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Youth, Protest and Political Participation: the Case of Zamdela, Sasolburg.

MAHLATSE EDWARD RAMPEDI

A full dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Johannesburg in fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Arts in Sociology.

Supervisor: Professor Peter Alexander
Co Supervisor: Dr Carin Runciman

Johannesburg, October 2015.
Abstract

Scholars agree that the number of protests in South Africa is rising and that young people are often at the forefront of these uprisings. Some have referred to it as a ‘rebellion’ to give an indication of the scale of protest activity in the country (Alexander 2010). While scholarly literature on the general phenomenon is quiet extensive, research on youth participation is limited. This dissertation addresses this weakness by means of a case study on Zamdela, a township close to Sasolburg, which is located 90 kilometres south of Johannesburg. On 22 January 2013 people from Zamdela participated in a large and violent protest where looting and destruction were widespread and over five thousand people, many of them young people, were observed to have participated in the protest. The main focus of the protest was to act against the amalgamation of the Ngwathe and Metsimaholo municipalities and to express discontent with the African National Congress (ANC) provincial Premier.

This dissertation seeks to answer how and why youth in Zamdela engage in protest and how that impacts on their political participation including voting in elections. A mixed methods approach was utilised. Most information comes from interviews with young people (non-participants as well as well as those who joined the action), but use has also been made of documentary evidence, observation, interviews with older people, and some quantitative data that was also collected.

It makes a contribution to our conceptualisation of youth in three ways. First it shows that young people in Zamdela tend to define the term experientially, emphasising social responsibility but also physical capacity. Secondly, a distinction is made between ‘older youth’ and ‘younger youth’. This is based mainly on political attitudes, and the dividing line is roughly between those born before and after 1990. Thirdly, I suggest the nearest similar word to ‘youth’ in Sesotho has different connotations to the English word. This highlights the need for take greater care with translation, because words are embedded in social experiences, and so provide clues to the way these vary.

I provide the study of social conflict in South Africa with a detailed timeline of the action that occurred in Zamdela, thus offering a micro- sociological account that goes beyond journalistic reports. This includes a map showing the progress of the
protest, indicating locations of barricades and some of the properties that were destroyed. It gives a sense of the scale and changing form of the protest.

By analysing the period between the January 2013 protest and the May 2014 national elections I provide an account of the changing political attitudes and forms of political participation undertaken by young people, and particularly unemployed young people, in Zamdela. Contrary to the popular view that young people are apathetic to politics or caught in a period of ‘waiting’ (Dawson 2012), I provide an account of the various ways in which young people relate to politics through social networks, arts and culture.

The evidence from a quantitative survey suggests, albeit tentatively, that participation in protest increased the likelihood that young people voted in the elections, but probably not to a considerable degree. Furthermore, although, even in voting districts close to where the protest occurred, the ANC received more votes than other parties did, youth who protested were more likely to support the Economic Freedom Fighters than those who did not.

In sum, the dissertation shows how youth participated in one of the largest community protests South Africa has witnessed, the way they defined themselves as ‘youth’, how they understood their involvement, and the impact of participation on wider political identification. In all these respects, it makes an original contribution to sociology.
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Finally and most importantly, I wish to thank the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the South African Research Chair in Social Change for their financial assistance. It was a privilege to be one of the few people who received assistance to complete, and to have, a masters dissertation
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANCYL</td>
<td>African National Congress Youth League</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoGTA</td>
<td>Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>Congress of the People</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Democratic Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRAC</td>
<td>Franchise Action Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEC</td>
<td>Electoral Commission of South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRIS</td>
<td>Incident Registration Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCR</td>
<td>Metsimaholo Concerned Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDB</td>
<td>Municipal Demarcation Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACP</td>
<td>South African Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAIC</td>
<td>South African Indian Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAIRR</td>
<td>South African Institute of Race Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANCO</td>
<td>South African National Civic Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASO</td>
<td>South African Student Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASOL</td>
<td>South African Synthetic Oil Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATKON</td>
<td>Statistical Consultation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>United Democratic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Institute of Security Studies</td>
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Figures, maps, images and tables

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and problem statement

On 22 January 2013 after a meeting involving about 10,000 people, the community of Zamdela township, just outside Sasolburg, Free State, took to the streets and violently protested against the government in order to stop the planned amalgamation of the Metsimaholo and Ngwathe municipalities. The community believed that amalgamating two municipalities would be unfavourable to their community because they perceived the Parys-based Ngwathe municipality as poorly funded and comprising of corrupt officials. They feared that such problems would spill over into Metsimaholo (Sunday Times, 2013). At least 5000 community members took part in the protest, about 200 people were arrested, a number of shops were looted and destroyed, a number of people were injured, including police officers, and four protesters died (Marinovich and Lekgowa, 2013). Media reports depict that youth played a central role in the carrying out of the protest in Zamdela (City Press, 2013a).

Historically, youth have been the force behind some of the largest uprisings in the country. In 16 June 1976, youth in Soweto organised a protest against government-imposed use of Afrikaans as a language of instruction of black youth in the townships. Mass action by youth escalated even into the 1980s, with students from student bodies in secondary schools, universities, colleges, and townships organising mass actions and coming close to collapsing the apartheid education system (Deegan, 2005: 94).

Post-apartheid we have seen the continuation of protest action in South Africa, mostly focusing on socioeconomic issues. Issues of unemployment, neglect by government and lack of service delivery have resulted in an escalation of protests since democratisation in 1994. This has raises a significant challenge to the 21 year old democratic government that promised individual and collective economic growth; ‘a better life for all’ as the ANC slogan boldly states. In the past 10 years particularly, there has been an observable escalation of these protests and this has arguably amounted to what Alexander (2010) avers is the ‘rebellion of the poor’. Though contemporary scholars study protests in South Africa, they seldom particularly analyse the role of young people. This dissertation addresses this gap.

This dissertation studies three things; youth, protest and political participation. It studies youth in protest, how they protest, and the way in which youth is understood.
This research takes on a sociological approach in understanding youth identity; that they are not merely a category of people that can be understood by age. It analyses youth based on circumstances within which they live, how their identity is formed and politicised, and how they are a heterogeneous group of people in contrast to many sociological and institutional interpretations. It makes a further contribution to existing literature on youth by looking at them in terms of language and translation, something that scholars seldom do. It looks at how the concept of youth is understood in English in comparison to Sesotho, both of which bring about differences in conceptualisation and understanding.

It is very common for researchers to only look at protests in South Africa in terms of their numbers and the grievances that communities demonstrate in these protests without providing in depth analysis of these uprisings (See Alexander et al, 2014). This dissertation takes a further step in the study of protest by taking a sociological approach in analysing the protest in Zamdelas. It provides a day-by-day account of the events of the protests in order to demonstrate the form that the protest took. In addition, it supplements the analysis by using descriptive maps that show the scale of the protest, the distances that people walked during protest, how they organised, and the size of Zamdelas in relation to Sasolburg.

While young people are often at the forefront of protest, a distinct analytical focus on youth, their political participation, and political perspectives are often abstract. The views and activities of protesters are studied as if they are homogenous without specific attention to youth. Often when youth are discussed in the politics of South Africa, they are viewed as apathetic, and often this is demonstrated by low voter registrations and voting (Collette and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014). This dissertation makes an analysis of youth political participation in between the January 2013 protest in Zamdelas and the 2014 National Elections. It provides an account of this political participation over time, highlighting the different ways in which young people engage with politics, some of which are conventional and other non-conventional ones. Instead of community meetings and elections, young people were observed to be active politically through social networks, arts, and culture. In doing so, the dissertation demonstrates with evidence that youth are neither apathetic to political activities, and not necessarily in a state of ‘waiting’ as Dawson (2012) argues in her dissertation.

By analysing the period between the protest and the national elections this dissertation is able to trace changing political attitudes and activities throughout time.
The recent national elections were perhaps the most significant elections in twenty first century South Africa for several reasons. Firstly, they were the first national elections after the abolishment of the apartheid government where ‘born-frees’, theorised as those born in and after 1994, cast their ballots. Secondly, they were the first elections in which the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was a contending party. The EFF in this current political landscape is the first break from the ANC which has gone politically to the left. Thirdly, the elections in Zamdela particularly occurred not long after the large and violent protest that lead to the destruction of the township and eventual deaths of four residents.

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the dissertation makes a comparative analysis of the 2009 and 2014 national and provincial elections in order to demonstrate the shift in party politics both nationally and locally in Zamdela, particularly with the inception of the EFF and the January protest. It concludes by analysing the protest and national elections data in light of Booysen’s (2007) ‘ballot and the brick’ thesis. Fundamentally, the research aims to illuminate how and why young people in Zamdela engage in community protests and how this impacts on their participation in political activity including voting in elections by considering the following questions:

- What is the meaning of youth?
- How and why do people engage in protest?
- Are young people in Zamdela apathetic to politics?
- In what spaces do young people participate politically?
- What attitudes do young people have towards voting and political participation?
- How do young people view politics and what implications do these views have on national elections?

1.2 Key Concepts of the dissertation

Three concepts are paramount in this research; youth, protest, and political participation. The research adopts the argument that ‘youth’ is a very problematic concept to define. It builds on the argument that youth is experiential, that it can be experienced in different ways by people of the same community, class, race and gender (Abbink et al, 2005; Naafs and White, 2012). This suggests that youth cannot be reduced only to age the way in which institutions and governments do. It
problematises the creation of social identities and blurs further the line between youth and adulthood.

The concept of protest is defined in numerous ways by different scholars. However, in the South African context it is seldom defined. For the purpose of this dissertation, protest is defined as 'a joint action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target' (Opp, 2009: 38). Thus far, protests have been one of the ways in which communities in South Africa, and elsewhere, engage with the state and even challenge it. They have become the means of last resort in cases where decisions made by government could not be altered or rejected by other peaceful means (Cook et al, 1995; Tilly, 1997).

Political participation is the act of engaging with the politics of one’s state, where people engage with interested groups and individuals to have influence on those decisions that affect society at large (Brady, 1999; Gomulia, 2006; Aragonez and Sanchez-Pages, 2008). Methods of political participation are often conventional, such as voting in elections and giving feedback in community meetings. However there are other ways that are unconventional but yet significant, such as protests and community forums (Cornwall, 2004). A gap thus exists in understanding how the three concepts relate to each other and this dissertation aims to partly fill this gap. The following section outlines the discussion in each chapter of the dissertation following this introduction.

1.3 Chapter outline

Chapter 2, Youth, protest and political participation: A literature review, provides a review of the existing literature in the study of youth, protest and political participation. The chapter focuses initially on the conceptualisation of youth both on an institutional and sociological level; illuminating on the static nature of institutional definitions as opposed to transformative definitions of youth. It examines definitions of youth on the basis of age and how this has become very problematic in socially and sociologically understanding them in a more nuanced way. Additionally, it provides literature on the changing nature of generations in South Africa and pays particular attention to the so called ‘born-frees’.

The chapter also examines literature on protests generally and in South Africa particularly. It provides a historical perspective of protests around the country, their
transition of the character of protest from the apartheid era to post-apartheid, as well as how they have come to a point of escalation in post-apartheid South Africa. In addition, chapter two discusses political participation and the different ways that people engage with the state. It examines literature on spaces and ways of participation that people engage as well as those that are created by communities in order to engage with the state in their own way.

Chapter 3, *Methodology*, is an in-depth explanation of methods used in the dissertation to answer the research question. The chapter describes the nature of the study and the research question, and the reasons why Zamdela was chosen as a case study. In addition, it describes the design of the research, ways in which data was collected, samples as well sampling methods, and concludes with a reflection on ethical considerations pertinent to this research.

Chapter 4, *Historical perspective on Zamdela*, provides historical context to the dissertation. It outlines the formation and development of Zamdela and its history of protests. The history dates back to the 1950s and also looks at those that have occurred post-apartheid.

In Chapter 5, *Zamdela in protest: a timeline*, I provides a timeline of protests from the beginning of its brewing process in December 2012 to the time the community took to the streets in protest against the amalgamation of the municipalities on 22 January 2013. In terms of the protest itself, the chapter provides a day-to-day account of the protest and events that happened on those three days of protest. The outline is supplemented with maps illustrating the paths that protesters took and the locations where important events, such as looting, burning, road barricades and marching, took place.

Chapter 6, *Youth of Zamdela*, conceptualises youth in Zamdela based on the argument that their identity cannot be understood through simple categorisations of age. It provides an analysis of what it means to be ‘youth’ in Zamdela based on the argument that such a definition cannot be standard for every individual or group of people. The chapter develops youth identity based on circumstances and experiences that are particular to the community of Zamdela, thus informing ways in which they identify themselves as ‘youth’ as well as the heterogeneity of youth. In addition, chapter five illuminates on the changing nature of youth identity based on changing generations. It compares the previous generation to ‘born-frees’ in Zamdela, to establish ways in which these identities transform and their engagement with politics.
Chapter 7 provides a further analysis of the protest. *Actors in the protest and repertoires of collective action: the actors of the protest and repertoires of collective action* analyses the composition of the protest, leadership and the different sets of people that were engaged in protest. It focuses on the ways in which young people participated in protest, highlighting methods that were used to protest and youth agency.

Chapter 8, *Protest to Elections – political participation in Zamdela*, analyses spaces of participation in which the youth of Zamdela engage in politics. It provides several groups, organisations and geographical areas in which youth place themselves in order to have influence in the community and in politics. In addition, it discusses new ways in which the youth of Zamdela engage with these politics, some of which are seldom used by working class youth in the country, including the use of radio stations for protest and social networks for mobilisation. It counter-argues the dominant argument that the youth are apathetic to politics by emphasising the alternative ways in which they do so and the implications this has for wider political participation by young people.

Chapter 9, *The 2014 National elections* gives, by use of a timeline, an account of local attitudes of the youth towards voting and elections in general. It analyses the changing patterns among the youth in terms of their alliances with political parties and their willingness to vote, and the lack thereof. In closing, it provides the results of the 2014 national elections in comparison with results of the exit poll survey and my own survey to illuminate how young people voted. This comparison is also made with reference to Booysen’s (2007) ‘ballot and the brick’ to further understand the relationship between community protests and elections.

Chapter 10 is the *Conclusion*. It sums up the arguments in the dissertation and how it has dealt with the research question. It begins with a summary of the major findings on how youth is understood sociologically and the factors that forge youth identity in contemporary South Africa. Additionally, it argues on youth political participation in Zamdela; illustrating with evidence the ways and spaces in which youth participate in political activities that include protest and elections. In addition, the chapter discusses the important contributions to literature that are made by the dissertation as well as providing suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2: Youth, protest and political participation - A literature review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to critically review literature that will provide the theoretical foundation of this dissertation. It focuses firstly on the concept of youth from a sociological perspective. It provides a critical description and analysis of the technical, social, and cultural conception of youth in the current body of scholarly literature. Secondly, this chapter explores the current body of literature on protests in South Africa, analysing arguments about protests and their metamorphosis particularly in the post-apartheid period. It pays particular attention to the escalation of protests before and after democracy in South Africa leading to the argued ‘rebellion of the poor’ (Alexander, 2010), thus providing a theoretical foundation on which this protest-related research on Zamdela can be built. Thirdly, this chapter defines political participation as a concept and outlines the arguments made in terms of what political participation is and how it occurs among youth. It pays specific attention to the perceived lack of interest from youth in political activities, the changing nature of methods and spaces of political participation and some of the arguments critiquing elections as a significant method of political engagement. Based on such theoretical grounding, the study itself will, in the context of Zamdela, explore how participatory spaces are related to certain political behaviour, the shifts in-between the spaces and whether different forms of political participation affects voting in elections.

2.2 Conceptualising ‘youth’

Defining youth based on age has been the norm for many countries around the world. Governments and institutions often define youth as a category. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for example views youth as those people aged between 15 and 24 (Naafs and White, 2012), and in the South African context, the National Youth Policy categorises youth as those people between the ages of 15 and 34 (RSA, 2009). In western societies particularly, argues Schwartz (2010), youth are defined outside their social context. They are defined only with age as a main factor, and sometimes the only factor, without regard to youth’s interactions with other people and with some events in their lives (Schwartz, 2010: 5). These definitions are problematic
and require a more sociological interpretation. They disregard the cultural factors of youth, thus leaving out important aspects that contribute to youth identity as people who live in a specific era, area, and circumstance.

Wyn and White (1996) critiqued this conceptualisation of youth based on age; arguing that the concept of youth needs ‘rethinking’, particularly because factors such as age alone do not capture the concept of youth adequately. They warn that people should consider factors such as gender, wealth, education, and subcultures as important aspects in understanding young people. In doing so, people will then reach an improved understanding of youth that is based on people’s social reality, and which moves beyond the boundaries of institutional definitions of youth (Wyn and White, 1996: 25).

2.2.1 The socio-cultural aspect of youth

Androutsopolous and Georgakopolou (2003: 2) share the same sentiments as Wyn and White (1996), arguing that the conceptualisation of youth only using age is misleading, as ‘it suggests a homogenous social and cultural experience that hardly corresponds with the richness and range of real-life diversity of young people’. Youth therefore are not to be compacted into some sort of category in order to understand them. Thus, one needs to replace static approaches with relational factors in order to create a clearer conceptualisation of youth. This is where a cultural understanding of youth is much more appropriate instead of a physiological one, because including cultural aspects in the conceptualisation of youth is important as it puts more emphasis on the diversity of youth in contrast to the homogeneity ascribed by national and international institutions.

In their study of youth in Muslim Northern Nigeria, Abbink et al (2005) also argue that factors such as initiation, marriage, parenthood and employment are increasingly changing the definition of youth; a boy would be an adult when he takes a wife or builds his own house, and a girl would become a woman when she conceives a child or is taken as a wife. Youth is thus viewed as a period before certain events in a person’s life, where a person only becomes an adult when he or she assumes some social responsibility that effectively makes his or her adulthood distinguishable. As such, young people in different periods in their lives are more likely to have different ways of forming identities.
Youth identity can also be understood in terms of the ‘politics of waiting’, socioeconomic development, or the lack thereof. Dawson (2012) in her study of youth in Zandspruit avers that black youth are continuously in a state of ‘waiting’, where the lived reality of being unable to attain markers of adulthood and respectability prolongs their ‘youthhood’ (Dawson, 2012: 868). This means that the individuals who depend on other people, particularly their families, for financial support, are often seen as those that are yet to acquire markers of adulthood. However, due to perpetual unemployment, personal and financial independence is desired but cannot be attained. From the perspectives of anthropologists, Naafs and White (2012) argue that when young people also become enrolled in higher education their average ages for marriage rise and their becoming part of the labour force is postponed. As a result, they remain longer in the state of complete or partial dependency on their parents thus postponing their adulthood (Naafs and White, 2012: 5).

