Protest and participation in Durban: A focus on Cato Manor, Merebank and Wentworth[1]

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Abstract

This paper considers how Durban citizens understand protest and what other methods of participation they employ in their pursuit of service delivery, democratic citizenship and social change. It is based on a sample of twenty households drawn from Cato Manor a 'hotspot' for 'service delivery' protest as well as Merebank and Wentworth situated in the South Durban basin well known for its civil society / community opposition to local petrochemical refineries. The paper employs theories of 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of participation and 'participation as citizenship' to understand protest and participation among Durban's low income, urban citizens. It argues that protest and formal participation methods are used in parallel but with differing levels of intensity across communities depending on how people view agency and democratic citizenship. The paper also considers the role of social movements and NGOs arguing that their initiatives to effect 'transformative' participation have their limits.

Introduction

Social protest among South Africans is high. South African Police Service data for 2012 / 2013 records 12,399 'public incidents'10,517 of which were classified 'peaceful' and 1,882 classified 'violent' (Mbuyisa, 2013). As depicted in Figure 1, the Municipal IQ Hotspots Monitor[3], a local government data and intelligence service, recorded 173 'service delivery' protests in 2012 rising from 82 in 2011 (Municipal IQ Press Release, 7 August 2013). 155 'service delivery' protests were recorded for 2013 and as of March, 48 recorded for 2014 (Municipal IQ Press Release, 3 April 2014). According to the Hotspots Monitor the province of KwaZulu-Natal experienced an increase in service delivery protest from 6% in the January – July period of 2012 to 14% in the January – July period of 2013 (Municipal IQ Press Releases 6 August 2012, 7 August 2013). As of March 2014, indicated in Figure 1, KwaZulu-Natal accounted for 6% of protests in South Africa (Municipal IQ Press Release, 3 April 2014).
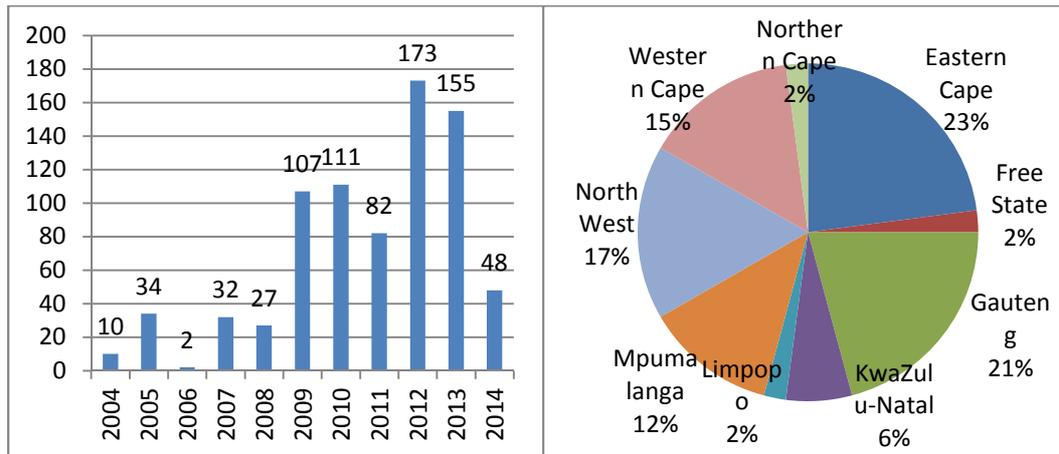
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[3] The Municipal IQ Hotspots Monitor is limited to major protests (peaceful or violent) waged by community members against municipalities, as recorded by the media or other public domain sources. These protests raise issues that are the responsibility or perceived responsibility of local government (such as councillor accountability, the quality and pace of basic service delivery, and in metro areas, housing). The Monitor does not include issues falling outside of local government's service delivery mandate such as demarcation, industrial relation disputes or party political issues (including candidate lists). Where protests are sustained over several days or weeks, these are recorded as a single entry. Unlike the South African Police Service 'crowd-incident' data therefore, the Monitor protests pertain only to local government service delivery issues.

