012. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation report (Van Holdt et al., 2011, p. 9) notes that in some cases of community protest, there are highly visible responses from senior ANC political figures, which include the suspension of municipal officials, probes into alleged corruption by municipal employees and concrete initiatives to improve service delivery. In other cases, however, there is no reaction whatsoever. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Coordinated Oversight on Service Delivery (2010, p. 50) pronounced Durban to be 'performing well' on service delivery suggesting that the high levels of discontent among Durban citizens would go unattended. Protest and activism in 'invented' spaces of participation ranging from uncoordinated street protests to strategic 'occupies' have, therefore, become an important mechanism through which citizens assert their rights to a better life (even though various 'invited' spaces are also engaged with). In Durban, a number of these struggles have resulted in success.

Is there a possibility for linkage in what currently appear as 'popcorn protests'? The question of whether a movement can emerge from the proliferation of South African protests remains for leading oppositional civil society strategists to pose. The Democratic Left Front movement has made halting attempts along these lines. The Occupy movement that rose in late 2011 is one indication of the possibilities, and Occupy Nigeria shut down that country for two weeks in early 2012 after the International Monetary Fund ordered the withdrawal of the petrol subsidy. But at this stage, without a political orientation to movement-building, this study of selected South African social protests and Durban suggests that atomization and silo-based activism will continue to prevent a broader advance for socio-economic progress, no matter the militancy and frequency of protests.

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Note

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1. The Centre for Civil Society Social Protest Observatory comprises a collection of articles relating to social protest in South Africa since 2009, compiled from mainstream newspaper reports and press releases by civil society organizations and trade unions. It does not include reports from the vernacular nor from other sources cataloguing social protest in South Africa. It is, therefore, limited insofar as journalist bias (or mere non-newsworthiness) and editorial discretion by major corporate-owned newspapers dictates the extent of coverage. The Centre for Civil Society Social Protest Observatory is available at: http://ccs.ukzn.ac.za/default.asp?2,27,3,1858.

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