In contrast, some people that may be considered as part of the youth are considered as adults because they leave their homes and become independent early in their lives. By considering that they are no longer under the care of their parents and guardians, they are thus considered to be adults because of the roles they play in their current settings (Naafs and White, 2012: 5). Chiyemura and Francis (2012) add that factors such as space, time, and society need to be factored into the conceptualisation of youth. In some African countries, argues Chiyemura and Francis (2012: 3), ‘there is no such thing as youth, it is merely a construct to meet social needs’. Thus, no matter how old one might be, if one cannot perform certain duties in the family or community, one can be regarded as youth (Chiyemura and Francis, 2012: 3).

Given all of these perspectives, this research adopts a sociological definition of youth that builds on cultural and relational factors. This is beneficial because it will give one an understanding of the conditions and factors that contribute to the creation of identity among youth in Zamdela. In this way, youth as a concept is defined as a historically and socially constructed identity, that is, a lived experience (Abbink et al, 2005; see also Dawson, 2012). Youth in Zamdela are thus understood as people that mobilise themselves by virtue of their common attributes, shared attitudes and experience or reality, or simply those ‘people who belong to a common period in history’ and whose lives are affected and conditioned by common life experiences (Wyn & Woodman, 2006:496; see also Dawson, 2012: 31).
None of the above authors (Abbink et al 2005; Dawson 2012 and Naafs and White 2012; Wyn and Woodman 2006) consider a cultural implication that is inherently problematic in the conducting of the research itself; the effect of the language used during qualitative interviewing and how respondents interpret and understand concepts that they are asked to define and the fact that, as I demonstrate in chapter 6, people may understand ‘youth’ in English differently from the direct translation offered in the vernacular. Introducing a multilingual understanding of youth in particular is important in a diverse linguistic community such as South Africa.

2.2.2 Youth in South Africa: ‘born-frees’ and generation

Understanding ‘youth’ in South Africa requires paying special attention to the ‘born-frees’. They are a developing and important part of the youth and their definition is one that needs to be problematised and deconstructed, particularly with regard to their involvement in politics. In its simplest form, the term ‘born-free’ defines those young people born immediately after the demise of the apartheid government in 1994. They are argued to be of a different tier in comparison to those that relatively lived during the apartheid era, that ‘the terrain on which these children grow, and continue to grow up, is substantially different from that of their parents or their older siblings. ‘They are a generation whose past, present and future, are neither completely defined by apartheid, nor completely free from it’ (Dolby, 2001: 7). In Dolby’s (2001) view, this generation ‘does not look solely to the past, to remnants of apartheid, to develop and define their identities’ but constructs their own identity with new experiences and cultures, but without looking wholly at the previous generation for clues about ways in which they can construct their identities since they differ significantly from their predecessors (Dolby, 2001: 8).

Mattes (2012) concurrens with Dolby’s (2001) interpretation of the new generation. He argues that the new generation is too young to have full knowledge about the conditions of the apartheid era. The post-apartheid generation does not have ‘any direct memory of race classification, passes, or official segregation of churches, schools, residence and inter-personal relationships, the drastic repression of dissidence and resistance, or the armed resistance and popular struggle against apartheid’ (Mattes, 2012: 4). Thus given the supposed gap in the new generation’s knowledge about matters such as the unbanning of liberation movements, the 1994 elections and the passage of the 1996 Constitution in South Africa, the country’s post-
apartheid generation is to a lesser degree affected by the apartheid regime and are unlikely to base their politics on post-apartheid circumstances (Mattes, 2012; see also Goodwin and O’Connor).

This literature suggests that young people born after 1994 are a completely different generation and their circumstances differ (Mattes, 2012: 4). Yes, I agree this is true to a certain extent however, there is uncertainty in the claims that apartheid circumstances do not influence the new generation. Though it might not be directly, the political and socioeconomic conditions within which the post-apartheid youth live affects them. Most of them live in the same areas and houses that their parents lived in, and they associate with their elders socially and politically, thus advancing cross-generational learning. A gap also exists in both Dolby (2001) and Mattes (2012) interpretation of the ‘born-frees’. Both studies are one dimensional, in that they are only descriptive of the youth and lack empirical contributions from the recently political ‘born-frees’ that are now eligible to vote. Having reviewed the sociological definition of youth I now mover to the concept of protest.

2.3 Protest

This section reviews existing literature with the aim of understanding protests in South Africa so as to comprehend how they are used as political action in the context of Zamdela. Protest is a large part of South African history; previously used as a tool to challenge the apartheid government and currently (inter alia) against issues of service delivery. This review examines the literature that illuminates the nature of protest as political action, the means which people use to protest as well as the motivations for the protests. In addition, this section provides a historical account of protest action in South Africa, highlighting their trajectory since the 1950s to post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, it reviews literature on social movements as a contributor to protest action in South Africa, their formation and influence on the past and the present.

2.3.1 Understanding protests

Prior to illustrating protest action in South Africa, it is important to define and understand the theory encompassing protests in existing literature. The study of protests is championed by Charles Tilly, in Contentious Politics and Social Change (1997) he argues that there is always contention between the state and the people, in
which the people collectively act as a vehicle for social transformation. He defines contentious politics as processes where almost exclusively, a) a ‘set of people make collective, public, visible claims on other people, claims which if realised would affect the objects’ interests, and b) in which at least one party to the claims, including third parties, is a government’ (Tilly, 1997: 56). Contention in this case includes revolutions, strikes, lockouts, protests and other forms of public discontent.

Opp (2009) add to the conceptualisation of protest by offering several characteristics. For Opp (2009: 38) protest is ‘a joint action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target’. Collective action is the key to the definition of protest. In addition, the actors have at least one goal in mind or a specific target, and the intended goals of the said action should be of a nature where they could not be achieved by the actors’ own initial actions alone.

According to Cook et al (1995), protest is the means of last resort when change cannot be obtained through consultation or any other formal means (see also Tilly, 1997; Della Porta & Fillieule, 2004; Dubrow, Slomczynski and Tomescu-Dubrow, 2008; Opp, 2009). According to Opp (2009: 35) protest action or behaviour may be ‘unconventional’ by definition because there are ‘no institutional rules prescribing that it is repeated over time’, thus often resulting in actions that are often beyond legal limits in their execution (Cook et al, 1995). Conventional acts such as voting are not sufficient in changing policy or forcing the target’s decisions, thus ultimately leading to uprisings both small and large (Opp, 2009).

Protestors often use methods of claim making, or as Tilly (1997) dubs them, repertoires of contention. These are the ‘ways that people act together in pursuit of shared interest’ (cited in Tarrow (2011:39). These methods are historical, and often symbolic, as they are used over time during protests. They include ‘not only what people do when they are engaged in conflict with others but what they know how to do and what others expect them to do’ (Tarrow, 2011: 39). This dissertation adopts Opp’s (2009) conception of protest as it provides a simplified definition of protest and one that also makes an account of the unconventional methods that people use in uprisings. The following section looks at the historical understanding of young people in protest in South Africa.
2.3.2 History of youth in protest in South Africa

The history of youth political action, more particular radicalism, can be traced back to the 1940s with the ‘young turks’ of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) who later became the key leaders of the ANC and PAC in the 1950s. These included the likes of Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Gatsha Buthelezi and Oliver Thambo and Walter Sisulu among others (Halisi, 1999: 60). Tension emanated between the then leaders of the ANC and the ANCYL as the young turks advocated nationalist populism and denunciation of ongoing liberalism by the older generation of leaders in the ANC, and thus pressuring the older leaders to adopt a more militaristic approach in their politics (Halisi, 1999: 62). This was key to their success in grappling control of the ANC by the late 1940s, essentially shaping the liberation struggle and giving the ANCYL the foundation of radical politics that we see presently in the youth league.

Protest action notably started from the 1950s as this was an important time for black South Africans. This period illustrates the heightened discontent of the black communities in relation to the apartheid government and its rulers. This is particularly with the imposition of the ‘Unlawful Organisations Bill’ (May 1950) subsequently known as the Suppression of Communism Act (Act No 44 of 1950) that was directed at persecuting anyone or any organisation or group that aimed at influencing political, social or industrial change (Lodge, 1983: 33).

As a form of protest the South African Communist Party (SACP) -formerly known as the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA)-, in consultation with the ANC initiated stay-away’s from 1950 to 1952. A general strike called for the 1st May 1950 in opposition to low wages and restrictions on black citizens was later dubbed the ‘May Day strike’, in commemoration of the 18 members killed by the police. People living in urban areas such as Port Elizabeth, Durban and in the Western Cape supported the stay-aways and the strikes widely. These stay-aways did not only succeed in challenging the state at that time, but also increased ‘the level of participation between the different urban centres. However, these mass political demonstrations were beginning to fall into a pattern which would characterise organised black opposition in urban centres for the rest of the decade’ (Lodge, 1983: 35). From this, actions of protest increased throughout the country. Activists such as Walter Sisulu and Dr James Moroka signed ultimatums against the imposition of ‘unjust laws’, and the ANC,
South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the Franchise Action Committee (FRAC) began the Defiance Campaign in protest against the Van Riebeeck tercentenary celebrations; groups of people of up to 50 walked in the ‘whites only’ areas in defiance of racial segregation as well as organising the boycotts in Evaton and Alexandra between 1955 and 1957 (Lodge, 1983).

Youth participation in protest was most rife in the 1970s, where ‘black consciousness’ was spread as a means of rejuvenating the political minds of black activists and to improve group cohesion between black people as this was believed necessary to ‘liberate blacks from their own attitude of inferiority and subservience before political rights could be achieved (Lodge et al, 1991). Led by Steve Biko, the South African Student Organisation (SASO) championed black consciousness and deemed it necessary for the empowerment of black people. Black consciousness is held to have been influential in the uprisings of 16 June 1976 where thousands of black students took to the streets in protest against the introduction of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in secondary schools (Karlis et al, 1997; Lodge et al, 1991). Lethal force was used by the police in suppressing the protest and by the end of 1977, the number of people that had died stood at 575 (Karlis et al, 1997:168). The Soweto uprising depicted the utter rejection of the apartheid system and the effects that it had on youth and South Africans in general. From this, there was a rapid spread of revolt around the country and more protests were organised. Inspired by the students of 1976, black communities formed local groups in the townships and increased defiance (Lodge et al, 1991: 8).

A string of protest marches across the country’s townships followed throughout the 1980s, some of which reached insurrectionary proportions. These protests were led by youth and different organisations that put pressure on the established government and undermined the law. According to Adler and Steinberg (2000), youth and local organisations became what are known today as ‘civics movements’, which played a very important role in the revolt of the communities. As South Africa moved towards democracy, the civic movements declined as political activists ventured into mainstream politics (Mayekiso, 1996). Thus, the likes of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) and The United Democratic Front (UDF) were arguably losing their place as political role players across the country’s townships (Mayekiso, 1996).
The role of youth and the civic movements in this era are well discussed by Adler and Steinberg (2000). Their study provides a clear timeline of events as well as important role players in the revolts of the 1980s. Their contribution will thus aid in drawing out a clear history of protest action in South Africa as well as making a distinction between the protests that occurred before and after the apartheid era.

2.3.3 New social movements and protest in post-apartheid South Africa

To understand protest in post-apartheid South Africa, it is important to begin with an account of the new social movements. From the early 2000s a range of so-called ‘new social movements’ emerged, challenging issues of privatisation and service delivery. Ballard et al (2006) illustrates that there were new social movements in South Africa. These social movements are new because they ‘are more collaborative and development-oriented’ instead of focusing on anti-apartheid initiatives (Ballard et al, 2006: 14-15; Dwyer and Zeilig, 2012). They are not meant to overthrow the government as those social movements in the 1980s were designed to but instead are aimed at influencing the state’s development policies and practices (Dwyer and Zeilig, 2012). In general terms, these movements are strengthened by urbanisation, industrialisation, literacy and the development of the state that allows people to exhibit their discontents efficiently (Dwyer and Zeilig, 2012).

Though these movements have been influential, they are argued to have been inefficient and are declining in leading social transformation, and have been gradually substituted by frequent protest action as a means of forcing social change. Marais (2011) particularly argues that the massive increase in protests in post-apartheid South Africa describes the failure of the new post-apartheid government to redress the wounds inherited from the apartheid regime. This is, as Marais (2011: 457) describes it, ‘the failure of the first round of post-apartheid [new social movements] to tap into the huge reservoirs of popular anger and discontent’. South African Citizens thus demand, through protest, public goods that are assumed to go hand-in-hand with democratisation that is, with the operation of community-based organisations, still not achieved (see also Dawson, 2012). These protests in broader terms have the capacity to push for reform on social change by ‘working the system from within’ while at the same time ‘building alternative hegemonic activities capable of challenging the post-apartheid development path’ (Marais, 2011: 460).
In another view, protest actions unlike new social movements, are argued by Hart (2008: 6) as a ‘movement beyond movements’; a phenomenon that describes widespread discontent of the people towards the government’s management of social development and a continuations of the struggles experienced during the apartheid era that are carried into post-apartheid South Africa. Potentially radical as they may be, they are a means with which new forms of activism and organisation are formed within the communities that employ them, and within the social movement’s agenda.

2.3.4 Escalation of protests in post-apartheid South Africa

Scholars disagree on the number of protests that have occurred in post-apartheid South Africa, however what they agree on is that there are a large number of protests that have occurred since the turn of the millennium (See Pithouse, 2007; Hough, 2009; Alexander 2010; and Dawson, 2012). By the mid-2000s, local protests against the government had significantly risen and become a prominent feature in impoverished townships as well as in shack settlements all over the country (Alexander et al, 2013).

Protests in South Africa increased rapidly after the 2004 national elections. The hotspots were in Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and the North West province where most issues of the protests revolved around service delivery and were directed at local government officials such as councillors (Marais, 2011: 457). The research done by the South African Research Chair in Social Change describes this escalation in good detail. In over a decade of researching and recording community protests in South Africa, they have created a large database that outlines the trajectory of protests as well as the frequency and grievances stated in these protests.

Figure 2.1 below describes the frequency of protests in the last decade. The year 2012 had the highest number of protests in the last 10 years indicates how service delivery protests have been increasing. Communities waged protests against the ANC government due to the lack of service delivery and economic disenfranchisement, particularly of youth. For Alexander (2010), this escalation of protests across South Africa has amounted to a ‘rebellion of the poor’ where a large number of protests against the government are occurring within a short period and continuously becoming violent. In Alexander’s (2010) argument, South Africa is observed to have the highest rate of public protests in comparison to any other country in the world, and is thus dubbed the protest capital of the world (Alexander, 2010).
Figure 2.1. Number of protests recorded on Rebellion of the Poor database p.a.

Source: Research Chair in Social Change (2014).

Drawing from the Incident Registration Information System (IRIS) and the ‘Hotspot Monitor’ by the Municipal IQ, Alexander (2010: 28) noted that there were more protests in the first seven months of the Zuma presidency than in the last three years of Thabo Mbeki’s, and that this rebellion ‘has been widespread and intense’ and in some cases, ‘this has reached insurrectionary proportions’ where youth are mostly the fuel with which these large protests ensue (Alexander, 2010: 37; see also Dawson, 2012: 26). Though Alexander has argued the youth to be a large element of the protests in the current ‘rebellion’, he has not put particular focus on their organisation, mobilisation and repertoires of collective action. Young people are portrayed as part of the community, however not the main focus in the current uprisings. This research fills the gap in that it not only, and similarly to Alexander (2010), expands the research on the current rise of protests around the country, but additionally illuminates youth as agents of protest action in greater detail.

2.3.5 Why people in South Africa protest

Service delivery amongst other issues is the main motivator for the communities in South Africa to engage in protest. Figure 2.2 depicts some of the grievances that communities protested about in the past decade.
Predominantly in urban townships, delivery is usually poor in terms of housing, water and sanitation, representation, employment and newer issues of demarcation in places such as Zamdela (Alexander *et al*, 2014; Langa and Von Holdt, 2012). Goebel (2011) emphasise that people become frustrated when service delivery is slow, particularly when poor people living in shack dwellings and informal townships are in desperate need of the basic services that should be provided by the state. Recent studies describe that citizens use protests as ‘attempts to shape or gain a voice in local development processes that lock out or ignore certain constituencies’ (Marais, 2011: 458). Those that cannot be heard take centre stage and make demands on public goods from the government through protest and local government officials, often councillors and mayors, are the targets instead of the greater ANC government (Della Porta & Fillieule, 2004). Particularly, people protest as a means of demonstrating their discontent and frustrations with the lack of accountability by local government officials (Hough 2009; Von Holdt *et al*, 2011). These protests usually include the organising of mass meetings, submissions of memoranda, barricading of roads, burning of tyres, election boycotts, destruction of buildings and confrontation with the police (Alexander, 2010: 26; Miraftab & Willis, 2005).

According to Pithouse (2007), protest action in South Africa is along the lines of citizenship and the constitutional right to full social inclusion; an element that was non-existent for black South Africans during the apartheid era. In his argument, he
gives Durban city as an example where black people were forbidden to settle in the towns and city centre. He points out that not only did democratisation mean that the people would have a right to settle anywhere, they would have the right to receive free housing from the newly elected ANC government and ‘to be taken seriously when thinking and speaking through community organizations’ (See Alexander 2010: 25). Though citizenship is similarly an issue to focus on, the advancement of democracy in South Africa has significantly resolved the problem of social inclusion. Rights-based discontents are frequently consolidated by the constitution, whereas social services and service delivery is still a major issue in South Africa.

In her study of the community of Zandspruit, Hannah Dawson (2012) argues that the increasing number of protests is both, in addition to social inclusion, a political manoeuvre, and an opportunistic feature for the people. She refers to protests as a means of ‘collective clientelism and a battle for patronage’ from below, where ‘violent confrontation with the state is understood as a form of claim making’ where protesters ‘demand recognition and claim to public goods’ (Dawson, 2012: 24). It is thus a means of acquiring access to the state where formal means are not efficient and where they have completely failed.

Beresford (2015) makes a wider analysis of gatekeeper politics in South Africa but concedes with Dawson (2012), demonstrating that the struggle for patronage is deeply rooted in mainstream politics where authorities in political parties, after gaining access to resources, ‘utilize positions of party authority to leverage themselves into positions of state authority (Beresford, 2015: 231). Such client-patron politics then extend to party factions at the local level, where power-seeking factions under the guise of community interests organise protests for the purpose of benefitting economically or undermining local government authorities. Patronage is thus an important part of community protests, while at the same time echoing the visible interest-based schema of South African mainstream party politics.