Figure 1: Service delivery protests, by year (2004 – 2014) and % by province (2014)

Post apartheid Durban has a varied and interesting culture of public protest and participation. Examples include relief through the justice system when the shack dwellers movement Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM) won a landmark judgement against the provincial government in the Constitutional Court in 2009. The Court struck down the KwaZulu-Natal Slums Act which allowed municipalities to evict illegal occupants from state land and derelict buildings. ABM made the case that this was inconsistent with the Constitution and national legislation such as the Prevention of Illegal Eviction Act, the National Housing Act and the National Housing Code. Protest activity by the self-organised shack community originating in the Kennedy Road shack settlement in Clare Estate continues. Often cast as 'violent' by authorities owing to tactics of burning tyres and obstructing main roads, its campaign is to improve the living conditions of the poor and to democratise society from below. Another example is that of the 2011 closure of the hazardous Bulbul landfill site in Chatsworth. The landfill was used to dispose of waste from Engen, Sappi and other chemical factories around the province. High levels of toxicity were linked to asthma, bronchitis and allergies suffered by nearby communities. The closure was a result of two decades of opposition from a largely low income, Indian community in Chatsworth together with environmental organisations such as Groundwork and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) who used a full range of protest tactics, including organized marches and rallies, petitioning as well as formally engaging through the Environmental Impact Assessment Process. Protest in opposition to environmental pollution and the municipality's plans for port expansion continue within South Durban communities. Yet another example of protest in Durban is the 2012 Umlazi 'Occupy'. The 'Occupy' took place over a month and involved residents of the Zakheleni shack settlement in Umlazi 'occupying' the grounds of the local councillor's office. Influenced by international 'occupy' movements and the rhetoric of the 'ninety nine per cent versus the one per cent', the Umlazi 'Occupy' resulted in a disciplining of the ward councillor and a re-constitution of the ward committee for better representativeness. Occupiers' demands were not just for 'service delivery' but also for a right to the daily 'practise of democracy' (Mottiar, 2013: 612).

The examples above reflect the range of protest and participation in Durban where tactics include a repertoire of protest methods alongside formal participatory methods. Protesters, for the most part, come from poorer neighbourhoods and shack settlements. Their claims are usually framed as material demands for 'service delivery' in the form of housing, water and

electricity but very often, claims refer to the lack of accountability and transparency of local authorities as well as the lack of genuine spaces for participative democracy for the urban poor. In some cases a focus on structural or systemic transformation is discernable. The role of social movements and of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is also apparent in cases.

This paper considers how Durban citizens understand protest and what other methods of participation they employ in their pursuit of service delivery, democratic citizenship and social change. Following the introduction contextualising protest and participation in Durban, the paper examines various theories to understand participation, spaces of participation and the role of civil society in protest and participation. It goes on to discuss the study areas Cato Manor, Merebank and Wentworth. The paper then focuses on three themes in analysis and discussion: 'invited' and 'invented' spaces of participation; protest and participation as social rights, agency and accountability and the role of social movements and NGOs in transformative participation. The paper concludes by summing up the main arguments put forward.

Spaces of participation and participation as citizenship

Faranak Miraftab (2006: 195) distinguishes between 'invited' spaces of citizenship (drawing from Andrea Cornwall, 2002) and 'invented' spaces of citizenship. 'Invited' spaces are defined as those occupied by grassroots actions and their allied NGOs that are legitimised by government and donors. 'Invented' spaces are defined as those occupied by the collective actions of the poor that directly confront authorities and challenge the status quo. The two are however mutually constituted and distinguished by the fact that actions taken by the poor within 'invited' spaces aim to cope with systems of hardship whereas actions taken within 'invented' spaces are characterised by defiance and resistance to the status quo. Grassroots activities move back and forth between the two spaces. Miraftab contends that spaces created from below for practising citizenship through the agency of the poor could be more responsive to their needs and realities than spaces created from above (p. 200).

John Gaventa (2004) argues that by the late 1990s there was a re-emergence of discourses on participation as a 'right' of citizens rather than an 'opportunity' given to 'beneficiaries' (of development). In this sense citizenship is attained through practise and engagement rather than that which is bestowed by law. Participation shifts from concerns about 'beneficiaries' or the 'excluded' to a concern with engagement by citizens in policy formulation and decision making in areas that affect their lives. Citizens are therefore not 'users or choosers' but active citizens who engage in 'making and shaping' social policy (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001: 1). Drawing from Marian Barnes (1999) Cornwall and Gaventa argue that 'users' as 'citizens' turn to collective action (rather than maximising individual self-interest) to address their common experiences of oppression or disadvantage (p. 5). Collective action is a means to exercise citizenship in three ways. The first is as a social right where civic engagement brings citizens closer to their social rights or entitlements. In this sense citizens are actively engaged in governance and politics for the greater good. The second is as a form of agency where citizens make and create the services they receive rather than simply consuming them – they become actors in their own affairs and not passive beneficiaries of rights granted by the broader society. The third exercise of citizenship as collective action is as a relationship of accountability between public service providers and users. By seeing themselves as actors rather than passive beneficiaries citizens are better able to seek accountability from service

providers. A form of greater accountability is e.g. through increased dialogue and consultation.

Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan (2005) argue that 'participation as citizenship' can provide the basis for a conceptual relocation of participation within a radical politics of development. They contend that various participation initiatives promoted by NGOs and social movements have the potential to address broader issues of politics to make change more embedded and retain the potential of participation to be 'transformative (p. 242). While acknowledging the limitations of NGOs as agents of transformative development i.e. their confused status among civic, private and public spaces, their 'neo-imperialist' and disempowering tendencies and their rejection of partnerships with more political elements within civil society, Hickey and Mohan highlight NGO advocacy as an important factor. Advocacy's potential lies in its making claims for excluded people in ways that could increase their capacity to demand rights of citizenship and draw them into wider arenas of decision making. Social movements contribute to making participation transformative by extending boundaries of citizenship to marginal groups and opposing a project of development while also opposing the ideology of that development. In this sense there is an emphasis on challenging existing power relations rather than working around them for piece meal gains e.g. better service delivery.

Cato Manor, Merebank and Wentworth

This study[4] is based on interviews with twenty households in Durban. Ten of them took place in Ward 30 in Cato Manor. Of these, five were drawn from Masxha where there are Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) houses and services such as electricity and water. The other five were drawn from Greenland, a nearby informal settlement where water is accessed from stand pipes and electricity through illegal connections. The remaining ten interviews took place in Ward 68 in South Durban. Five were in Merebank amongst a flatted community and the other five, also amongst a flatted community, in Wentworth. These two communities are separated by a main road and households have access to services such as water and electricity. Sampling employed snowballing rather than random selection owing to the fact that interviews took place during the day when people may have been away from their homes. A good range of demographic variables made up the sample with both male and female householders represented (twelve females and eight males) as well as a variety of age and race groups (all the Cato Respondents were black, the five Merebank respondents were Indian and of the five Wentworth respondents four were 'coloured' and one black). Despite interviewing having taken place during the day – a number of respondents indicated that they were employed. This sample is therefore not limited to unemployed residents of Cato Manor and South Durban. Interviewing took place anonymously in order to encourage respondents to speak more freely and also, to ensure that protesters in these communities who may be threatened in any way were kept safe. Cato Manor, Merebank and Wentworth were visited with local activists as guides. The three activists (two from Cato Manor and one from Merebank) are all young women who are also Centre for Civil Society Community Scholars. The Community Scholar Initiative encourages the work of 'organic intellectuals' and attempts to include their world views and experiences in formal academic research. The three activists were also formally interviewed as were their activist colleagues – one based in Cato Manor and the other in Merebank. Five activists were interviewed in total. The limitations of this study are obvious. Firstly it is based on a small sample of twenty households – ideally

this could have been supplemented by participant observation such as attendance at meetings and at protests. Secondly no interviews were conducted with local social movements and NGOs, specifically ABM and SDCEA.

Cato Manor is approximately 10 kilometres from Durban's City Centre and has a population of around 90,000 people (eThekwini Municipality website). Its residents include some of the poorest of the urban poor and it is the site of an ambitious municipal urban development project. It was selected as a case study as it is a known 'hotspot' for protest in Durban. A recent newspaper headline, for example, reporting the death of a young girl during a protest fuelled by a shortage of housing, evictions of shack dwellers and 'transit camps' for the displaced, claimed: 'In Durban's Cato Manor: Death by protest, death by dissent' (Patel, 2013b). This is not the first protest related tragedy in the area, a month or so earlier, an activist was shot during an eviction in Cato Crest in an occupation known as 'Marikana' where a large number of people set up makeshift homes after their shacks had been destroyed to make way for a housing development. The housing development did not benefit the 'Marikana' occupiers as they could not afford to pay bribes for new houses nor did they have connections to local party structures (Pithouse, 2013). Evictions also held an overtly ethnic inflection in reference to people from the Eastern Cape being alien intruders to Durban despite the fact that some of them had lived in the area since 1995 (Pithouse, 2013). Many of the 'Marikana' occupiers have jobs in Durban and children enrolled in local schools. Prior to the occupation their shacks had been destroyed on eight separate occasions and their three court orders violated by the municipality (Pithouse, 2013). ABM is vocal and active in Cato Manor. Following a protest march it lead on the Durban City Hall, it was described as a 'movement … at the forefront of a new wave of mass political mobilisation at the fringes of formal South African society' (Patel, 2013a).