In his assessment of South African protests, Hough (2009) argues that the violent unrest at local government level is part of a wider problem with the potential for growing into a revolution. He reported that aside from the service delivery issues that South Africans are facing, there are bigger problems in terms of crime, the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the non-functioning of governmental departments as cause for protest (Hough, 2009: 6). Indeed several of the protests are
of this nature, and this research will expand on these underlying issues as grass root causes of protest.

2.3.6 Violence and xenophobia in South African protests

In some South African protests, argues Hough (2009: 3), there is often a ‘cultural cleavage’ as one of the underlying causes or preconditions for protest. He argues that this is facilitated by religious, economic, and linguistic differences that often threaten stability in most areas and xenophobia in protest thus becomes a consequence when communities are faced with these issues. For example, the protest marches that occurred in Alexandra, Diepsloot and other areas across the country were recorded to have been some of the biggest disgraces in post-apartheid South Africa as xenophobia was prominently exhibited. Over 70 people were killed and a third of the victims were South Africans (Alexander, 2010). This protest included the infamous ‘necklace’; a practice adopted from vigilante killings of political opponents and [black] police informants (impimpi’s) of the police in the apartheid era (Minnaar, 2001: 8).

Though much of the literature on protests highlight service delivery as a defining factor in protests, some scholars are not completely convinced that such protests are based only on service delivery; that the xenophobic attacks of 2008 in Diepsloot brought different dynamics (see Marais, 2011, Langa and Von Holdt, 2012; Alexander, 2012). For Mottiar and Bond (2012: 309), the xenophobic attacks suggest ‘a backward looking localisation rather than liberatory insurrection with the kinds of scale or geographical vision’ that have been witnessed and exhibited in previous protests. The Diepsloot protest highlights the extent to which resources are scarce, and furthermore exposed how this may lead to attacks on foreigners who commonly are sharing such limited resources.

Von Holdt et al (2011: 5) describe that community protests today are ‘marked by the destruction of public and private property, and confrontations between armed police and stone-throwing crowds’. Some protesters often become casualties of protest action where some are heavily injured and some are even killed during uprisings. Government properties and those that belong to local government authorities such as councillors often become the targets of the protesting communities. Some protesters even prepare for such violent confrontation with the police. In Piet Retief in April 2009, some of the protesters were observed to have been armed with
*pangas*¹, axes and knobkerries, and at least two people were killed when the police responded (Alexander, 2010: 31; Sinwell *et al.*, 2009: 3). Recently in Marikana, many of the protesters wielded traditional weapons in their confrontation with the police (Alexander *et al.*, 2014).

The escalation of violence in protest has not only been between the protesters and the police, but it has often been directed at foreign nationals who live within these protesting communities. The xenophobic attacks in the township of Alexandra in 2008 became a turning point in violent protesting and this trend spread quickly across the rest of South Africa. In a short period of time, at least 61 people were killed across 135 different townships in South Africa and over 100 000 people displaced (Von Holdt *et al.*, 2011: 5). Today, community protests often include some form of attack on foreign-owned businesses that are found in the townships which is often accompanied by an eruption and orgy of looting of the shops, ‘illustrating both xenophobia and class antagonism’ (Von Holdt *et al.*, 2011: 39).

### 2.4 Political participation

A large body of scholarly literature exists on political participation that suggests that popular participation of citizens enables people to ‘voice out’ their grievances through several channels so as to be heard by government authorities. This process of collective decision-making that is participatory democracy provides the citizens with the power to decide on policy proposals and for the politicians to assume the role of implementing such policies (Aragonez and Sanchez-Pages, 2008: 2). These officials, along with bureaucrats, are responsible for shaping and formulating public policies on behalf of the electorate (Gomulia, 2006: 29). Without the participation of citizens, democracy itself is argued to be meaningless (Dalton, 2008: 78).

In Brady’s (1999) ‘Political Participation’ in the chapter, *Measurement of Political Participation*, he describes political participation as those attempts by people at influencing others and their decisions that concern societal issues. These others, he argues, could be anyone from political elites, interest groups, as well as business enterprises. Likewise, Gomulia (2006: 26) argues that political participation is ‘a voluntary participation of citizens influencing political decisions directly or indirectly by individuals or groups in order to carry through certain interests’ (see also Sinwell, 2001).

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¹ South African slang name for a machete.
2010). It is an instrument that citizens use to access the government and more so to contribute to governance. Conducting a qualitative study in the Western Cape in South Africa, Gomulia (2006: 26) notes that participation is not solely an instrument to influence the government and governance; it is also ‘about self-realisation and being a stakeholder in various social and political spheres of society’. Such political participation is varied among citizens of different ages and social circumstances.

2.4.1 Youth political participation

There is a general impression that youth are apathetic towards politics and this has had a negative effect on their participation in political processes (Mattes, 2008). They have the lowest levels of engagement in political activities such as voting and they show very little inclination to initiate membership or show loyalty to political parties (Quintelier, 2007: 165). This is evident in the low rate of voter registrations; where only 23 percent of eligible 18-19 year olds in the 2009 national elections registered to vote and again with the 2014 elections where youth participation figure stood at 22 percent (IEC, 2014).

In her study of British youth, Quintelier (2007) provides several compelling reasons that influence the lack of participation by young people in political activities. Firstly, she argues that young people have fewer reasons to take part in the political processes; that the reasons that other people, particularly of the older generations, have to engage in politics do not yet affect youth to the extent that they take part in politics in order to ensure change. As the younger generation, young people’s lack of properties, own families and employment, for example, creates a higher chance that they will not participate in the politics that affect them in these areas. This can be understood in the form of the dichotomy between youth and adulthood that is suggested by Abbink et al (2005) in their conception of youth. Political engagement in this regard has thus come closer to roleplaying, where the adults with responsibilities reflect a higher incidence of participating in politics and youth are afforded the opportunity not to involve themselves.

The second issue that youth encounter in their political participation is that they often find themselves in an environment where political participation can take many forms; usually different from the conventional forms of participation that the previous generations are used to. Rather, argues Quintelier (2007: 165), ‘young people prefer local community actions, political consumerism, new social movements and activities,
single-issue politics, protest actions’ and other forms (See also, Cornwall, 2002; Sinwell et al, 2009). This is discussed in great detail below.

Finally, the lack of political participation exhibited by young people may be explained by their conception of politics and political leaders. According to Quintelier (2007: 169), young people are critical of their leaders and they often recognise when they are misrepresented by their elected leaders in comparison to their older counterparts. They often believe that political leaders are corrupt, disengaged, untrustworthy, selfish and power hungry and more so in comparison to the older generation, ‘we would expect that young people carry a more negative attitude towards politics, while exhibiting less interest and less trust in the political process (Quintelier, 2007: 169).

In the South African context, Dawson (2014) argues that youth participation in politics is motivated by issues of unemployment, politicised access to state resources, envy, ‘patronage from below’ and patron-client relations. She argues that youth are continuously in a state of ‘waiting’, that entails the personal experience of the widening gap between young people’s aspirations and the reality of those aspirations not being fulfilled, of which are impacted by the lack of employment and educational opportunities (Dawson, 2014: 876). Youth thus spend much of their times in the township on street corners and taverns in order to kill time by engaging in recreational activities (Dawson, 2014: 869). Waiting is then coupled with envy, which is grounded in the visible inequality between informal settlements and more prosperous neighbouring residential areas, and is generated through narratives and rumours that circulate in the townships (Dawson, 2014: 876). Coupled together, waiting and envy ‘create a powerful impetus for protest’, and youth are readily available to take such action to express their discontents with the government and to secure better service delivery (Dawson, 2014: 876).

The politics of patronage play a large role in contemporary youth politics in Dawson’s view. Dawson (2014b: 521) argues that ‘protests can be understood as a ‘battle for patronage from below’, providing the youth with brokerage opportunities’ that they can use to get better services and employment. She argues that youth often align themselves with state representatives and aspiring leaders in the township with the hope that they will attain favours of which was demonstrated in the three protests that occurred in the township (Dawson, 2014a: 879). Youth therefore enter into a relationship between the leaders that is based on dependence and reciprocity where
leaders could achieve their political aims only through protest, which required the youth for direct action’ and youth can get an opportunity to acquire state resources (Dawson, 2014b: 521; see also Dawson, 2014a).

2.4.2 Youth and elections in South Africa

There is a tendency within discussions of young people to view them as apathetic to politics (Mattes, 2012; Quintelier, 2007). In their opening statement about African youth and voting in elections, Resnick and Casale (2013: 1) argue that ‘younger people tend to be less engaged in formal modes of the democratic process, particularly voting’ (see also Alexander, 2012). Similarly, Mattes (2012) found in his study of youth in South Africa that political participation amongst young people is relatively low, with many young people abstaining from politics and elections at a growing rate. With reference to the ‘born-frees’ in particular, he argues that they are less likely to vote in elections and to take part in community protests.

On the study of elections in South Africa, several scholars have conducted studies on factors that shape voting behaviour. Mattes (1995), in the infancy of South Africa’s democracy, argued that a rational choice mode of explanation best explains voting behaviour. He thus argued that while race can be used to understand voting behaviour, individual evaluation of policy and class were better predictors of voting behaviour.

In contrast, Friedman (1999) notes that voting is not only ‘an instrumental cost-benefit analysis in which citizens weigh the certain benefits of casting the ballot against the sure cost of doing so’ (Friedman, 1999: 214). Instead, he highlights that given the history of the ANC and the black majority it represented, the party gained a lot of its support from how the electorate identifies itself with the party, and this, more often than not, is based on race, religion and language. Thus, ‘casting the ballot is primarily not an instrumental calculation, but an expression of who a citizen is’ (Friedman, 1999: 214). Therefore the ANC, argues Beresford (2012: 866) in his study of workers, acquires legitimacy among as it is perceived as the party that is associated with the majority of black South Africans whereas other parties such as the DA are perceived to be representing the interests of the minority, white minority in particular (Beresford, 2012: 868). The ANC essentially being the ‘black party’ and the DA, the ‘white party’ (Beresford, 2012: 866).
Even in the 2009 elections, ten years after his initial thesis, Friedman (2009: 114) argues that identities continued to shape the way in which people vote, even among those that had decided not to vote based on their critiques of the ANC. He highlighted that even those that decided to abstain from the elections months before the elections returned to the voting stations and voted for the ANC on the day of elections due to the strength of the identification which many black South Africans feel for the party (Friedman, 2009: 114). In the Western Cape, Friedman found that some ‘coloured’ voters who voted for the ANC in 2004 returned to supporting the DA in response to the ANC’s leadership in the Western Cape, ‘which they felt gave priority to the interests of black Africans and which they found culturally and politically foreign’ (Friedman, 2009: 115). This boosted improved the DA’s share of the votes in the 2009 elections.


…identify the ANC as the heroic party that fought for them against the apartheid government and helped them to recover their rights, freedoms and personal dignity. This is the symbolic/ideological dimension to their support for the party. It is reinforced by the Party’s own nationalist liberation discourses of the ANC-led alliance being the sole legitimate political champion of liberated South Africans.

He argues that even though ANC nationalism may have depreciated over time, it has not been exhausted. By virtue of it being the party that struggled for the freedoms of many black South Africans, voters, particularly workers, have become attached to the ANC on an emotive level. More recently, Paret (unpublished) concurs and emphasized that the ANC’s considerable support from the electorate originates predominantly for its status as the party that brought about liberation in the country. As a result, this feeds into the hegemony of the ANC in electoral politics. This hegemony, however, is continuously challenged by the growing discontents that people towards the ANC and the deepening of the competition between the ANC and other political parties such as the EFF and the DA.
While Friedman (2009) and Beresford (2012) primarily discuss party identification and voting in terms of race, other scholars highlight the relationship between class and the party voted for, particularly for those voting for the ANC. Garcia-Rivero (2006) and Habib and Naidu (2006), found that there has been a certain shift in ANC support that is based on class. Garcia-Rivero (2006: 66-67) emphasise that:

ANC ‘closeness’ is increasingly based on class rather than on racial lines. If affective support is implicitly meant to lead to voting, the governing ANC may find it increasingly difficult to mobilise its racial constituency; black people may be divided between who are already part of the middle to high social strata, and who will demand protection for the new economic status, and those who are unemployed, on low incomes and in the middle to low strata, who will demand services from the state.

This is based on the premise that the ANC can provide certain benefits for them not as a particular race, but as a certain segment of the population that is divided by class. Instrumentally instead of intrinsically, a large part of the black middle class is voting for the ANC whereas the poorer and working class are voting for leftist parties, such as the DA and New National Party (NNP) (Habib and Naidu, 2006: 89). Similarly, Kotze and Prevost (2014) in their analysis of middle class ‘born frees’ voters from different universities found that race did not play a significant role among this particular sample of students that are ‘born free’. Instead, these middle class students, including aspiring middle class students who most likely come from working class backgrounds, ‘demonstrate that they will not necessarily blindly follow a political party, but engage in rational decision-making when considering political alternatives’ (Kotze and Prevost, 2014: 26). The above arguments provide a number of perspectives on the factors that influence voting behaviour. It is likely that no one perspective outlined above can provide a comprehensive explanation and that by combining these perspectives a more comprehensive understanding of voting behaviour can be provided.

2.4.3 Methods of political participation: alternatives to voting in elections

Political participation is something that is varied in its nature and can be expressed in many forms. Cornwall (2002: 24) argues that ‘participation extends beyond making active use of invitations to participate, to autonomous forms of action through which citizens create their own opportunities and terms of engagement’. As such, other
means of participation, or ‘invented’ forms of political participation exist side by side with conventional methods as people develop creative activities for themselves in order to express their political opinions (see also Graham, 2013; Dawson, 2012; Miraftab and Willis 2005; Sinwell, 2010: 24).

Ekman and Amna (2009) likewise describe the multidimensional nature of political participation. They explain that aside from the formal means of participation ‘citizens involved in one mode or dimension of political behaviour tend to be involved in political activities in other dimensions’. As such, ‘people of all ages and from all walks of life engage socially in a number of ways, formally outside the political domain, but nevertheless in ways that may have political consequences’ (Ekman and Amna, 2009: 8).

Protest is generally viewed as an alternative form of political participation outside of voting, and often it is. However, scholars in South Africa have also been interested in the relationship between the two. In her research on the relation between protest and voting, Booysen (2007) found a strong relationship between protest and voting. She argues that instead of completely abstaining from voting in elections, most citizens use both elections and protest as a way of influencing power relations and achieving more effective delivery of basic services. The rationale is that a large number of South Africans use protest as a way in which to pressure the government into delivering services between elections but remain loyal to the ANC at election time. As such, communities employ a ‘dual-action repertoire’, of the ‘ballot and the brick’ Protest and voting are thus seen as complimentary political strategies used by poor communities, which do not undermine the dominance of the ANC. Alexander (2012) critiques Booysen’s thesis by highlighting that those who protest may not be the same people that vote. As Alexander highlights, Booysen presents no evidence that protesters and voters are the same people.

There are also a number of other spaces in which young people politically engage outside of protest and elections. Dawson (2014a) highlights the ‘culture of waiting’ that characterises the experiences of many unemployed youth in urban townships (Dawson, 2014a). Without employment, young women and men often hang around at street corners, shops and taverns so that they can spend the day and keep up with local issues and gossip. Dawson (2014a: 869) argues that although these informal gatherings may be viewed as ‘wasting time’ by the rest of the community, they provide ‘a space for young men and women to voice personal frustrations and dreams
but also their social critique, dominated often by lively debate on local politics and the failings of the state to fulfil its promises. Thus, the process of waiting does not necessarily reflect wasted time, but the redistribution of such time to other social contexts that include political dialogue.

Furthermore, amongst some of the youth today there is an emerging form of cyber-activism that is being used all over the world where technology-literate community members spread and publicise political action on social media. Thus, technology plus activist youths, potentially catalyse political participation and mobilisations against critical issues that face people in different parts of the world. Several examples can be made. Social networks, particularly Facebook and Twitter, were used to aid the revolution in Tunisia and mass protests in Egypt, well known as the Arab Spring (Eltantawy and Wiest, 2011). This marked the beginning of large scale usage of social networks in African countries. On March 5th 2012, a short film under the title Kony 2012 produced by the Invisible Children Inc. ‘went viral’ on YouTube in condemnation of the war crimes committed by international war criminal and military leader Joseph Kony (Kentucky Kernel, 2012). This online movement aimed at urging the International Criminal Court (ICC) to arrest, try, and sentence the military leader by the end of 2012. In early 2014, social media platforms were once again filled with activities and discussion as an outcry erupted concerning the kidnapping of over 200 girls in Nigeria by the rebel group Boko Haram in the Bring back our girls campaign (The Independent, 2014). Social media have become one of the largest platforms for political participation at both a local and global scale. This form of cyber activism allows for efficient political participation of people thus maximising activity and mobilisation (Beinart and Dawson, 2010).

2.5 Summary and gap in literature

The literature explored above gives a valuable theoretical grounding for this research; however, most of it was conducted in the American and European context thus operating outside the boundaries and context of South Africa, let alone in a township. Very few studies have been done in the South African context under a similar topic, thus describing the gap in the literature and providing reasons for undertaking this

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2 Invisible Children, Inc. is an organisation founded in 2004 to increased awareness of the activities of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Central Africa, and its leader, Joseph Kony.
research. Furthermore, several studies on youth and political participation were published in the early stages of South African democracy, thus discounting the socioeconomic and political changes that have occurred over time (See Adler and Steinberg 2000; and Seekings, 1993). The study on Zamdela, based on the above literature, will update the concepts and arguments in terms of contemporary township activities and their complexities. This warrants this research as it will bring up to date the concepts of youth and current modes of participation. It will describe how the concepts have changed over time and in the context of a contemporary South African township.

Academic literature tends to discuss community grievances under the umbrella of ‘service delivery’, which does not look at other underlying issues that influence people to protest; not all grievances are service delivery issues (See Alexander, 2010). Furthermore, this certainly does not adequately explain the reasons why young people become involved in the protests.

Dawson (2014a) makes a critical analysis of contemporary youth politics and how they continuously navigate their lives in the wake of consistent inequality, unemployment and the politicised access to state resources. However, her interpretation of youth in Zandspruit does not fully capture the wider extent of youth agency, interest, and engagement in local politics. One does not get a sense of their political participation, consciousness, and critique of politics in South Africa away from protests, more of which will be illuminated in this dissertation in detail.

The literature on voter behaviour is insightful; however, given the changing political landscape in South Africa, they do have their gaps. For one, Mattes’s (1995) argument and this dissertation are 20 twenty years apart, and with the changing political landscape they are written in different contexts and more so, based on the views of almost a different generation. There is also a gap in terms of the time that Friedman (2009) added to the discourse. The EFF had not been established by then and same as Booysen (2007), the analysis was made in a relatively different political setting. Lastly on voter behaviour, this dissertation sheds light on the voting and political behaviour of working class youth, which is contrary to Beresford (2012) and Kotze and Prevost (2014).

In summary, scholars in South Africa have researched youth, protest, and political participation as separate fields of study. Seldom have all three concepts been combined and a relationship between them established. This research aims to outline
the interconnections between the concepts and to understand how they influence each other, especially given that youth engage in protest and politics in a non-traditional way. It aims to understand not only how the protests are influenced by youth, but also how youth are influenced by protests in terms of their participation in politics, their politicisation, as well as voting in elections.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a discussion of the research methods that were used in answering the research question. I begin by motivating the reasons why case study research was appropriate for the study of youth in Zamdela, with a brief description of the merits and limits of using such case study research in the dissertation, particularly its nature as a lived experience by the researcher in the field. The chapter then gives an account of the ways in which the researcher accessed the township youth and the process of building rapport. It provides a detailed description of the research design, outlining the mixed methodology that became the architecture of the data collection process. This mixed method approach consists of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This chapter also provides details of the sampling methods that were used in both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies. One is thus able to understand how participants were chosen, why they were chosen and what areas were surveyed in the data collection processes. The chapter also discusses the salient ethical considerations pertinent to this research, and lastly, the limitations and biases that came about in the use of the selected methodology.

3.2 Case study research on Zamdela

Case study research was used in studying Zamdela’s youth. I chose to employ this method of research in Zamdela for the following reasons. Firstly, it would not have been possible within the confines of a masters dissertation to study all young people and their political participation. By limiting the scope of the research to a specific area of investigation, it was then possible to ensure ‘the construction of a detailed, in depth understanding of what is to be studied’ (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001: 3) in order ‘to understand how behaviour and/or processes are influenced by, and influence context’ (Hartley, 2004: 26). By focusing the research in one area, one is able to obtain data as efficiently as possible. Secondly, case study research is strongly grounded in that it factors in a ‘lived reality’, where the researcher can relate to the experiences of the participants (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001). Thus, many aspects of the area of study can be seen, documented and analysed without the inconvenience of looking at phenomena from afar. It is then possible to uncover unexpected phenomena that may
open the way for a more nuanced analysis. Lastly, this form of research has the potential to make possible rich theoretical developments. For Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001: 4), ‘existing theories can be contrasted against complex realities, and the very richness of the data can help generate new thinking and new ideas’ when case study research is employed. The uniqueness of different communities and the complexity of the data that can be obtained in case study research has the potential to challenge existing literature and fill in missing gaps.

Zamdela was selected as the site of my case study after working with Professor Peter Alexander and Dr Carin Runciman as a fieldworker on the Rebellion of the Poor research project soon after the protest on 22 January 2013. The interest arose after witnessing the number of young people that were involved in the protest, the way in which they organised and their agency in politics.

After conducting the research for over a week for this dissertation at the end of February 2013, good communication between the researcher and many of the young people in and around the township was established. Since then, regular contact with a number of community leaders in Zamdela had become frequent and fruitful. Some of the community leaders, who initially were members of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) and who later on became members of the Metsimaholo Concerned Residents (MCR), would initiate contact when they were planning to hold community meetings, gatherings or simply to update the researcher on events that were happening in and around Zamdela. The consistent communication with some of the party leaders in Zamdela led to the establishment of a good rapport, particularly with those young people that were relatively of the same age and who had similar interests in education and politics. Furthermore, my comprehensive knowledge of almost all of the languages and dialects used in the township made communication simple and effective.

Subsequently, I had two key informants that helped me get a better understanding of the township as well as making further connections. One key informant was the former secretary of the ANCYL, who introduced me to other members of the organisation and aided in getting me access to their meetings. The second was the leader of the Concerned Residents, who assisted in getting me access to community meetings and introducing me to some of the other influential leaders in the township. These two young leaders were gatekeepers to the people that I wanted to research for this dissertation and to the wider community. The residents then
became familiar with having a researcher in the township, with some actually asking me questions about the research and how it would benefit the community. By sitting down with them and explaining the purpose of the visits (See Appendix B), many started to refer me to more of the people that had participated in the protests and those that belonged to and led the community organisations. I was fortunate to be able to use these two informants who were in different places and different relations to people to develop a wide range of contacts. Although it was snowball sampling for the key informants, a variety of perspectives were gathered without having to depend on one key informant. Subsequently, I managed to develop a larger network of residents with key informants.

Limitations do present themselves in case study research and some have been realised in the course of the study. Case study research often results in the collection of very large amounts of data to be analysed, and consequently, even more data to be omitted from the presentation of the research (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001: 8). Since case studies on areas can span long periods of time, researchers often find themselves with a lot of data on their hands, such as notes, interviews, pictures and memories from conversations with people. By filtering the data that is to be used in the research away from the data that is not used, researchers discard some of the analysis that can add value to the research if it were to be considered. This was the case when looking at the data collected as a whole. However, being guided by the research question it was then simple to make a decision on the data to include in the research and that which needed to be discarded.

Another problem with case study research that needs to be considered is that case studies are ‘generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes’ (Yin, 2009: 15). As such, findings from this research may seem to be representative of the population of youth in Zamdela at large which may not necessarily be the case.

3.3 Research design

In order to study the youth of Zamdela and their politics the researcher used a mixed methods approach in gathering the data. This approach is one that merges qualitative and quantitative approaches into the methodology of a single research project (Clark and Creswell, 2012). This approach is beneficial in that it ‘provides a more complete
understanding of a research problem than either approach alone’ (Creswell, 2013: 4). This design allowed investigation and scrutiny of different sources of information in order to build an informed and persuasive argument.

I selected the mixed-methods approach for the purpose of triangulation. This refers to the ‘the traditional view that qualitative and quantitative research might be combined to triangulate findings in order that they may be mutually corroborated’ (Bryman, 2012: 633). As a result, the bias that might exist in one method can be corroborated with what is being found in the other, thus increasing the credibility of the arguments and findings that are made in this dissertation.

The researcher employed a predominantly qualitative research methodology in the initial stages of the research (between March 2013 and May 2014) and concluded the second phase quantitatively (post-elections). Henning (2004: 3) states that qualitative research will allow for the understanding and explanation, in argument, through the use of evidence from the data and the literature, about what phenomena one is studying. Complex as youth identities and politics are, this approach facilitated a deeper engagement with the data collected, thus creating room for deeper analysis and understanding of youth politics and political participation in Zamdela.

Quantitative methods were important in the second part of the research. As mentioned above, this method was important for triangulation with the qualitative methods. In addition, it was possible to examine the relationship between variables ‘that can be measured, typically with instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures’ (Creswell, 2013: 4). This form of data can be used comparatively against other researches of the same type (see in chapter 9), thus making a valuable contribution in closing the gaps present in other researches.

3.4 Qualitative data collection

For qualitative research, the researcher used three methods in the collection of data. Firstly, the research began by making use of documentary evidence found in both the Sasolburg town and Zamdela township libraries, then semi-structured interviews and finally, observations.

3.4.1 Documentary evidence

I was initially encouraged by Estelle Boers (personal communication, 02/04/2013), the Assistant Library Manager in Sasolburg Town, who informed me that the Zamdela and
Sasolburg libraries contain small archives of Zamdela’s history and its politics. Upon browsing in both the libraries, the researcher found that these archives not only contained a very important minor dissertation (See Mofokeng, 1997) on the history and development of Zamdela, they also contained a large file of newspaper articles from major newspapers in the province that documented service delivery protests that had been occurring in Zamdela and Sasolburg since 2009. These articles proved very helpful as a starting point and in dating back the service delivery issues and grievances that had faced Zamdela in the past as they provided background information on the protests that are being researched in this dissertation.

The limitation with newspaper articles is that they tend to be very short and describe only those things that are noteworthy to the time and context at the recorded moment. They focus mainly on highlights of the events without the analysis and understanding of events that is demanded in sociological studies.

Furthermore, I joined some of the Facebook groups that people use, in order to understand the issues that were being discussed as well as the types of people that administer these groups. I quickly made friends with a number of residents through Facebook and I was welcomed into some of the network groups that were created by different people around the township. In this way, I could find out what was happening around the township, how influential the groups were, who was in these groups, and how effective social networking was in the overall political participation of youth. With the above, I had all the contacts I needed to conduct the semi-structured interviews with more precise questions.

### 3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

In the next phase of the research, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews which are those interviews that have set questions on a fairly specific topic or theme, sometimes called an ‘interview schedule’, which researchers use to direct their interviews (Bryman, 2012: 47). These interviews were very flexible, in that they gave the respondents a lot of leeway in answering the questions and allowed me to ask other related questions that arose without deviating away from the topic at hand (Bryman, 2012, 47; see Appendix C).

These semi-structured interviews occurred in; March 2013, November and December 2013, and May 2014, the first taking place not long after the protest. The interviews contained open ended questions that allowed participants to explain events
and thoughts as extensively as possible without having to resort to 'yes' or 'no' responses. The next phase of collecting data through the interviews was in November and December 2013. By this time, the protest had occurred almost ten months previously, the EFF had been formed, and the registrations for the national elections were just over a week away. It was then simpler to interview people because of the political vibrancy that was present.

The final period in which I conducted semi-structured interviews was in the hiatus just before the national elections, in May 2014. This was at the height of the campaigning and people were willing to talk about the elections and the politics of Zamdela. I encountered very little difficulty due to the rapport that I had built with the residents and their willingness to answer my questions on the elections was a benefit.

The interviews were conducted in the three dominant languages that are spoken in Zamdela; English, Sesotho and Zulu. Interestingly, these languages have been found to play a role in the understanding and definition of some of the concepts in this research and this will be discussed in Chapter 6. However, at the same time they created a limitation in the collection of the interviews, particularly in the understanding of questions by respondents, and subsequently the answering of said questions. What became apparent was that some of the respondents could not understand some of the concepts that I wanted to explain in English. Words such as 'youth' were very difficult to understand in either Sesotho, IsiZulu or sometimes in English. ‘Youth’ particularly had a different meaning when spoken in different languages compared to when it is explained in English. Though this complexity brought about a certain discovery in the meaning of youth as a concept (discussed in chapter 6), it did pose challenges in explanation and understanding with some of the respondents that were interviewed in the vernacular languages.

The semi-structured interviews included 21 men and 11 women. Through preliminary interviews and observations, it became apparent that there were more men participating in politics in comparison to women. Despite this, much of the research strived to achieve a gender balance as extensively as possible.

Concerning both the qualitative interviews, I employed purposive sampling in the findings of the respondents. This method entails the selection of the sample based on ‘the knowledge of the population, its elements and the purpose of the study’ (Babbie, 2010: 207). I interview young people between the ages of 18 and 39, a segment that is institutionally and popularly known as ‘youth’. These young people
were required to have been residents of Zamdela at least since 2012. I did deviate away from this sample on occasion when I interviewed two older men, Lucky Malebo and Sam Mthembu, who are community leaders and became key informants who helped me navigate the township. I also interviewed an 81 year old pensioner who wanted to comment on the politics of the youth and how they engage with politics. I did so because I wanted to counter-argue some of the perspectives of young people with oral evidence from the older generation.

Within the selected youth sample I purposively ‘snowballed’ to gain access to other participants within the age group. Snowballing entails ‘the process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects’ (Babbie, 2010: 208). This process was ideal in doing research for this particular sample because it allowed me to connect with youth with minimal effort. A lot of young people in Zamdela called their friends on my behalf and explained the purpose of my being there. Eventually this led the researcher to youth in the ANCYL, the EFF and to other spaces such as the Thembalethu flats and the unemployment forums. Other respondents became interested in the study and wanted to be interviewed as well. Some, seeing the University of Johannesburg’s logo on the vehicle in which I arrived, thought that we might be from the government and perhaps offering employment to the youth. This drew attention, however after explaining the nature of the research to the residents they still wanted to be interviewed. To supplement this, the visible talks I had with some of the most influential people in Zamdela provided legitimacy to the research done for this dissertation, thus allowing more access to people in community organisations and the ANCYL.

With snowballing, there was still that inherent limitation of having one informant referring the researcher to acquaintances that share the same political views and spaces in their political participation. Some were from the ANCYL, some were from the EFF, and others were from the same streets and households. This subjected the research to informants with biased stories, opinions, and political affiliation. I overcame this challenge by interviewing people in different areas of the township and talking to residents that were not related in any way. This sent the researcher in different directions for the snowballing process, thus giving me a wider sample with which to work.
3.4.3 Observations

I used non-participant observations in the research on youth in Zamdela. This approach is ‘when a researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at a research site’ (Creswell, 2012: 190). Observations require a person to ‘be there: to observe, to ask seemingly naïve but insightful questions, and to write down what is seen and heard’ (Fetterman, 2009: 9). This was important because it gave me insight into how young people in Zamdela were spending their time. Subsequently, the observation work led to the articulation of new questions that were put into the semi-structured interview schedule for me to later probe the understanding of particular things more. In addition, observations helped in triangulation, in that I was able to compare what people actually do with what they say they do.

I began the observations with the assistance of a friend of an informant, Mr Mthembu, who drove me around while explaining the characteristics of the township. From this, I could then observe how the population is distributed, where the protests were, the size of the township and its proximity to the Sasol firm, the new housing projects and the routes and distances that people use to move around the township.

Following the small tours, I employed the ethnographic technique of ‘hanging out’, by joining people at their places of leisure (Bryman 2012). This was beneficial because it allowed me to gain better access to the respondents. There were some with whom I ‘hung out’ in bars, libraries and at some points spent time with those that spent much of their time in the local shopping complex that hosts a car wash, a braai\(^3\)-and-eat place, and several large shops owned by both South Africans and foreign nationals. To gain a wider perspective in my observations, I extended the observations to community meetings, ANCYL gatherings and the locally well-known Thembalethu flats where most people often ‘hang out’ in the afternoons.

The limitation that presented itself from the observations is the difficulty in acquiring access in some of the social settings that were relevant to the research. Bryman (2012: 433) warns that researchers often encounter this limitation. Though public areas were easily observable, I found it very difficult to gain access to political party meetings. Since this research was conducted at a time when party politics were volatile, particularly considering the formation of the EFF and the elections, it was difficult for me to attain the trust of the respondents due to having to ask some

\(^3\) A South African word for barbecue.
questions that are seemingly personal. At one of the initial EFF meetings that I attended, though having asked permission to attend, I was actually asked to leave because the people did not feel comfortable speaking in the presence of a researcher.

3.5 Quantitative methods

The qualitative part of the data collection was conducted by means of two surveys after the elections. These were the exit poll data interviews conducted on the day of the elections and my own survey that was conducted six weeks after the elections.

3.5.1 Research Chair in Social Change Exit poll survey

This survey was on voters that had voted in the 2014 national elections. It was conducted by researchers at the University of Johannesburg’s Research Change in Social Change unit. In its full version, the exit poll survey was conducted in over sixteen different communities in Gauteng, Free State, and North West provinces. All communities are within a distance of two hours from the city of Johannesburg and are known to have recently had significant political activity, including service delivery protests and labour-related strikes (Paret, unpublished). A total of 3 782 respondents were surveyed.

I led the research team in Zamdela, selecting which stations to visit, and how long one should stay at the voting stations. In Zamdela, my team and I surveyed 158 respondents out of the total, with 93 males and 65 females. Convenience sampling was used to survey people as they exited the polling station. The findings that were particular to Zamdela were included in this dissertation.

3.5.2 Post-elections survey

This survey was conducted six weeks after the 2014 national elections. Its purpose was triangulation, where the survey would capture in numbers and figures the way in which the youth vote in light of the perspectives expressed in the qualitative interviews and the exit poll survey. As such, it would provide a certain level of verisimilitude to the findings in other sources of data.

The areas that were surveyed include four areas in the township of Zamdela, namely: Protem; Tailor Park; Thembalethu and Angola. The area in which the survey was carefully chosen to present to characteristics that would lead to the acquisition of
the best data possible. Firstly, it was conducted in the area where the protest was mainly concentrated in order to have access to the people that participated in the protest. Secondly, the area chosen encompassed five of the many voting stations that were erected during both registration and elections.

All four areas are approximately two square kilometres in size. With such a large territory to cover, I organised a team of three helpers that would aid in the administration of the interview. Each person, with at least seventy questionnaires, would cover one area at a time. In administering the survey, the team surveyed people on the streets and in their homes. On the street, the researchers would pick respondents and ask them for their time to complete the survey. This was fairly quick as it took less than five minutes per session to complete the survey. When surveying people in their homes the researchers would survey every fifth household. This allowed for a larger geographical spread of the respondents to achieve a wider sample in the results.

The questionnaire was brief in both questions and administration. It consisted of eleven quantitative questions that would cover the respondent’s age, gender, employment status, political affiliation, their participation in protest and elections and whether they voted or abstained in the 2014 national elections. The twelfth question was solely qualitative, requiring a one-sentence explanation on the reasons for abstaining or voting for a certain party in the elections.

The sampling procedure employed was purposive sampling in order to target respondents between 18 and 39. The sample population resided largely in the sections where the protest was mostly concentrated because many people in this area were likely to have participated in the protest as well as being witnesses to the protest activities. After such considerations, 258 surveys were conducted, with 146 men and 112 women, voters and non-voters and with protest participants and those who abstained.

In terms of purposive sampling in the quantitative research, there was a bias in the selection of the respondents. The surveys were focused on a small geographical area in Zamdela therefore the results are not representative of the entire township as a whole. The results are on a micro scale and may differ if the surveys were conducted in another part of the township. As a masters student with limited resources, the surveys were done over two days and covering only a small section of the township.
3.7 Data analysis

According to Albright et al (2010: 4) data analysis ‘includes data description, data inference, and the search for relationships in data.’ It is a process of understanding what the data tells the researcher in order to make arguments in relation to such data. The process of analysing both the qualitative and quantitative data is discussed below.

3.7.1 Qualitative data analysis

I analysed the qualitative data thematically, a qualitative data analysis method that entails ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some themes developed in the study include perceptions on the nature of the youth and youth identity, experiences and opinions on protest, perceptions on political participation, feelings towards political parties, and interest in voting in elections. Other themes include making a connection between protest and elections in order to analyse the relationship between the two, and analysing the elections in terms of those that participated in the protests and those that abstained.