Merebank and Wentworth are located in what is known as the South Durban Basin. The South Durban Basin is home to two large petrochemical refineries, a paper mill, chemical process industries, motor manufacturers, an estimated five thousand businesses as well as 22,000 households and 200,000 residents (eThekwini Municipality website). Owing to the enforcement of the apartheid Group Areas Act in the 1950s 'coloured', Indian and black communities were relocated to this area despite its proximity to heavy industries. There are on-going tensions therefore among residents, big business and environmentalists. Merebank and Wentworth were selected as case studies because they are situated close to Engen, Saprev and Mondi and bear the brunt of environmental stress (pollution) and public health costs associated with the petrochemical industry. South Durban has also been the site of much opposition by civil society and communities in the face of these challenges. Examples include the 2011 march by Merebank and Wentworth residents from Settlers School to the gates of the Engen refinery following an explosion which sent out a shower of crude oil. School children were admitted to hospital with complaints of breathing difficulties and skin and eye irritations (Naidoo, 2011). More recently, protest has centred on the municipality's proposed port expansion which threatens to relocate communities, increase pollution levels and cause further environmental degradation. Various organisations are active in the South Durban area. Among them are Groundwork, Earthlife Africa and SDECA comprising a network of community based organisations and NGOs.

Protest and participation

Of the twenty households interviewed, protest was revealed to be a more popular in Cato Manor than in Merebank and Wentworth (South Durban). Six out of the ten Cato Manor

respondents said they engaged in protest while only one out of the ten South Durban respondents indicated that he engaged in protest 'Now and again' (Respondent 6, Wentworth). Likewise, when asked if respondents utilised formal methods of participation such as engaging with ward councillors and attending ward committee meetings eight Cato Manor households said they did compared with only one South Durban household. Cato Manor respondents living in the informal settlement Greenland cited various reasons for protest including a lack of proper housing – they were clear that they wanted to stay in Greenland but have their temporary dwellings upgraded to formal RDP houses: 'We've been here seven years but still no RDP house –nothing is being done' (Respondent 9, Cato Manor). The argument for remaining in Greenland was also made for convenience: 'We want houses and we want them here, it's near town and easy to get to work – I catch my taxi right here on the main road' (Respondent 6, Cato Manor). Other reasons for protest were: better access to water than stand pipes, a formal electricity supply, strategies to keep children safe from the main road, a nearby river that is 'smelly' and a 'lazy councillor'. Concerns around the councillor formed the main reasons for protest in Masxha, a part of Cato Manor where there is formal RDP housing and respondents have access to water and electricity. 'It's about the councillor. We want to re-elect the councillor for Ward 30 because the councillor was elected unfairly, the count was done all wrong, there was disrespect for the majority' (Respondent 1, Cato Manor). Respondents in Cato Manor outlined quite specific methods of protest that involves barricading main roads and burning tyres because 'We want to create chaos, to draw attention to our grievances, to send a message' (Respondent 1, Cato Manor). For the most part however, respondents were against violence or the use of violent tactics but did not classify tactics of 'burning' as violent: 'Burning is not seen as violent, for example when we burned the councillor's office (container) it was 10:30 at night there was no one there who could be harmed' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor). When asked about utilising formal methods of participation, respondents displayed a very good understanding of mechanisms and processes at the local level arguing: 'I think other processes are more influential (than protest) such as general meetings and consultative meetings held by the ward councillor. Protest has no significance because no decisions are made and nothing will come of it. We need to follow the correct processes to influence government – we must engage properly and then persevere.' (Respondent 2, Cato Manor) and 'Following the political process is much better than protest. I'm a member of the ANC so I have to follow the process. You start with the local councillor if this doesn't work you take it to the mayor then the minister then the public protector, you can go to the president himself after that but you can't by-pass the official process' (Respondent 7, Cato Manor). The two Cato Manor respondents who indicated they didn't participate formally revealed that it was because they did not support the ward councillor: 'No, because this councillor is corrupt. If we had an honest councillor I would attend meetings.' (Respondent 3, Cato Manor) and 'There are two camps in this ward. One supports the ward councillor (they are the minority) and we are the other (the majority) who support another candidate. So we don't go to ward meetings. We do attend ANC regional and province meetings though' (Respondent 1, Cato Manor). According to activists: 'Well these methods would only work if there was justice. If everybody in the ward was welcome or if those of us who happen not to support the councillor could even get into the venue (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor). When asked if they would engage with the ward councillor and participate in ward committee meetings should their protest demands be met – both respondents said they would. Activists were quick to make the point however that participating in formal structures was all very well but protest would likely always continue because '…it's about solidarity about the problems we have in common – it's not just this single issue of the councillor, it's about all things that affect us – it doesn't stop at an RDP house' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor).