After the data was collected, it was then coded. Coding is described by Jonker and Pannink (2010: 139) as the ‘labelling of the phenomena which the knowledge engineer perceives in a specific piece of text and which he or she considers to be of potential relevance to the knowledge domain.’ This is achieved through the simultaneous use of interviews, field notes, and media articles to link the research findings within a theoretical grounding from scholarly publications (Cassell and Symon, 2004). The coding in this research began with the transcribing of the semi-structured interviews into texts and was then selectively coded based on the relevance of the data and ethical considerations. The process was archaic in execution, requiring literal cutting and pasting of quotations in order to develop the themes and subsequently to code the texts. At the end however, it was then simple to analyse the relationships between factors and subsequently to draw conclusions from the data.

3.7.2 Quantitative data analysis

To get the utmost accuracy in the analysis of the quantitative data, the researcher sought the help of the Statistical Consultation Services (STATKON), a professional service provider at the University of Johannesburg. STATKON helped in the data entry
and the processing of the data under the guidance of the researcher. The researcher provided a detailed guideline on the way the data had to be presented and the way in which the tables had to appear. In this way, the results of the dissertation would be in line with the purpose of the study.

I also used SPSS to make my own analysis, a software that is provided freely by the University of Johannesburg. With this software, I was able to get the utmost accuracy in the analysis of the quantitative data. With a proper guideline for the software, I could produce the desired graphs and tables that are presented in the latter chapters of the dissertation.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The research was conducted only with those aged 18 and above as per the requirements of the University of Johannesburg. Consent in this regard was sought by way of written consent forms that were provided for the participants that agreed to be interviewed (Neuman, 2011). These forms contained a detailed explanation of the nature of the research, its purpose, and the desired outcome so that the participants and the parents can make informed decisions in contributing to the research.

Though it would have been ideal to interview youths under the age of 18, this was not possible. Interviewing them meant that the researcher had to seek parental consent and actual parental presence in the interviews. Due to the sensitivity of the conversation and the possibility of interviewees confessing to criminal activities, only those youths that were over 18 were interviewed so as to preserve the relationships between the under 18s and their parents.

Participation in the research was also voluntary and full confidentiality was guaranteed for all of the participants. This is so that the research could be conducted in a way that does not cause harm, alienation or arrests by the police, or in any way that humiliates, degrades or releases information that is harmful to the participants (Neuman, 2011; Oliver, 2010). The original names of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms so that their identities could be concealed as far as possible.

Though I used Facebook and YouTube for online research, precautions were taken where necessary. I followed normal ethical conventions and did not take or publish any content that was private and instead used only that data which was publicly visible. This model has issues of privacy, consent, confidentiality in its usage given the
fact that online interfaces are in the public domain, some participants may be unreachable in person, and some users may be underage in terms of granting informed consent. To overcome this challenge, those participants whose views are included in the research were communicated with in order to obtain written consent, and their views were expressed under pseudonyms (Frankel and Siang, 1999: 1).

### 3.10 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was to identify and explain the methods that were used in the collection and analysis of the data. This chapter has fulfilled this aim as it gives a detailed account of the mixed-method nature of the methodology. It began with the discussion on the case study research, something that became a large part of this chapter. It outlines the reasons why Zamdela was chosen as a case study and how the township was accessed in the initial stages of the research. Continuing on, the chapter has given a detailed explanation of the design of the research, and even further detail on the different segments of the mixed methodology; both qualitative and quantitative. In addition, the chapter has provided an outline of the sizes of the sample populations, their characteristics, and the areas in which they live in the township. This method is well known as purposive sampling, as it discriminates against certain segments of the population under investigation in order to solicit data from a certain part of the population. What followed these discussions are sections on how the data were analysed, highlighting the different methods that were used in analysing the qualitative and quantitative data. This is then concluded by a section on the ethics that were considered in the collection of data, as well as the limitations and biases that were observed in the process. The following chapter provides a historical background of Zamdela and its trajectory of protests since its establishment in the 1950s.
Chapter 4: A Historical perspective on Zamdela

4.1 Introduction

Zamdela has a long history of protest action and has played a role in the struggle for liberation. From its residents being part of the black consciousness movement to the orchestration of attacks on the apartheid state in the 1970s, Zamdela has influenced the course of history in the country. This chapter outlines the history of Zamdela and how the township came to be what it is today. It gives details of the township from its formation and development from the 1950s as a temporary settlement for the African labour force that ended up settling and creating a fully-fledged township. This historical perspective illustrates the events that occurred in Zamdela in relation to protest activity over the past six decades. This will aid in understanding the reasons that people protest and the way in which they do, thus creating a foundation for the analysis of the 22 January and 18 April protests.

4.2 Formation and development of Zamdela

Zamdela is a township that sits adjacent to the town of Sasolburg in the Northern Free State. South African Synthetic Oil Limited (SASOL), a major petroleum and synthetic fuels firm, initially established Zamdela to accommodate the employees of the nearby SASOL petroleum plant (Vaal Triangle Info, 2013). SASOL offered all kinds of jobs to both African and white people, so many labourers from most parts of the Free State went to Zamdela in search of jobs. This quickly increased the overall population of the township as well as increasing the available workforce for the oil refinery. All the people that lived in Zamdela in the early 1950s were exclusively SASOL employees, thus making Zamdela a company township.

Development of the township escalated when the firm became fully functional in the mid-1950s. From 1954 to 1955 particularly, Sasol built houses for the white employees in Zamdela and named the extension Protem (Mofokeng, 1997: 9). The extension was separated from the compound that was provided for the African employees in the nearby Belina settlement. In the late 1950s, the separation of the races was made government policy just as SASOL established Sasolburg. The white residents were relocated from Protem to the newly established Sasolburg and Zamdela was left to the black labourers (Samson, 2009: 6). Named after the Sasol
firm, the company town Sasolburg became a central place for industry and commerce as well as a central point of entry into the SASOL firm.

Sasolburg and Zamdela did not grow substantially in the 1950s. Unlike other towns in the Free State, the area that included both Sasolburg and Zamdela was not under the management of a municipality (Samson, 2009: 7). SASOL merely managed the town using policies that were in line with those of the apartheid state. When Sasolburg was granted municipal status in May 1967, it was then that the town started to grow and a larger increase in population began. Today Sasolburg alone houses approximately 34,000 residents of which the majority of people that own property in the town are white (Vaal Triangle Info, 2013). Most black people make use of the town’s resources such as the taxi ranks and the shops however they are not residents of the town itself. They mostly come from the townships on the periphery of the town; from areas such as Deneysville and Zamdela itself.

After the white residents were relocated from Protem to Sasolburg, many of the houses were left vacant. Due to the need for accommodation and the increasing population attracted by the employment opportunities in the SASOL oil plants, many of the people lobbied the company to allow them to inhabit the houses. In addition, there was a small and growing number of black middle-class black people that could afford to buy the properties left behind by the white SASOL employees so it was also economically ideal (Samson, 2009). Therefore, the occupation of the Protem residents was necessary. Black workers finally occupied Protem from 1956, which partially alleviated the challenge of accommodation for the black workers (Mofokeng, 1997: 9).

Law from purchasing land in an urban area prohibited Africans, therefore the people that worked in these urban areas travelled to work on a daily basis or rented premises near the towns (Kok et al, 2006: 8). In addition, the government did not promote the development of townships that were provided for African people in Zamdela at that time, thus leading to further problems of overcrowding and a lack of housing (Kok et al, 2006: 87). The township became too small to accommodate all of the people coming from the nearby areas such as Sebokeng, Deneysville, Heilbron, Parys and Sharpeville (Mofokeng, 1997: 10). As a result, Zamdela’s informal settlements came into existence in the late 1970s as people ran out of accommodation yet again due to the influx of labourers and the effects of the Group Areas Act, (Act no 41 of 1950, as amended) (Templehof, Munnik & Viljoen. 2007: 113).
This status remained until the 1990s when the apartheid state collapsed and black people could move freely into Sasolburg. The abolishment of the apartheid state also allowed an exponential influx of people into Zamdela, thus from the 1990s the township of Zamdela allowed free entry of migrant workers from all over the Free State, South Africa and neighbouring countries. The resulting large influx of people transformed Zamdela into becoming fully populated in a short period. However, when it had reached its full capacity, the municipality was faced with problems of overcrowding and a lack of habitable accommodation that have led it to the current protests against service delivery and negligence by the government (Vaal Triangle Info, 2013).

Many of the African workers in the 1950s and ‘60s resorted to squatting in informal settlements and renting backrooms from those that had larger and better places to stay, and developments by the municipality were slow to non-existent until the mid-1990s when apartheid was abolished. This resulted in the development of shack dwellings and people living in non-demarcated areas on the outskirts of Zamdela. The Harry Gwala informal settlement in Zamdela developed in this manner when those who could not move into the hostels had to find accommodation within the small spaces that Zamdela offered, thus resulting in the overcrowding of the township as well as the local hostels (Mofokeng, 1997: 10). The situation worsened in the 1990s after the abolition of apartheid, and a change of political policies that disqualified the provisions of the Group Areas Act and that allowed the free migration of people into both Sasolburg and Zamdela. Another large inflow of people from neighbouring areas occurred as well as the migration of families into the once male-only hostel type residences in the township, creating serious overcrowding. In this situation, poverty and crime became rife as the township expanded (Kolanchu, 2011: 5).

In its current state, the Metsimaholo municipality that houses Zamdela has a population of 90 000, with 30 000 people employed. Figures provided by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) show that in Zamdela the poverty rate today is at an unnerving 42%, of which 18% live in informal settlements (SAIRR, 2013). Like many South African townships, Zamdela today has become a place where issues of service delivery permanently confront the community, and growing discontentment with local government inaction leads to very large and violent protests.
4.3 Protest action in and around Zamdela: pre- and post-apartheid

Zamdela played a role in the advancement of the struggle for liberation. In 1984, youth in Zamdela were a party in the Vaal Triangle uprising. The uprising that included the towns of Vereeniging, Sasolburg and Vanderbijlpark and townships such as Zamdela, Sebokeng, Bophelong, Sharpeville and Boipatong began an uprising against the Lokoа Town Council (Gerhart & Glaser, 2010: 71). On November 1983, the council was elected to become the first black town council in the whole of South Africa (SAHA, 2014). In their enthusiasm to raise money for the administration, the Lekoa Town council decided to raise the rents of all the black people renting houses in the Vaal Triangle. This resulted in protests. The communities protested against the increase in rents in all these areas and as well as against the exclusion of the black communities in the soon to be created tri-cameral parliament (Vaal Triangle Info, 2013).

Those that worked in the Lekoa Town Council administration were seen as supporters of apartheid and its racially separatist policies and the local councillors particularly ‘were labelled as agents of the government and were seen as corrupt self-enrichers at the expense of the poverty stricken residents’ (Vaal Triangle Info, 2013). Championed by youth, the communities protested and in the event of the protests, there was significant damage done to the Town Council buildings, the police stations and the homes of those that worked for the council. In retaliation, the police shot at the protesters with rubber bullets, teargas, and live ammunition. In the aftermath of the protests the mayor was killed along with two councillors, one Evaton councillor and two young protesters (SAHA, 2014).

Protest action in Zamdela has continued into post-apartheid South Africa with regular protests against the lack of service delivery and the ruling government. Recently, Young people took to the streets in protest against the proposed merger of the Metsimaholo and Ngwathe municipalities (Sowetan, 2013a). The merger was highly contested by the Zamdela community and there were threats of protest action if ever the merger was approved by the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB). The community demanded that the Premier of the Free State, Ace Magashule, come and address them at the Zamdela stadium, after the premier failed to appear, a protest erupted and over 5000 people took to the streets of Zamdela (Marinovich and Lekgowa, 2013).
Similarly to many protests in South Africa, the youth burnt tyres in the streets and blockaded the main road leading into the township. The residents also carried out an attack on municipal buildings, municipal cars, and the local police station. However, the most notable occurrence in the protests was the attack and looting of the local shops and a few in Sasolburg. Many of the shops in the townships were looted and burnt down and the residents contributed some grotesque graffiti that lashed out at the premier and the merger of the municipalities. The large ‘Zio Supermarket’ suffered the most as people looted it and carried trolley-sized loads of merchandise to their homes. Some of the looters made more than two trips amid the chaos (Sowetan, 2013a).

The protesters were later dispersed by the police after they fired rubber bullets at the protesters and smoke grenades into the middle of the crowd. In addition, the Public Order Policing Unit sprayed the crowds with water cannons with the intention of dispersing the crowds and quelling the protest. In retaliation, the residents struck back with stones and attacked some of the police officers that were at the forefront of dispersing the protesters. In the aftermath of the protests, at least 200 protesters were arrested and 4 protesters and two police officers were killed.

4.4 Conclusion

The township of Zamdela played a significant role in the creation of the character of urban townships in South Africa, and its community has played a role in the escalation of protest action. This chapter has discussed the formation and development of the township of Zamdela from the 1950s to the present. It has provided a detailed illustration of the township’s history of protests and the socio-economic and socio-political issues that have faced Zamdela in the apartheid era as well as the social issues that the community currently is facing in a democratic country. This history of protests is important in understanding why people use protest as a means of communication with the government and why such protests become so large and violent. The next chapter discusses the timeline of the protest.
Chapter 5: A timeline of Zamdela’s protest

5.1 Introduction

The three days of protest in Zamdela created a landmark in Zamdela’s recent history. The residents of Zamdela embarked on one of the most violent protests in the history of Zamdela as they rejected the merger of the Metsimaholo and Ngwathe Municipalities. Their protest was based mainly on two arguments; that there was very little consultation with the community from the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB), and that there is no economic feasibility in the merger of the municipalities (Sunday Times, 2013). Moreover, the merger would hinder development and create tension between the communities housed separately under the two municipalities. This chapter provides a timeline of events that occurred before and after the protests against both the merger and the executives of the Free State government. It creates a timeline of three specific periods in the protests of Zamdela. Firstly, it brings to light the issues between with the MDB and the community of Zamdela during the proposal stages of the merger up until their notification of the process to the media. Secondly, it puts focus on the subsequent protest against the merger by Zamdela’s residents by means of a day-by-day account of the revolt itself; its protesters, its violence, the role of the police, the looting, as well as the aftermath. Lastly, it gives an account of the April protest as partly a continuation of the rejection of public officials, however with its own characteristics, organisation, and execution.

5.2 An overview of the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB)

The MDB is the institution that is entrusted with the task of determining municipal boundaries in South Africa. Created by the Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act No. 27 of 1998, the MDB was appointed to oversee the process of restructuring municipal boundaries. Its primary function under section 4 of the Act is ‘to determine municipal boundaries in accordance with this Act and other appropriate legislation enacted in terms of Chapter 7 of the Constitution’ (MDB media Statement, 2013). With this board established, the government aims to reduce the number of municipalities that are in existence today in the country. Most of them were created to govern specific regions that housed people of a certain race or ethnic group to create a manageable segregationist state.
Originally, there were over 800 municipalities around the country and the MDB is entrusted with the task of reducing them to 300 (Mathoho, 2013). This includes the merging of some municipalities that are in close proximity to each other and whose resources can be shared and redistributed, as well as the creation of new municipalities in areas where there is a lack of local government involvement.

5.2.1 The MDB and its proposal

In June 2011, the board under the leadership of Lindiwe Mahlangu proposed the merger of the Metsimaholo and the Ngwathe municipalities. The idea behind the amalgamation of the municipalities was to create one functional municipality that would house a selected number of towns and townships, including Zamdela, in the Northern Free State, so as to improve the performance of local government through the restructuring of the municipalities (Mathoho, 2013).

The new municipality, a product of the merger, would provide services for all the towns and townships with the exclusion Edenville; a farm area to the south of the Ngwathe municipality boundary that would later be incorporated into the nearby Moqhaka Local Municipality if the merger becomes successful (MDB Media Statement, 23 January 2013). Specifically, the MDB had three intentions in mind: to facilitate and promote economic growth in order to enhance the region’s economic advantage near the Vaal River through a single municipality; to increase the Metsimaholo and Ngwathe municipalities’ competitiveness with other municipalities along the Vaal; and to resolve the stalemate with the Heilbron community that have, for a significant time, requested their withdrawal from the Ngwathe municipality and incorporation into Metsimaholo (MDB Media Statement, 2013).

This new metropolitan municipality, according to the MEC of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) Olly Mlamleli, would in turn invite significant investment into the area and improve the development of the towns and townships that would be housed by what would be the second metropolitan municipality in the Free State after the Mangaung Local Municipality (Free State Weekly, 2012).

5.2.2 The internal consultation process: December 2012 to January 2013

The next step in the process was to invite public participation in cementing the merger as it required the communities affected by the merger to be consulted and to fully
agree on the matter. The circulars would include the nature of the merger, its intentions and the requirements for submissions as well as the relevant dates on which those submissions should be submitted (MDB Media Statement, 2013).

The only evident circular that was published was an internal one within the MDB, and between the MDB and the Fezile Dabi District municipality, the provincial executive committees responsible for local government, such as Mayor Brutus Mahlaku. The MDB argues in its press statement published just after the protest that public participation in the merger was encouraged and that the news of the merger was widely distributed (MDB Media Statement, 2013).

According to the MDB as a response to the January 22 protest, the notices to the public were formally published in October and November 2012. The MDB avers that they encouraged the public’s views and participation on the matter from the date of the release of the notice until the 10th of December as the set date for the closure of any submissions regarding the delimitation. (Sunday Times, 2013; see also MDB Media Statement, 2013). According to the statement, the MDB publicised the proposition of the merger in both the Daily Sun and the Sowetan newspapers on 9 November and subsequently in the Beeld and Volksblad on 16 November (MDB Media Statement, 2013). Within this time, states the MDB, at least 28 submissions from residents in the Metsimaholo local municipality were received before the deadline in early December. After the receipt of the submissions, the board went ahead with the examination of those submissions and opened the way for further legal processes that would cement the merger. This process, according to the MDB, would continue up until 2015, where a decision would ultimately be made before the end the national and provincial elections in 2016 (MDB Media Statement, 2013).