Responses from Cato Manor suggest that most residents participate at the local level. 'Invented' spaces of participation, such as protest, are utilised because people feel excluded or pushed out of 'invited' spaces. Residents view protest however, as a permanent feature of political participation. Participation therefore occurs in both spaces. Miraftab (2006) argues that 'invented' spaces are used to confront authorities and challenge the status quo. It would seem that Cato Manor residents revert to 'invented' spaces when confronting authorities but not necessarily challenging the status quo – their claims in this case are for a new ward councillor rather than a transformation of the ward councillor / ward committee system. Indeed respondents indicate that once their demands (through protest) are met and a new councillor is in place, they will utilise formal mechanisms of participation.

Participation trends in South Durban differ considerably from those in Cato Manor. Residents of flatted communities in both Merebank and Wentworth did not favour protest as a form of participation. They seem to make very little use of 'invented' spaces, most of them however acknowledged that they were aware of the various protests in their area opposing pollution in South Durban. Their participation in 'invited' spaces is further contracted to meetings with their body corporates (who then engage with the council) around issues pertaining to the upgrading of their flats. Interestingly their grievances are similar to those of Cato Manor residents framed as a failure to deliver and a lack of faith in local authorities: 'The ward councillor said there are funds to upgrade the flats. Where is the money? They are doing nothing. The council didn't even paint the building' (Respondent 2, Merebank), 'I used to (go to ward meetings) when the old councillor was here. But now that he's gone…We don't want to condemn the councillor – we know he's doing his best but the old councillor was more accommodating' (Respondent 4, Merebank). Other grievances highlighted seemed more closely directed to industries in the area. These included the toxic odour which most respondents blamed for the health problems they encountered such as wheezing and asthma, the foul smelling sludge running through a nearby drain and an explosion at Engen which resulted in extensive oil sprays on walls and damage to washing hanging on laundry lines.

Protest as social rights, agency and accountability

The lack of inclination toward protest among South Durban respondents can perhaps be understood within a prevailing sense of futility. Residents in Merebank and Wentworth seem sceptical that their agency will yield genuine results. When asked how they thought government reacted to protest: 'They don't take notice. They want for things to get very bad. They want to chase us out so they can build a harbour.' (Respondent 4, Merebank) and 'Is protest effective? No, it's not worth protesting. It never comes right. If you don't have a Zulu name – nothing for you (Respondent 4, Merebank). Regarding protest aimed at South Durban industry 'We can protest but you think we can shut Engen down? They'll shut us down' (Respondent 5, Merebank). Even the single respondent who said he did protest argued 'There've been protests against pollution so then they shut down the smoke during the day but just start it up again at night. You are just finishing your shoes and getting a deaf ear' (Respondent 6, Wentworth). Despite this however there was a sense that protest is an important method of participation: 'In a way it's good because people get to say how they feel, express their opinions.' (Respondent 5, Merebank) and 'Protest at times is better – they listen to you. In meetings they just talk. Protest causes a disturbance so they can see they are to be blamed' (Respondent 6, Wentworth). Protest is therefore understood as a way to express public opinion or articulate needs and also as a method of accountability.

The question as to why residents of Merebank and Wentworth aren't very likely to protest is answered to an extent by a Merebank respondent who argued that there is very little of sense of unity required to make protest effective enough. She referred to the incident at Engen where the fire and oil spill damaged peoples' walls and laundry: 'People will go with you and protest but something happens then they say they weren't there' (Respondent 5, Merebank). The 'something' that happened is a reference to the fact that Engen gave each affected Merebank household R500 and issued vouchers ranging from R3,000 to R5,000 to cover the cost of damages 'So the community stopped complaining about Engen. So now they are 'for' Engen. There's no unity' (Respondent 5, Merebank). This is built on by a Wentworth respondent who argues 'We are not a very progressive community. Democracy has not sunk in. People…are still just looking for hand-outs' (Respondent 7, Wentworth). His view is that the Wentworth community 'buys into' the idea of development settled on them by local authorities without critically considering the impact it will have on the area for example, in the light of its cultural and historical significance. Indeed respondents laid very little stress on the closure of Engen and other polluting industries and seemed happy with piecemeal solutions aimed to mitigate the symptoms of pollution: 'Engen is too big to close down. They should provide us with a free doctor and no generic medication. My wife has bad asthma and is suffering' (Respondent 4, Merebank). The fact that South Durban residents are less inclined to protest may also have something to do with spatial arrangements where common spaces are limited in flatted dwellings and less conducive to organising unlike Cato Manor (Lodge and Mottiar, forthcoming 2014). Added to this is that South Durban neighbourhoods are under threat owing to the proposed port expansion as compared with Cato Manor where there is a municipal plan for residential upgrading under the Cato Manor Development Project (Lodge and Mottiar, forthcoming 2014).

Respondents in Cato Manor were very clear about the place of protest in a democracy and it being a citizen's right: '…it's our democratic right to protest.' (Respondent 3, Cato Manor), 'Protest is a democratic expression' (Respondent 2, Cato Manor). In this sense protest was understood as having empowerment and transformative potential, '(By encouraging protest) you make people (protesters) see the light and it encourages them to act like citizens and ask for their rights' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor). Asked about those who don't take part in protest a respondent stated, 'They don't understand politics. They are blank' (Respondent 3, Cato Manor). Protest is also understood within post-apartheid freedom, 'It's how we won freedom' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor). Following this, protest was not seen as a challenge to the state or the African National Congress (ANC), 'There's no challenge to the ANC, we don't for example want the DA in power. We were born and bred ANC we don't want another home.' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor) and 'It's not ANC policies – it's people not doing their jobs properly' (Activist 1, Cato Manor). Protest is therefore a method to access change within prevailing structures and systems 'Protest is the only language our government understands' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor). This sentiment was offered within the context that various other efforts to 'formally' address grievances had been ignored. Interestingly enough even respondents who did not engage in protest stated that strategic protest had its value such as protesting in the run-up to an election when protesters are more likely to be taken seriously or protesting in a way that affected the economy. Respondents also understood protest as a mechanism of accountability, 'Protest exposes corruption.' (Respondent 3, Cato Manor) and 'They (the ANC) make promises – we make them uphold these promises' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor).

A very firm sense of agency was discernable amongst Cato Manor residents who took part in protest. While most conceded that there were few concrete gains to be had from protest action

they nevertheless supported its continuation. For respondents who argued that they protested because they felt 'ignored and disrespected by the ANC' (Respondent 1, Cato Manor), protest resulting in a visit from the ANC PEC and NEC was fruitful (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor) because it created an arena where protesters voices (excluded from local spaces of formal participation) could be heard 'by the ANC'. This was important because 'there was no one dictating and there was mutual respect with the ANC listening to us and hearing our problems'.

The role of social movements and NGOs

Initiatives to protest in Cato Manor seem to stem from within the community. Masxha respondents referred to 'a community of active people' made up of both men and women, old and young, employed and unemployed. Greenland respondents expressed similar sentiments arguing that protesters shared the same grievances and that unemployed people were more likely to protest as those with jobs would be at work but join when they could. Mobilisation for protest is, for the most part, carried out by a small group of community activists who call meetings, go on door to door visits and utilise a BBM and WhatsApp group to inform residents of planned protest. In many cases people join protest just because they see the smoke from burning tyres or hear the singing. Activists argue that protest is usually the final strategy after formal processes such as writing letters to the municipality or handing over memoranda have been exhausted. They also contend that there is no real sense of leadership or of a committee because tasks will rotate and change at every meeting with different participants volunteering different undertakings. This also serves the strategic purpose of avoiding the targeting of individuals by the police. A kitty is set up at meetings to finance protest costs e.g. matches etc. When asked about alliances, activists mentioned support from the Centre for Civil Society based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and ABM. This support was described more in the way of strategic advice rather than of a physical or financial nature. Indeed two activists interviewed didn't seem too impressed by the participation in one of their protests by people who were not directly part of the community: 'There isn't involvement in our protests by social movements although once some members of a local social movement joined it (on their initiative) but behaved like barbarians, they threw stones and hit water meters damaging some of them' (Activist 2 and 3, Cato Manor).