Official public participation with the residents became problematic, mainly because of the internalisation of the merger by the MDB, the councils and the office of the mayor as well as the means of publicising the merger through the aforementioned newspapers. Only those four abovementioned newspapers contained details of the merger without the inclusion of prior widespread personal meetings with the affected residents before the deadline of submissions to the merger. According to the Daily Maverick (2013), there were very few invitations of some of the councillors from Zamdela in the discussions of the merger with the board; the councillors who did not fully explain what was planned to the community in public meetings in the township. This resulted in inadequate delivery of the news about the merger, whose discovery
at a much later stage when the discussions were finalised, provoked the violent protest in early 2013; of which it is argued could have been avoided had the MDB and councillors conveyed the news to the residents in full and in due time (*Daily Maverick*, 2013)

5.3 The rejection of the merger

Some of the residents that worked in the municipality and local government leaked the news of the merger to the community. Bandile (32, male, unemployed) alludes to the matter that ‘it’ [the merger] is from people from the municipality. Those that are close to Magashule⁴ knew about these things and they were concerned about the township and they told everyone.’ Talks of the merger became very popular within the township until members of the MCR mentioned the matter on the local radio station in early January 2013 (Dika, age unknown, male, radio station manager).

The proposal to merge the municipalities was subsequently roundly rejected by many of the people in Zamdela. Two main reasons were expressed in repudiation of the merger. Firstly, the MCR argued that there was very little to no consultation about the merger with the communities in the Metsimaholo local municipality, thus not being given a fair chance to object to it (*Sunday Times*, 2013). The MCR accused the premier and the mayor of concealing vital information and undermining the community at large in terms of the merger, thus violating the community’s rights to inclusive participatory procedures. According to *Sowetan* (2013c), the chairperson of the MCR in Zamdela describes the merger as illegal as it did not make provisions for public participation and opinion on the matter, thus causing the entire process to fall apart.

Fingers were pointed firstly at the executive mayor, Brutus Mahlaku, and the Free State premier, Ace Magashule, and the community insisted on the dismissal of these officials from the positions they occupied. According to Jabu (23, male, unemployed):

‘That guy [Magashule] wanted to put Sasol under Parys which everything in Sasol will also belong to Parys. But he found that Sasolburg is full of rebellious people and everything failed because they protested. They do not let anyone walk all over them.

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⁴ Premier of the Free State Province.
With this in mind, the residents strongly insisted that the two officials step down because they feel that they are being misled and that these people are thieves. Magashule particularly is accused of ‘imposing anarchy by employing people from Parys to administer the Metsimaholo municipality’ (Sowetan, 2013c).

Secondly, they argued that the merger would not yield good socioeconomic results for the abovementioned communities so the residents were concerned about the idea of the redistribution and sharing of resources with the communities in the Ngwathe municipality- particularly when it came to basic services. Sylvester (28, male, unemployed) articulates this situation and states that:

So people ended up protesting because the people that come from Zamdela have few opportunities anywhere in Sasol and that is affecting people. There is always a place without electricity, air pollution is too much and then in January this year we were affected by a tornado. It blew away the houses and the people that suffered were not really helped; they were left like that. So Zamdela protests too much because the people want to be well off but they cannot because of things like these and because of these political parties.

They saw the budget issues of both the municipalities as problematic to the wellbeing of the residents, particularly in Metsimaholo. According to Mongezi (22 male, university student), ‘they wanted Sasolburg to fall under Parys. I hear the Ngwathe municipality owes lots of money and if they merged, the debts will automatically fall on us. Even the people that wanted this didn’t explain it thoroughly to the people.’ At the time of the rejection of the merger in early 2013, the Metsimaholo local municipality had an annual budget of R803 million in comparison with that of Ngwathe with roughly R476 million (Sunday Times, 2013).

The budgets as they were could not account for the acceptable provision of basic services to Zamdela such as water, subsidised electricity, and housing and some residents saw the merger as something that would add to the already established lack of delivery in services. According to Sehlogo (29, male, unemployed):

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5 A tornado hit Zamdela on the 1 January 2013. This was not long before the protest on the 22 of the same month where the large service delivery protest occurred.
It was not only demarcation. Hence I have said you should go inside this township until the end of it and you will see that this place is not good. It doesn’t show to be under a big company such as Sasol. It is worse than most small places in the Free State. That’s why people protested. There were so many things that people protested for.

Even in terms of employment opportunities, the Metsimaholo municipality is perceived to have more employment opportunities than Parys. For Setsumi (19, male, student) the MDB and other stakeholders ‘can’t merge the municipalities because they are not the same. Sasol has many opportunities and there are more people working here than in Parys.’ Many young people in Zamdela are facing unemployment and this is one of the reasons that induced protest. In addition, the Ngwathe municipality is highly indebted in its budget, with an estimated R9.2 million owed to its debtors as well as a large amount that is due to be paid to Eskom for electricity allegedly amounting to an estimated R115 million, and that all this debt would fall onto the Metsimaholo finances once the municipalities are merged (Sunday Times, 2013).

5.4 The January 2013 protest

In light of the merger, the residents of Zamdela under the leadership of the concerned residence group organised a meeting with the minister of CoGTA, Richard Baloyi, and the mayor, Brutus Mahlaku. They expected these officials would have a much better explanation of what the situation is with the demarcation board, as well as to allow some sort of public participation on the matter (Sunday Times, 2013).

5.4.1 Sunday meeting: the first day of protest

The meeting was held at the Zamdela stadium on 22 January 2013 and it numbered over 1000 residents from Zamdela and neighbouring townships (Sowetan, 2013b). Before it was burnt down for unknown reasons later in September 2013 (to be discussed in Chapter 7) Karabo FM, the local radio station in Zamdela, was instrumental in publicising the community meeting. With its wide listenership in the township, it reached a large number of people and this helped to influence large numbers of residents to attend the meeting.

Residents gathered in the stadium and waited for the officials to arrive whilst singing songs as a means of passing the time and perhaps motivating the residents to remain in the meeting. The meeting comprised of residents from all walks of life in
Zamdela; from children to youth and older residents. At about noon, there was no sign of the representatives of the Mayor, the Council or Premier's offices, which resulted in the attendees of the meeting exiting the stadium and flooding the streets of Zamdela. The trigger for the protest was the realisation that the Minister, Premier and the Mayor would not be attending the meeting; that there would not be any feedback on their grievances, and subsequently public participation in relation to the merger. ‘We never had any commotion at the stadium because we had been waiting. We were waiting to be addressed but no one came. I’m sure we waited till noon before people left. ‘People were not fighting at all at that time. You know what big liars politicians are. We sang all the time while waiting’, reported Katleho (29, female, unemployed).

News coverage records that the protest was large, where at least 5000 community members took part in the protest (Marinovich and Lekgowa, 2013). This large number of people came about when residents attending the meeting combined with the rest of the community.

5.4.2 Creating a fortress: barricading Zamdela

Map 5.1 below reveals the paths and points of interest in Zamdela and Sasolburg during the violent protest in January of 2013, a week that shook the township and challenged the state and its representatives. It shows the scale and of the protest and the distance that the protestors marched to get to the town centre of Sasolburg. From Map 5.1 it can be seen that the protestors marched for approximately 4.7 kilometres to get to Sasolburg. The blue line on the map describes tentatively the road on which the protestors walked, excluding other roads that people might have taken to Sasolburg. Marching along Eric Louw Road from Zamdela to Sasolburg is the Sasol petroleum firm on the right. The firm is heavily fortified and guarded so it did not suffer any damages as many other shops in Zamdela and the town centre were. Upon entry into Sasolburg is the Zio supermarket on the right, see Map 5.1, which like other shops in the town centre suffered damages and looting (see section 5.4.3).

The boxed map at the bottom left of Map 5.1 is a downscaled version of Map 5.2. This area was chosen specifically because it depicts the area where the protest began and was concentrated. It shows important landmarks such as the radio station, police station, taxi rank and schools. In addition, it depicts the paths taken by the protesters and the locations where the blockades were set up.
The immediate thing that is done often during protests is barricading of the main roads. The first barricade was on the street that enters into the older section of Zamdela (at B1); the street where almost all of the public transportation travels through and the shortest way to the only large taxi rank in the township.
With map 5.2 I illustrate some of the important events that occurred during those three days of protest. By creating barriers at the intersection that allows traffic to flow into the taxi rank, the protesting community became very successful in
preventing people from going to work on the morning of 23 January 2013. They then continued along Eric Louw main road where they stopped the traffic passing through at B6 and B2. ‘We barricaded the R57 highway to Vereeniging and the one from Vanderbijlpark to Sasolburg. Within a few minutes the police were in conflict with the people and the shops were broken into and looted’, stated Sehlogo (29, male, unemployed). With the blockades, youth took advantage of all the choke points\(^6\) within the township, thus allowing them complete control of the entrances in and out of Zamdela.

The protesters barricaded the main roads (see B3, B4 and B5) with tyres, broken furniture and with remains of many of the public properties that were vandalised immediately after the meeting. These included broken public telephone booths, cement rubbish bins that are usually placed at street corners and burnt electricity and road signs that were uprooted and stolen. When walking through Zamdela after those several days of protest, there were shells of municipal cars that were burnt-out and abandoned (field notes, 27 January 2013). These cars were trapped in Zamdela when the protest began, and thus became targets of the enraged protesters.

Several liquor stores in the heart of Zamdela were broken into and liquor and money stolen. In another part of the township, one of the trucks from the local supplier of building material, Cashbuild, was either hi-jacked or stolen during the violent march. The truck was then used to ram a Standard Bank ATM machine at the local small shopping area further into B5. It is unclear whether money was stolen from the ATM however, the damage that was inflicted on the ATM was significant. Thereafter the Cashbuild truck was driven out of the shopping area and was, after being parked adjacent to the Cashbuild warehouse, set alight (Beeld, 2013). The shops on the main road that go through Zamdela to other sections and ending up in Sasolburg town were looted and destroyed. Protesters first targeted shops and stores that had goods that could be immediately consumed. These shops included tuck shops that are owned by foreign nationals, mainly from Pakistan and Somalia. ‘People robbed and damaged cars. We protested and vandalised property seeking that attention; something to stop the merger of the municipalities. So people vandalised the police station and the ‘Zio supermarket’, said Setsumi (19, male, student). The main road that runs through

\(^6\) A point of congestion or blockage.
Zamdela quickly became filled with broken refrigerators, boxes, and empty food containers that were looted from the nearby shops. Perhaps some would suggest xenophobia as an element in the protest, however that view is speculative due to the fact that all of the shops were vandalised, causing losses for most of the small business entrepreneurs living in Zamdela.

Person to person violence began when the protesters faced the police after vandalising and destroying public properties such as the police station. They assaulted the police with objects ranging from stones picked up from the roads to rolling burning tyres towards the police (Mail and Guardian, 2013). In an attempt to disarm the protesters and subsequently quell the riots, the police force deployed public order policing units into the protest. Throughout, *nyalas*\(^7\) roamed the streets as police officers attempted to halt the riots. The police then fired rubber bullets, teargas and smoke grenades into the heart of the mob. Many people sustained injuries from rubber bullets and from inhaling the significantly painful fumes’ from the teargas and smoke grenades.

During the shooting of the protesters, argues Sehlogo (29, male, unemployed) ‘the police organised reinforcements from their colleagues to come and help them and the scale of conflict was reduced. Some people were shot and killed. That was very painful for the community because people we knew died that day’. The police allegedly fired live ammunition that resulted in four people being shot, and whose deaths were reported the next day; an incident that is still under police investigation, and whose results are still unknown. Within hours of the protest, Zamdela was filled with police officers chasing, shooting, and arresting the protesters (*Sowetan*, 2013b).

### 5.4.3 Monday: the peak of the protest

The effect of the protest on public transport and workers was significant. On the previous Sunday a stay away was informally proposed as a means of adding more people into the protest and indirectly warning those that planned on going to work not to do so (*Sowetan*, 2013b). On the following Monday, as per the early warning, there were large numbers of people walking the streets of Zamdela. The roads had been blockaded with a large number of burning tyres as people occupied the roads and dumped garbage from the looting (field notes, 27 January 2013). This halted all public

\(^7\) Large armoured vehicles used by public order police and designed to withstand heavy damage

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transport, and subsequently prevented people from going to work. ‘People didn’t go to work. If you went to work they [protestors] would send you back home’, said Mable (35, female, unemployed). Going to work not only became impossible when people started their second day of protest, but also dangerous for both the workers and the taxi industry employees.

Some other community dynamics of the protest were the predicament of the workers and the effects on the schools. High schools in South Africa in particular have a long history of protest involvement and being affected by protests. And more recently, Khutsong’s students missed over 6 months of school attendance due to a protest against the redefinition of municipal boundaries that would result in Khutsong being incorporated into the North West Province (Mail & Guardian, 2006). Zamdela’s Nkopoleng Secondary school whose setting is on the main road was the first to be interrupted as the protest commenced. Protesters passed through the main street and immediately afterwards lessons were halted and many of the pupils vacated their classes. They had gone to join the protest and added to the unrest that had consumed Zamdela. Nomasonto (22, female, student), a student of the high school exclaims that:

I was there going to school. When I got to the main road I found my friends who said they are on their way to witness the protest. When we got there we saw people attacking a Pakistani and his shop. Then I saw a large crowd of people running to Zio supermarket and we followed them. The police followed us too. The police here are criminals as well. They practically escorted us to go and loot Zio. They just sat there whilst Zio was being emptied. To illustrate that they are criminals, they just let looters who returned, come and load more stuff back and forth.

Zio is one of the largest service providers of groceries and other necessities, and is located next to shops in nearby Sasolburg. It is about 5 kilometres from Zamdela, along the route its customers and employees have to walk or travel using the local taxi system. During the protest, people marched all the way to the Zio supermarket and ‘it fell prey’ to the looters during the protest. The protesters took home lots of groceries and large amounts of alcoholic beverages worth hundreds of thousands of rands. The road to Zamdela, within a short space of time after the looting of Zio was filled with people carrying plastic bags full of groceries and some even pushing trolleys full of merchandise looted from the supermarket (Sowetan, 2013a).
The conclusion of the second day of the protest began with people spraying graffiti on the walls as a way of visibly insulting Ace Magashule and Brutus Mahlaku, and as a way of demonstrating their rejection not only of the merger between the municipalities, but also the rejection of Parys. The walls were spray-painted with insulting words such as ‘fuck Mahlaku’ and ‘to hell with Parys’ (*Sunday Times*, 2013).

Image 5.1: ‘Say no to Parys’

Source: Mahlatse Rampedi field pictures.

The most noticeable graffiti on the wall of the flats just South-East of the township read ‘fuck Ace Makgosha’\(^8\). Much of this graffiti was sprayed on the walls of the shops and stalls whose vendors had to abandon their premises immediately after the protest. This resulted in a large display of hateful phrases all over the township to further demonstrate the excommunication of the mayor and the premier. Some of these anti-Parys drawings are still visible and remain ‘unremoved’ or painted over to date, perhaps suggesting the extent to which the residents, or the owners of the properties, reject the proposed merger of the municipalities.

\(^8\) *Makgosha* refers to someone that is a prostitute.
5.4.4 Tuesday and Wednesday: the recession

Tuesday and Wednesday were the last days of the protest. The township was littered with the detritus and scars of the protests; dark marks on the roads from the burning tyres, roads without signs, shells of burnt-out government buildings and vehicles, and debris from the looted ATMs. People walked in the streets and there were very few vehicles on the roads because of the barricades and rubble. The shops and other businesses suspended their services; some indefinitely due to the high losses incurred during the protest, and some simply closed and waited for the riots to end. Within this period, Zamdela was a ghost town with no economic activity or transportation. People had to rely on whatever resources they had to sustain themselves until the township regained its economic functionality. Those that had to travel far to reach their place of employment faced a bigger predicament in comparison to those that had jobs close by. They either had to be absent from work or seek special transportation even after a few days of protest. ‘Things were difficult. We had to travel far to get food and electricity. Those without money had to walk that far’, said Ndumiso (35, male, in part-time employment). Simphiwe (20, male, unemployed) while reflecting on the protest, also explains the situation thus:

When I came back Zamdela was all burnt and there was no transport. I had to walk from town to Zamdela…there was starvation afterwards. All the shops were closed and there was no place to buy anything. People lived on the things they looted and there was so much crime. People broke into people’s houses because there was no order on that week. That moment was an opportunity for people to act wild and do whatever they want.

On that same Tuesday, it was broadcast over the local radio and published in the newspapers that the Minister of CoGTA, Richard Baloyi, had announced that the amalgamation of the two municipalities would be put on hold after it was violently demonstrated that the merger was something that is neither wanted nor needed by the residents of Zamdela in the Metsimaholo municipality (City Press, 2013a). Subsequently, he attempted to clarify the situation by saying that the residents of Zamdela were mistaken in their protest against the merger; that they had acted irrationally and without full knowledge of the process. He stated that ‘people were under the impression that this merger was going to happen, that it was already decided
when it wasn’t’ (City Press, 2013a). Gabisile Gumbi-Masilela provided and opposing view on the matter in a later interview with City Press that the people in Zamdela had jumped to conclusions about the merger; that ‘they still had an opportunity to oppose the board’s decision or to make their own proposal (City Press, 2013b). According to both the Minister and Gumbi-Masilela, the protest, particularly its violent nature, was unnecessary and it could have been dealt with in a better way, stating that ‘the board would in future try to improve public participation processes, to enable communities to better understand them’ (City Press, 2013b). The minister then decided to appoint a task team to monitor and review the demarcation process as well as investigating the criminal activities experienced during the protest.

Though the protest had ended and the merger was put on hold, this was a time of grieving for some of the residents. A protest such as this one was unique in Zamdela’s recent history. For some, it was a scar on the image of Zamdela, as well as a painful experience to undergo. Sylvester (28, male, unemployed) in this regard describes that:

I didn’t like most of it because so many things went bad. People died on that day and that was painful. Some were shot with rubber bullets and people have scars now. Some were left without food because all the shops were destroyed and the ATMs were closed and life was difficult. So the people were badly affected and this was not good. Some died on that day.

Wednesday was the day that the protest had completely died out. The township was very quiet and the smoke that rose continuously over the past three days had died out. According to news reports, over 200 protesters were arrested at the protests peak and four lives had been lost within the previous three days (SAPA, 2013).

Zamdela, however, regained its economic functions. Transportation went back to normal and the residents in collaboration with the municipality cleaned the streets. Thinking retrospectively, Xoli (27, male, unemployed) describes that Zamdela ‘was in a shambles. But when people heard that the protest was over they came out and cleaned the streets. Expectedly, ‘people still hate the government.’ Employees of the municipality came to the township with heavy machinery and quickly removed the shells of burnt-out vehicles from the roads to make way for public transportation and to return the township to its former state. Though this was a peaceful hiatus in
Zamdela, the area was still under heavy police presence, simply to maintain the peace after three days of revolt.