Practically all of the South Durban respondents were aware of or had heard of protest in their area mostly centred on environmental opposition to Engen, Saprev and Mondi. They located this protest within the Wentworth Development Forum, the Merebank Residents Association, the Isipingo Residents Association and various environmental organisations and NGOs. Three respondents referred specifically to SDCEA and its director saying they knew of his advocacy work and of his organising protest marches. The two activists interviewed held differing opinions about SDCEA and its role in South Durban: 'I'm not sure there would be protest without SDCEA, because people don't know about / understand the issues.' (Activist 1, South Durban), 'I think protest would happen without SDCEA but perhaps it wouldn't be so organised or so effective' (Activist 2, South Durban). According to activists, protest in South Durban is planned rather than spontaneous. Much of it is organised by SDCEA in alliance with various residents' organisations and environmental organisations such as Earthlife Africa. Methods of community mobilisation include an extensive email list and the use of loud hailers in South Durban communities. SDCEA is also credited with being able to provide resources such as transport to and from events and T-Shirts and banners detailing the nature of grievances. Preferred methods of protest are peacefully marching to hand over memoranda and obstructing entrances and exits. South Durban activists argue however that

Merebank and Wentworth residents are not inclined towards 'getting out there' to 'fight the bad or hopeless causes' (Activist 1 and 2, South Durban). They argue though that 'people don't realise the power they have' (Activist 1 and 2, South Durban). Further, while they support the efforts of SDCEA in South Durban they point out that dealing with broader issues such as environmental pollution in the area is important but often internal area-specific issues are neglected. These issues, they contend, ought to be dealt with by smaller organisations (such as residents committees) or community members / movements themselves.

NGOs and social movements are active both in Cato Manor and in South Durban. The most visible of these are ABM in Cato Manor and SDCEA in South Durban. A recent editorial argued that ABM has tens of thousands of supporters from more than thirty settlements in Durban (Olifant and Mhlanga, 2013). Cato Manor (more particularly Cato Crest) is one of the settlements where ABM is 'a sustained voice for shack dwellers in public spaces' (Olifant and Mhlanga, 2013). Indeed ABM is to be credited with a number of victories around Durban including stopped evictions, democratising the governance of settlements and winning access to schools (Olifant and Mhlanga, 2013). The movement is also known for refuting the discourse on 'service delivery' arguing that its demands are about 'being human' which translate into demands for housing and land (Gibson, 2011: 156). ABM's struggle is not simply for houses or for political power: 'they want to change how things are done. In other words they are struggling not merely for "delivery" but for a vision of a different kind of politics' (Gibson, 2011: 171). In this sense there is not much evidence that Masxha and Greenland residents have been influenced by this vision given their commitment to fighting for changes within prevailing structures and systems. They are however cognisant of the successes of ABM and understand its potential to bring about change – this is clear in activists citing ABM as a source of support and advice. Likewise the presence of SDCEA in the South Durban area does not seem to have prompted residents to take an active part in local challenges. The organisation's sustained advocacy initiatives do however seem to have penetrated local understandings of environmental threats and the rights of communities. This is evidenced in respondents' views about Engen's responsibilities to provide medical care for those whose health is affected by its polluting South Durban. These views very likely follow incidents such as the protracted negotiations between Engen and SDCEA after the 2011 fire which resulted in 100 children having to be hospitalised owing to the ensuing droplets of crude oil and the cloud of toxic smoke. Engen initially offered R30 per person in compensation but SDCEA refused arguing for the setting up of a 24 hour clinic, paid for by Engen, to treat asthma and other respiratory conditions caused by the incident (Bowman, 2011).

Implications for understanding protest

Protest in South Africa has been described as a 'rebellion of the poor' (Alexander, 2010: 25). Protest trend differences between Cato Manor and South Durban suggest however that not all 'poor' citizens engage in protest. Cato Manor residents do so readily with a clear sense of agency and citizenship while Merebank and Wentworth residents are less inclined to despite a prevailing sense that protest is an important part of democracy and of citizenship. Furthermore while Cato Manor protesters aim to 'create chaos' and argue that tactics such as burning down a councillor's office are not violent, they continue to make their demands well within the system and within a loyalty to the ruling party. This in effect, dilutes the sense of rebellion and is in keeping with other protest studies (Sinwell et al, 2009:1) which found protester demands to be rooted in the ANC's failure to implement policy locally rather than in a campaign against the Zuma administration or its national policies. Indeed the protest

movement has been described as '…at once extraordinarily militant in its actions and profoundly moderate in its politics' (Bond et al, 2012: 7). Significantly Cato Manor residents who protest are also just as willing to participate through formal channels.

Protesters in Cato Manor argue that they protest for 'service delivery' but also because they feel 'ignored' and 'disrespected' by the ANC. This confirms arguments that 'service delivery' protest may not be the most accurate way to refer to the wave of protests across South Africa (Friedman 2009, Pithouse, 2011). While protesters are certainly demanding services, they are also insisting on entrenching citizen choices in a democratic way. In this sense protesters see themselves as 'makers' and 'shapers' of social policy rather than 'users' and 'choosers' (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001). They understand their actions more as creating the services they receive rather than simply consuming an already formulated package of services. This is evidenced by Greenland residents insisting that they want formal housing, but on their terms i.e. they do not wish to be relocated. Similarly Masxha residents want to be included in formal spaces of participation in order to make decisions about their community through the ward committee system and via engagements with the ward councillor. Cato Manor protesters see themselves, as 'actors' and not 'passive beneficiaries' in this way they are more genuinely placed to seek political accountability. Collective action therefore becomes a method of agency to realise rights and hold the state accountable (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001). Furthermore activists in Cato Manor stress that even though they may participate through formal channels, protest would always remain on the agenda. In this way participation will not always be conducted on the state's terms ('invited') but also on the community's terms ('invented') (Ballard, 2008,180).

A useful way to consider the impact of ABM in Cato Manor and SDCEA in Merebank and Wentworth is within the 2011 debate between Luke Sinwell and Carin Runciman who invoke Gramscian notions of hegemony to understand resistance in South Africa. Sinwell (2011: 63) argues that radical tactics of protest movements are not necessarily underpinned by revolutionary politics. Local service delivery demands often gain only limited concessions and consolidate support for the ANC rather than igniting a movement against the ANC's neoliberal leanings. Runciman (quoting Polletta, 1997: 435) on the other hand, points out that the meaning of resistance may be widened to include a counter hegemonic challenge from long standing community institutions where 'people are able to penetrate the common sense'. While ABM has been visible and active in Cato Manor's 'Marikana' settlement their 'vision for a different kind of politics' has not impacted Masxha and Greenland protesters beyond a focus on mostly local-centred demands for services and for citizenship. So participatory spaces remain restricted by hegemonic ideologies (Sinwell, 2011). Similarly SDCEA's advocacy and protest action in South Durban does not inspire a sustained commitment to protest or indeed to participate by Merebank and Wentworth residents. Their demands on petrochemical industries to take responsibility for their actions do however seem to have permeated. This is evidenced in residents arguing for compensation and for free access to e.g. doctors and clinics. This may signal emerging forms of a counter hegemonic consciousness (Runciman, 2011). In respect of protesters interviewed in this study though, protest does not seem to amount to a counter hegemonic force in the sense of Gramsci's 'war of position'.

Conclusion

This paper argues that, according to the study sample, protest and participation varies greatly between Cato Manor and South Durban. Protest and the use of 'invented' spaces is much more likely to be undertaken by Cato Manor residents who view it as a fundamental part of

democracy as well as a way to assert citizenship – in this way protest is valued as a form of agency with potential positive impact on attaining social rights and holding the government accountable. Protest amongst Merebank and Wentworth communities is less valued. Residents of South Durban are less inclined toward protest as they are sceptical that any form of agency on their part will yield positive results. They do however acknowledge protest as an important part of democratic life.

The use of 'invited' spaces such as participation in ward committees and engagements with ward councillors also differs between the two study areas. Cato Manor residents are cognisant with formal processes and keen to utilise them. They do so in parallel with protest however. South Durban residents are not very active through formal channels of participation and seem comfortable engaging at very low levels with the body corporates of their apartment buildings who then deal with various residents associations and the council.

The impact of social movements and NGOs in the study areas suggest that there are limitations to participation initiatives promoted by social movements and NGOs having the potential to address broader issues of politics to make change more embedded and retain the potential of participation to be 'transformative' (Hickey and Mohan, 2005: 242). In the case of Cato Manor (Masxha and Greenland) ABM may carry some inspiration but residents still understand their challenges as addressable within dominant political ideologies. Likewise in the case of Merebank and Wentworth, SDCEA's advocacy initiatives may be linked to residents understanding their challenges more clearly and realising where responsibility for these challenges lie but there is yet to be a genuine increase in their demanding the rights of citizenship and drawing them into wider arenas of decision making.

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Tables & Figures

Figure 1