5.5 The 18 April 2013 protest

Despite the postponement of the merger, and the inclusivity in the discussions in terms of the way forward by the MDB and the municipalities, the residents still insisted on the dismissal of Mahlaku, the Mayor. After communicating this to the Municipality and the Mayor’s office to no avail, the residents threatened to revolt again if Mahlaku does not submit his resignation within seven days from the 3rd of April. They accused Mahlaku of misusing state funds close to R4 million for his personal gain since he was appointed as Mayor (eNCA, 2013). Bosele Security, which is used to guard Mahlaku’s house in Sasolburg allegedly receives up to R90 000 per month in payments for their provision of VIP protection. This is inclusive of armed bodyguards and security weaponry of four firearms, pepper sprays and frequent patrols of the house (City Press, 2013c).

The march was organised and led by the local branch of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). They mobilised hundreds of people with the aim of laying charges against Mahlaku, his Mayoral Committee and the Municipality on the 10 of April (City Press, 2013c). Unlike the one in January, the April protest was peaceful. The residents under the leadership of the ANCYL marched on the main road. Very little damage relatively, was inflicted on public or private properties on this occasion, as only one vehicle was damaged with fewer tyres burnt on the streets and limited physical contact with the police. On that Wednesday, only 12 residents were arrested and appeared in court later the next week (SAPA, 2013). Unlike the previous protest, no one was injured in the demonstrations and the stores on the main road and in nearby Sasolburg was unharmed.

5.6 Conclusion

The restructuring of municipal boundaries is a highly contested matter in the Metsimaholo municipality. Particularly, its internalisation by the MDB and other stakeholders in the proposal stages alienated the residents, thus causing the process to fall apart. Much of the blame was apportioned to the Mayor, the Premier, and the local Municipality, which resulted not only in one protest but also in two consecutive
protests. The results in this regard sparked a violent reaction through protest in Zamdela and three days of revolt which resulted in millions of Rands in losses, injury to many residents, 200 people arrested and four people deceased. This chapter has provided a timeline of these events from their inception in December 2013. It has provided a day-to-day account of the protest in January in terms of its organisation, events and aftermath. Lastly, it touches on the protest that followed in April as a reiteration of the grievances exhibited in the January protest.
Chapter 6: Youth of Zamdela

6.1 Introduction

The argument of this chapter is that youth as a concept can be defined using measures other than age. The one thing that both the participants in this research and sociologists concedes on in terms of defining youth is that there is no specific and standard definition of what youth are (Abbink et al, 2005; Schwartz, 2010; Naafs and White, 2012). The concept differs according to the person that defines it and the social conditions within which one finds oneself. The analysis of youth in Zamdela has thus far provided this research with three ways to describe youth. The three are social responsibility, language, and physical strengths. Social responsibility and physical strength in this regard add new detail to the definition of youth by forming a broader perspective on which to look at youth. In addition, the data collected from Zamdela show heterogeneity within youth when viewing them from an angle where age is not used as a factor. Their relationships with each other create a certain categorisations that describe their coherence, while at the same time showing their disparities. I make an account of language as a factor that is never looked referred to when conceptualising youth. I compare definitions of youth in English with those that are in vernacular, describing that the use of different languages in defining youth brings about different conceptualisation and understanding of the term. In closing, I discuss the born frees in relation to the older generation, highlighting the differences in identity and political understanding.

6.2 Understanding youth in Zamdela

Although I argue that age alone should not be used to define youth, age is still important based on the fact that it has been used for a significantly long time to define a certain brand for people in between specific ages. Bandile (32, male, unemployed) defines youth that ‘a youth is someone I can define by age. I could say from 18 to 35 or 36.’ Xoli (27, male, unemployed) describes his idea of youth in very much the same way; ‘in my opinion youth depends on age; maybe from 35 downwards.’ For Mable (35, female, unemployed) as well, ‘they are from 15 to 35. After that they are no longer

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9 Isizulu: Umuntu omusha ngim’bala nge age, from 18 to 35.
youth.’ Commonly the age 15-35 has been used by academics and government departments for statistical and political reasons (RSA, 2009; Naafs and White, 2012). Over time this has been what many of the people in the country and other places have used to identify themselves as part of the youth.

Over time the categorisation of youth as belonging between the ages of 15 and 35 in many departments and institutions has facilitated the internalisation of what youth is by many people around the country, and as such has become the simplest way that people can describe youth identity. Though these definitions are standard for most people, they are problematic when youth are placed in the social context (see Wyn and White, 1996; Androutsopolous and Georgakopolou, 2003). When socially contextualised, one finds that age is indeed a factor in understanding youth, but not the only and most important factor.

### 6.2.1 Social responsibility and the concept of youth

In understanding youth in a social context, Androutsopolous and Georgakopolou (2003) and Abbink et al (2011) argued that social responsibility plays a significant role in the determination of ‘youthhood.’ In addition, Dawson (2014a) argues that without independence, both financially and socially, one’s ‘youthhood’ can be prolonged.

In Zamdela social responsibility is a common theme that is used to distinguish between those that are youth and those that are not. Mongezi (22 male, university student) defines youth that ‘I guess that it is people that don’t have kids, don’t have responsibilities and they are still in school and are not yet independent’, argues Mongezi (22, male, university student). Ndumiso (male, part-time employed), a 35 year old male from the rural KZN adds that ‘a youth is someone that doesn’t have children, no responsibility and only takes care of himself’. Margaret (26, female, unemployed) shares the same perspective as the others. She argues that ‘when you have kids you are no longer a youth’. The social responsibility of having children draws the line between those that are youth and those that are not. It is a socially set benchmark on which adulthood is measured and without it, the individual in question does not fully assimilate into adulthood even at a relatively older age, of simply does not exit youth categories if the opposite happens.

The above show commonalities between the perspectives of both men and women in defining youth based on social responsibility, however there are differences between how both genders explain social responsibility. On a specific case among the
group of men that were interviewed, one openly stated while pointing at his comrade in the ANCYL in which they are both members that:

I would consider this man here as part of the youth. His unemployment makes him part of us. So when we are together like this, we can regard ourselves as the youth. It does not matter if he is 50 or older. He is part of the youth, part of us.

For some of the women however, being a youth is multi-layered in the context of social responsibility. They consider both having of children and the matriarchal roles that they play in the household and in the context of marriage. Mable is a married 35 year old with two children of 15 and 7. Mable describes the situation thus:

When I'm out the home married with a family then you are no longer youth. We do have children when we are young but that does not mean that we are adults. I would not call myself a youth because I am married with kids, and I can fend for myself and my kids.

With Mable, and some of the women, marriage does not only highlight the graduation from youth to adulthood, but it also factors in the role of the woman as the wife in the family. Like Mable, Katleho (29, female, unemployed) argues that:

There is a saying that says life begins at 40 which I think is wrong because when you are that age you would be married and you should do things that married people do. When your husband is going to the tavern you shouldn’t go to another party. That is where these kids are and they will hit on us and we might agree and say 'come here boy I will be your sugar momma'.

Unlike the men, these married women conceptualise their state of being part of the youth in relation to their husbands. Patriarchal organisation of the household then becomes a factor in the conception of the women as part of the collective youth because of the roles they play as wives shape and subsequently limits their behaviours in the community. Their social situation thus hinders socialisation with the rest of the youth and thus creating a different identity away from the general understanding.
6.2.2 Batjha and ‘youth’: the effect of translation on the understanding of ‘youth’

This argument is based mostly on the observation of the perception of the participants when being interviewed in different languages. The methodology required that different languages be used in order to get the most out of the interviews and for the participants to understand exactly what it is that is being asked of them. As such, it was found that the meaning of youth often changes when people are being interviewed in English as opposed to the conversation in vernacular languages, Sesotho in particular.

The linguistic differences can perhaps be attributed to the historical role that youth have played in South African politics; the fact that youth are at the forefront of protests and that they fuel mass movements (see Von Holdt et al, 2011; Alexander, 2012). Due to the impact that youth had in the Soweto uprisings in the 1970s, 16 June has now become a national holiday commemorating young people that stood against the apartheid government as well as those that were killed during the riots. As such, youth as a group of people, and more so as an English-based concept, have been politicised and this is realised today when the concept is interpreted in another language.

Speaking in English, when asked to explain what the concept of youth means, Eric (24, male, unemployed), describes that ‘our ruling party says from as early as young until the age of 35. From 36 you can join the major ANC’. So among black working class youth, the concept of youth in English tends to be context oriented and politicised whereas its Sesotho translation is not. Jabu (23, male, unemployed) in Sesotho defines youth that:

A youth is a person that has no vision because most of the people nowadays you find that the taverns are full. You cannot go anywhere and find people filing up a library and studying and having visions of their futures. But then I would say that youth are…I don’t know which direction to take this.10

10 Original Sesotho quotation: Motjha ke motho o eleng haana vision ka hore most ea bone nowadays otlha hore ditavern diatlala. Never o thole library e tetsi, okile oa bona. You don't find batjha ba balang hore ba bone mo babatlang hoea teng in life. Motjha ke, hai aketsebe hore kereng hore motjha ke eng.
In Sesotho, unlike in English, respondents included aspects of adolescence, rebellion to authority and disruptiveness when referring to *batjha*. Sylvester (28, male, unemployed) defines youth in the similar manner and does not politicise *botjha* in his perception of what a youth are. He defines in Sesotho that:

The youth are people that want to succeed, so a youth is someone that wants to see everything around him to be okay so that he can enjoy his youth and live a good life while he is still young. So a youth at the same time is someone that likes entertainment, someone that is active in so many things.  

Youth and *batjha*, though technically meaning the same thing, appear to be different in translation and context. Youth in English almost has an inherently political understanding to it, which is not present in the vernacular. When people are talking about young people in politics they use the word ‘youth’ to describe and define that group of people, and they often include its English origin even when addressed in Sesotho. They seldom use the word *batjha* because that is not what the word mean, or how they understand it in the context of the political youth. Saying ‘youth’ is almost saying that one belongs in a particular group. It ascribes a collective identity, referring to a group of people that belong to organisations such as the ANCYL, youth church groups and other organisations that have youth as a sub group of the members even if the organisation is loosely structured. This is not the same in the vernacular. In Sesotho, *Batjha* refers to any child and any juvenile young person. It can be derogatory in some contexts as Jabu explains what *batjha* are in Sesotho. Translation is therefore an important aspect of understanding youth given the politicised manner in which people understand the word in English as compared to other languages.

6.2.3 Strength and the concept of youth

The politicisation of youth does not only happen in translation. It occurs as well in the activities that youth undertake and how they relate to others in the same context, and this particular context is protest action. The participants of these research identified youth in terms what they were doing in the protest and what they are capable of in

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11 Motjha ke motho o eleng hore obatla ho tswela pepe, obatla ho bona nthshe engoe le engoe ele *sharp hore* a kgone go enjowa botjha ba hae a phile hantle asale monnyane. Motjha *at the same time* o rata *entertainment*, ke motho e eleng *active* ka dintho tsengata.
relation to other generations. Eric, a 24-year-old young man views a young person as ‘someone that is young, that can do things that older people cannot do’. He thus draws the line between youth and adulthood with a comparison of the activities and the abilities to execute those activities. Equally, Setsumi identifies youth that ‘young people are those that have a lot of strengths and when you are old you are not so strong’. Kenny (32, male, unemployed), a member of the ANCYL as well summed up this argument as he commented on youth during the protest that ‘the youth are the ones that make things happen; they fight and break things. So people mix themselves with youth because they have a much better chance of being successful in politics.’

In the context of protest, the ability to run was something that Eric (24, male, unemployed) and others stuck to during the conversation. He compared what youth were doing during the protest in comparison to what the older people did. ‘You can’t tell an older person to run but then a youth can do that’, said Eric. He pointed out that the youth were running around breaking and looting shops and that they were ‘everywhere’, as if they were the only ones there during the protest. He compared the January protests to that of 1976; one of the most violent and youth-packed protest in the history of South African protests. In his analogy of the ’76 protests, he expresses that in his view, youth are the ones that have the physical ability to fuel the protests.

The argument of physical strength in building youth identity is a new theme and it enhances the understanding of youth. Particularly, it aids in the conceptualisation of youth in the context of protest in constructing their identity, specifically one that is of a black working class in service delivery protests. One should note however that this theme is predominantly a masculine conception and only appeared among the young men interviewed. Questions of physical strength as a definitive feature of youth were not asked and the argument here is based solely on analysis of patterns and observations. There is still a gap that needs further research in terms of the women and their perception on physical strength and youth.

6.3 ‘We are not the generation of the past’: understanding the new generation

Youth identity is argued to be highly affected by changing generations. Schwartz (2010). They argue that the new generation in South Africa is different from the old one based on the circumstances within which they find themselves, thus influencing the way they create their identity as well as their engagement with politics. The creation
of identity of Zamdela’s youth has relatively followed the same path. Kopano (26, male, unemployed), the secretary of the ANCYL in Zamdela expresses his, and perhaps his comrades’ detachment from the older generation that makes part of the political community of the township. He argues the case of youth of Zamdela that:

We [the youth] are not the generation of the past… history doesn’t concern us so much and it is the old people that get emotional about it whereas we don’t. They are the ones that reflect back when they see us protest but that doesn’t concern us because we are living in modern days. Every generation comes with its own culture.

Kopano’s argument is nuanced by an expression from an older woman, understandably of the ‘past generation’, as she reflects on her experiences of apartheid in contrast to the perceptions of the post-apartheid youth about the history of the country. At 81 years of age, Sylvia (81, female, pensioner) had this to say to the researcher when asked about youth in Zamdela in relation to the politics and the elections that were taking place on the 7th of May 2014:

Let me tell you something. I have grandchildren. A child goes where he wants and a parent has her path. You can never tell them to walk the path you did. When you tell them to walk the same path as yours they say ‘these are modern times; do not tell me about the old times’. I say this because I have a lot of grandchildren, and they have grown and are now men. They are the modern children; they are the youth. So these children take their own paths because even when they vote they do so in secret, and from their hearts. You can never say that a child has chosen this, or he likes this.

These arguments are complementary; placing the ‘modern youth’ in a plateau above the reflections of the struggle for apartheid while creating an identity relatively far from the history of oppression. Not only does contemporary youth identity differ from the old one, but the differences are noted by the older generation as well.

Youth of Zamdela do not only exhibit a difference between themselves and the older generation, however there is heterogeneity among themselves. There is an evident dichotomy of the ‘younger youth’ and the ‘older youth’. The dichotomised characteristics of the youngest and the oldest youth, as described in the table below, are based on age, political experience, employment, qualification and participation
(including those that abstained) in elections, party politics and the social conditions based on apartheid history.

Table 6.1: Heterogeneity between and within and between the youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older youth</th>
<th>Younger youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• above 24 in age</td>
<td>• Aged 24 and below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• often politically engaged (voting and community meetings)</td>
<td>• infrequently engaged in politics (abstention and often apathy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prolonged unemployment</td>
<td>• high school students, recently unemployed and recent graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Qualified for national elections in 2009 and 14</td>
<td>• recently qualified for 2014 elections (not all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More experience in local party politics</td>
<td>• Less experience in local party politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mostly critical of leadership</td>
<td>• Critical in selection of parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Argued to be more affected by history of apartheid</td>
<td>• Argued to be to a lesser degree affected by remnants of apartheid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The content Table 6.1 were adopted from the different sources from whose explanation of youth allowed me to make the distinction between younger and older youth (see Schwartz, 2010; Eric, 24, male unemployed; Kopano, 26, male, unemployed; and Sylvia, 81, female, pensioner). In analysing the heterogeneity amongst the youth two groups emerged which seem to have different characteristics. I explore these characteristics in Table 6.1. The table describes both the sections of youth in terms of their involvement and participation in the 2009 and 2014 elections.

In Table 6.1 the older as those above the age of 24 because that is the age that one would assume the person might have had some idea of the changing regime in the mid to late 1990s. The younger youth are those below the age of 24 including ‘born-frees’. They are the ones that relatively spent their entire lives in a democratic South Africa with minimal or no experience of an apartheid government (excluding social and socioeconomic consequences of the regime).

Based on their older age, the older youth were eligible to vote in both the 2009 and 2014 elections whereas the younger ones did not since many of them are ‘born-frees’ that recently qualified in the 2014 elections. In addition, the former are those young people that are often found in community meetings, influenced mostly by unemployment, and often have memberships in political parties such as the ANC and ANCYL in the township. This is quite different to many of the younger ones that are
preoccupied with high schools, active seeking of jobs and very little political experience. Included in the table are also those differences within youth about their critique of politics and leadership; that the older youth are more critical of the leadership whereas the younger are critical of politics on both the leaderships and selection of parties. This is argued below. Furthermore, the younger youth tend to be different from their older counterparts as some scholars argue; that they reflect less on remnants apartheid in their politics (Schwartz, 2010).

Quintelier (2007) argued earlier that youth often are in different stages in their lives and this can affect their political participation. In this case, the difference in life stages dichotomises youth on an identity level. From attending some of the informal meetings in Zamdela, these characteristics were observed. The oldest youth are those that are relatively matured in terms of community processes and political awareness. They often participate in community meetings and some are members of the Zamdela ANCYL. They consist of conveners of community meetings, establishers of forums for participation, and the organisers, planners and executioners of political actions such as protests (Field notes, 07 June 2013).

From within the ANCYL particularly, these differences are nuanced, and have implications for cross-generational learning. The older youth are arguably the glue that holds together the social cohesion between the youngest and the oldest within the youth generation, and facilitate cross-generational learning of politics and subsequently the creation of youth identity. They argue that the youngest youth adopt their politics from the older youth in their participation in community protests and meetings. ‘These kids learn from us. We teach them to protest, and occasionally to drink and enjoy a bottle of Chivas Regal on a random day’ comments Kenny (32, male, unemployed) shortly after the protest on January 22nd where the local Zio supermarket was looted by an angry mob of protesters and a significant amount of alcohol taken. Kopano (26, male, unemployed), the secretary, adds modestly with reference to his older comrades that:

They [referring collectively to the older youth] are the youth development officers and if they are not visible, the youth will be lost. These officers exist both inside and outside the youth. Outside are those people responsible for providing the youth with employment opportunities. But within the ANCYL, there are people who lead us and teach the youngsters about the ANC.
Likewise, and looking above from below, Linda (age unknown, male, ANC councillor of War 21) describes that:

People learn from the oldest in the youth leagues. If you look at people such as Fikile Mbalula, they go into the ANCYL as rough diamonds and they leave as polished ones.

Not only does it shape the way in which the youth create youth identity, but as well maintaining the allegiance and solidarity of those within the ANCYL and those recent in its membership.

6.4 Zamdela’s born-frees

Although the older youth argue that they are influential in the politicisation of the younger youth, the ‘born-frees’ are of a different tier that the older youth are able to explain, and this makes them very complex in placing them within the known identity of youth in Zamdela. What has become critical is that the concept of born-frees, to the born-frees, has come to how the born-frees understand democracy and their place in it when living particularly in the township. Donald talks of the lack of freedom in the country, and that this freedom is not what people thought it would be. Donald (19, male, student) provides a critique of what it means to be a born-free in Zamdela, and in the new South Africa as a whole that:

Being born in 1994 doesn’t necessarily mean that I’m free. It doesn’t mean I’m free because…many people explain freedom in the wrong way. Freedom means that you are free from something and you are going to something. In other words you are not free. The thing is that freedom is not for free… [It] is not as such a thing that we can say we are free when we think about it. Freedom is not an obligation or abdication. Freedom in not our free will; it in not a breakthrough as you said. Freedom is not something that will help us, you know. Freedom is the journey of life. We do pursue freedom everyday understand. Freedom is only a title of how to be free.

The critique of the identity of born-frees was recently highlighted by the current President of the Republic of South Africa Jacob Zuma, arguing that the term is not appropriate for these youths, likening it to propaganda. In a speech he made in the 2014 voter registration drive in Atteridgeville in Pretoria, President Zuma stated that
‘Young people are called born frees, that is plain propaganda. They are making you [the born-frees] out to be idiots. Young people know the struggle, they were born in the struggle hence they live in informal settlements’ (News 24, 2013). Perhaps some will argue that his statement was made to win he born-frees over to the ANC, but what is most significant is that it describes further the displacement of the born-frees in post-apartheid South Africa. Knowing the struggle for the ‘born frees’ implies inheriting the struggles of their parents, of which shows a certain continuum that in reality is interpreted by class. The inheritance of the apartheid legacy, or lack thereof, would not necessarily be the same for ‘born frees’ of different classes. The experiences of being a ‘born free’ would not necessarily be the same because there are different levels of impact of apartheid for different people.

6.5 Conclusion

The identity of youth is evidently an evolving one; being shaped by the circumstances, experiences and perceptions of people in certain parts of the country. In Zamdela, these youth is identified by the ideas of social responsibility and physical strength in addition to the conventional interpretation of what youth means through the use of age. This chapter has explained in detail these themes with views from some of the youth and non-youth of Zamdela. In addition, it provided an analysis of how translation can have an effect on the understanding of youth. The way in which youth is understood in English is not necessarily the same way that it is understood in vernacular languages. Due to the historical influence of youth and the symbolic meaning that the word itself, the concept further evolves. In addition, there are differences between older and younger youth. Although they are all youth, they are still heterogeneous in terms of their ages, perceptions and engagement with politics. And finally the born-frees; the generation that is evidently misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is highlighted in this chapter how the concept of ‘born frees’ needs problematising and understanding. It is not sufficient to label them as those born in and after 1994, but to contextualise them in the broader conditions of South African politics, including narratives from themselves as new members of the political community.
Chapter 7: Actors in the protest and repertoires of collective action

7.1 Introduction

Protests are argued to have some form of organisation, structure and people leading the events that occur in such protests instead of being spontaneous (Opp, 2009). Zamdelas protest is of a similar nature, in that it comprises of different forms of organisation and several members of the community uniquely played some roles. This chapter analyses the composition of the protest of Zamdelas in their protest, their leadership, and the different sets of people that engaged in the protests. Given the focus of this dissertation, this chapter highlights particularly the motivations of the youth in their engagement in protests; particularly highlighting the difficulty of unemployment that fuels youth into protest. In addition, the chapter reflects on the methods that were used for protesting; highlighting both the conventional means of protests as well as newer ways in which the youth of Zamdelas challenged the state. These are the repertoires of collective action as developed by Tilly (1997) and they define an evolution of protest methods in South African townships and well as describing newer forms of agency from the youth.

7.2 Agents of protest: leadership and agency

In analysing the protest in Zamdelas, two tiers of leadership emerge in two processes; the events that happened during the protests, and the events that led to the uprising. In addition, an underlying difference between the two levels of leadership, one that is politically non-aligned, and the other is political. These are the Metsimaholo Concerned Residence (MCR), which consist of individuals who act in the interest of the community, and the youth- stemming mostly from the ANCYL branch in Zamdelas. These two facets of leadership meet in political junctions where community issues are common. In the interest of community solidarity and action, they act in collaboration to face the issues although being separated in their endeavours.

7.2.1 The Metsimaholo Concerned Residents (MCR)

The MCR is a community organisation formed by some of the people of Zamdelas, some such as the chairperson working for the close-by Sasol firm, for the purpose of
voicing-out the concerns of the community and representing them when there is a
need. The organisation is present in most of the meetings that were attended and
almost dominant side by side with the local political parties (field notes, 6 June 2013).
One particular meeting that occurred on 26 November 2013 was organised and
chaired by the chairperson of the MCR, Lucky Malebo. The meeting concerned the
large water and electricity bills that many of them had been incurring; calling them
unjustified and made up.

Though the MCR is leads the community in some cases, they do not receive
their mandate from the community. They act independently in their representation of
the community. Many people do not know the organisation but are familiar with the
faces. Mthembu (age unknown, male, employed), one of the members of the MCR,
likewise in an interview illuminated on the functioning of the MCR that:

The MCR is broad. It transcends political parties. We see people wearing all of these
green, black and yellow colours [the ANC], and some walking round wearing red
colours [the EFF] and we pay no attention to that.

Lucky Malebo (age unknown, male, employed) described the nature of the
MCR on their Facebook page thus:

Image 7.1: MCR Facebook snapshot

Source: Facebook.

They thus represent the community under the veil of community interests
instead of making political statements and struggling for political power. The MRC
does not meet the community on the conventional political arena, but based on shared
cconcerns and grievances against the lack of service delivery within the township.

Arguably, the large meeting, and subsequently the protest, would not have
occurred if it were not for the MCR. They played two roles; they were the ones that
distributed the news of the merger by going to the radio station and holding a public
debate about it, and later organising the meeting with the Minister of CoGTA, Richard
Baloyi, the Premier, Ace Magashule and the Mayor, Brutus Mahlaku, to get a clearer
explanation of the merger. This resulted in thousands of residents in Zamdela
attending the meeting and filling the stadium on the Sunday of the protest. It was
largely through their engagement with the government officials that such a large
number of people were able to be available for protest.

7.2.2 Youth agency and protest

With some social networking, videos of the actual protest were acquired aside of the
pictures from the media that suggests that young people are the ones that escalated
the protest. The footage shows many of them storming into the streets with bricks,
some jumping over barricades and many of them running away from the police. They
ranged from young school pupils to youth in general, some of which were in the
leadership of the ANCYL.

There was very little hindrance in terms of availability for protest on the first
Sunday, perhaps the reason why the protest was so large. The mere fact that it was a
weekend meant that many people were available for the meeting and protest, so those
that worked would be combined with the of unemployed youth in the township, of which
are in very large numbers. When walking though Zamdela one could see youth on the
streets during weekdays; some of them sitting under the shade where there are shops,
perhaps to socialise since the area is often visited by people that come to buy food
and other goods. In other areas in Zamdela, several young people, particularly males,
spend their time where they or their friends run a car washing facility as a business.

Passing time seems to be the one thing that young people are doing, and this
is apparent with many of the participants. Without jobs, they are often in a process of
‘waiting’, a state of anticipating socioeconomic change that will ultimately alleviate their
social issues and hopefully lead them to something better as argued by Dawson
(2012). These youths, similarly to the case in Zandspruit, one of the informal
settlements in the north of Johannesburg, were limited by their state of unemployment
in keeping themselves busy. Similarly, many youth in Zamdela do not take part in many economic or extramural activities.

7.2.3 The older residents

The meeting that occurred on the Sunday of the protest was attended by a many of the residents of Zamdela. The older residents, particularly pensioners and those in their fifties attended the meeting to hear in on the issues that would be discussed with minister Baloyi of CoGTA. Their participation in the protest that followed was very limited. There were very few of the older residence on the streets of Zamdela when the uprising escalated. For those that have witnessed the presence and participation of the older residents during the protests, the sightings were very few and their actions were not as crude as those of youth that were vandalising and burning things. The video footage of the protest does not capture them fully, however when asked about the presence of older people in the protest in early January, Setsumi (19, male, student) states that the protest was a ‘mix n’ match’ of people in Zamdela, where the older residents were part and parcel of the protest.

7.3 Repertoires of collective action

It has become common that in protests people begin their demonstration by making blockades and burning tyres. Protests in Khutsong in 2005 and recent ones in Kagiso and Bekkersdal in 2014 were plagued with smoke from burnt items and barricades. Protesters often hold placards that have messages in them that describe their rejection of whatever grievances they have against the local government, councillor, or municipality. These are the repertoires of collective action in many South African protests; the methods of protest, and they often have created the disturbances that the protests sought. They have become symbolic in that their use is almost guaranteed, and policing them has become more of a common practice by the state (Von Holdt, 2011). Organisation of the people into using these repertoires is often unnecessary, based on the eventual learning of residents, and the adoption of methods that were used in previous protests around the country before and after 1994. In this section I analyse the repertoires or methods of protest employed by the community of Zamdela.
7.3.1 Looting: opportunity in crisis

The act of looting in South African protest has for a long time created scars in South African protest history. Disgruntled communities have often through looting exhibited dissatisfaction and temporarily crippled their local economy, causing township-wide destruction and alienated foreigners that supply them with goods and services that are often costly in well-established malls and supermarkets. Youth in Zamdela exhibited all of these characteristics. Their protest against local government became fully-fledged and this led to the damaging of many shops. Some of them actually blamed it on the argued misconduct of Richard Baloyi and Ace Magashule. In Kenny's (32, male, unemployed) perspective, the looting in Zamdela, of which he dubbed the ‘Zamdela takeaway’, was a means of taking back what the government has taken away. According to Kenny (32, male, unemployed), who is a member of the ANCYL in Zamdela,

‘The reason we decided to download [sic] Zio\textsuperscript{12} is that Richard Baloyi said that we will get our answers at the police station. We didn't get the answer when we went there so we decided to go to the police station in town. When we got there we hear that Richard is in the location [township]. Now we ended up looking stupid and we decided to enter Zio, open up and load everything and go back.

Some would argue that these are elements of criminality and that it is an unjust act. They would retrospectively speak about the protests as irrational and unjustified. Bandile (32, unemployed) explains that after the youth fortified the townships with blockades:

They then went to town on foot and the people broke into and looted the shops. They looted shops such as Pep Store, Truworths, and American Swiss. After the police shot at them, they ran back to Zamdela and later looted the shops owned by the Pakistanis. The following day they attacked the Zio supermarket, Cashbuild and Saverite.

\textsuperscript{12} Zio is one of the largest supermarkets between Zamdela and Sasolburg town. It is roughly 8 kilometres from Zamdela and supplies the township with groceries and other goods as an alternative to going to the shopping malls in town
Some of the youth saw opportunity in times of conflict. They saw looting as of a means of acquiring goods that one would not acquire on any random day, particularly where there is unemployment and where have no or very little incomes. Kenny (32, male, unemployed) describes the situation that:

People took alcohol *mchana* [nephew], alcohol! People they took alcohol! That day even the rats of Zamdela were drunk; everybody was drunk! There was no problem; everybody was drunk! The rats and birds of Zamdela too. It was so nice. I don’t have money to buy a 30 year old Glenfiddich like that; it is close to six or seven thousand. But I drank that stuff that day.

This has specific similarities with the London riots of 2011. Over 2500 shops and businesses were looted in the city’s business district and many people, not necessarily those that were engaged in the initial disorder, went home with goods such as high value electronics, brand name clothing, and jewellery among other things (Casey, 2013). The things taken were not necessarily essential however they symbolized the feeling of exclusion, which can be understood ‘not only in terms of material poverty, but also as a type of physical separation from mainstream public life’ (Casey, 2013). This is one of the things that people in Zamdela have in common with the looters in the London riots. Zamdela is approximately 12 kilometres from Sasolburg town, where there are not many high value shops and many people are excluded from what goes on in town.

Looting therefore became an access to things that they were not receiving from the government, or things that they themselves could not buy. With a sense of exclusion, many young people found it necessary to break into the shops and loot whatever they could. When speaking to the young women waiting for the *imbizo*\(^{13}\) to be called, they emphasized on the opportunistic element of the protest. For Camilla (26, female, unemployed), a hairdresser that had been working on her friend’s hairdo during the day, ‘if it wasn’t for the protests, we would have never had the chance to indulge in Brazilian weaves. Those things cost thousands of rands and we were able to get them for free during the protest’. Eric (24, unemployed) on the other hand was also appreciative of the things that people had looted from the liquor store in the Zio

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\(^{13}\) *Imbizo* means meeting in IsiZulu. It describes an abrupt meeting between the members of the unemployment forum in Zamdela when there is about to be an announcement of available jobs.
supermarket, arguing that ‘there were some that were rejoicing with us. They were happy to get the free stuff. How can you get a drink worth R2000 and how you can you get it for free?’ Kenny (32, male, unemployed) himself appreciated the looting as well. ‘I took Pampers and all; stuff for my child because my child was so small during the time. I said that this is the advantage that I must take; the milk and other things.’ The supermarket after been violently vandalised and its goods looted incurred a loss of about R2.2 million in stolen goods and money (Sowetan, 2013c). This shows a wider social, political and economic exclusion that is expressed through looting.

7.3.2 ‘Xenophobia in Zamdela

Foreign nationals suffer the looting more often than not especially when they have established their businesses in urban South African townships. One would find ‘spaza’\textsuperscript{14} shops where they sell amenities to the community as a means of generating income. They are seldom employed in the areas they live in so they become entrepreneurs in the communities.

Foreign nationals settle in townships around South Africa, they often create some forms of social ties with the residents of that area. They become the faces of local shops and cheap consumables, and which are often seen as threats to township economies and businesspeople. This increases the propensity to which their shops are attacked and looted in comparison to shops owned by South Africans. For Von Holdt (2012: 39), the looting of these foreign shops reflects ‘xenophobia and class antagonism’, a resentment of foreigners based on envy and competition. Though the contention in Zamdela is between citizens and the state, foreigners became victims in the adversity as their stores were looted. Nomasonto (22, female), a 12th Grade student at Nkgopoleng Secondary School during the time of the protest describes that ‘they burnt the Pakistani shops. Xoli (27, male, unemployed) stated that ‘They burnt ‘Zio’ and took everything including alcohol’. ‘You know that when we South Africans start protesting we start with the foreign shops. Those shops were attacked and looted and people took everything from money to cigarettes. That happened the whole day’

In this case, there is very little evidence for xenophobia. Yes, Pakistani and Somali shops were looted however there are contradictory reports on which shops were looted first. Nevertheless, it was not only foreign owned shops that were targeted.

\textsuperscript{14} Slang term referring to very small and often unregistered convenience shops in the township.
Of course, there were xenophobic opinions from some of the resident who argued that ‘all of the foreigners should be deported to their own countries’, because ‘when the foreigners are here there is a lot of problems’ (Maria’s, 41, female, night-school teacher). Though this may be, there is no clear evidence to demonstrate that foreign shops were deliberately targeted in the protest aside from the fact that the foreign nationals had shops. This should make us weary about concluding that xenophobia is the only reason for attacking foreign-owned properties as they may be other motives.

7.3.3 Live communication: Karabo FM

Community radio stations have historically been used as tools for protest and Karabo FM in Zamdela has played the same role. For example, Radio B92 played a role in the protests of 1996 to 1997 in Beograd, Serbia and Radio Victoria in Neuquén, Argentina. These radio stations spread the news of the protests and gave details of the events during the protests (Jansen, 2001). Karabo FM is one of two radio station in the Metsimaholo Municipality. It was founded in 2006 under the umbrella of the Youth Development Organisation. It is a piece of an initiative that housed the station, Karabo Youth Magazine and an advisory centre.

Dika (age unknown, male, radio station manager) claims that throughout the years, it had gained over 80,000 listeners in under a hundred kilometre radius and has contributed to the distribution information in and around Metsimaholo. Since its establishment, it has become a link between the community and the access to information. Dika (age unknown, male, employed) who was the station manager at the time describes that:

In fact, we [Karabo FM], are the link between the government and the people; whatever the government want to debate comes to us because it knows we will communicate the message to the community and if the community wants to hear from the government it is through us. We are the centre of communication in this area…we listen to the community we have to make sure that we present our programming so that it meets the needs of the community in broadcasting

The station became a resource for the community, not only for purposes of protests but to aid in tackling other issues facing the Zamdela. It was a tool that can be accessed freely and in close proximity. Before the protest for example, the station was
used for fundraising after the tornado that hit Zamdela and parts of Deneysville in the beginning of January. ‘There were a lot of areas that were affected and this radio station helped to raise the awareness of what was happening and how to support the families in those areas and we carry much more support than broadcasting’, says Dika. In that same January, the radio station was put to use by members of the community in relation to the merger of the municipalities. People found out most of the details of the amalgamation of the municipalities from the radio station and they acted against the amalgamation from there on. According to Sylvester (28, unemployed):

When this happened [the amalgamation] someone at Karabo FM let everyone know what is happening. Afterwards we did some research and later found out that the merger was true. We got the information like that and we confirmed it by doing our own research.

Due to its engagement on a social level with the community, Karabo FM, Instead of being a neutral provider of news and entertainment, it became an asset of the community. It created an information bridge between the minister, the mayor and the community by facilitating conversations and calling the officials to come and address the community in the meeting.

Things took a bad turn for the station when the protest reached its peak as people extended their use of it. Since most of the people were listening to the radio station on that day, the station was bombarded with many phone calls; some of which contained very vulgar language from people that are upset with the failed appearance of the minister. The employees of the station were threatened when they did not answer questions that they asked, thus accusing the station of false broadcasting and aiding with the deception by the minister. Thereafter, many of the young people protesting went into the station and forcefully took over the broadcasting. They not only dictated the content, but also changed the entire broadcasting and incited. The station manager explains the ordeal that:

You can imagine having people who have been drinking for a while and now you are also intimidated on the side and the station nearly burned, and we had a couple of guys broadcasting whatever they wanted and using vulgar language and insults and we actually did not have proper control of the broadcasting that day for the mere reason
that we have seen the incident that happened from your Cashbuild stores and Save rite 10 metres away from your police station. We lost control so we decided to call the cops to inform them that these people were having stones and other weapons and they had been drinking and when we tried to have a word with them we actually had trouble doing that.

The usurping of the station was done with the intention of feeding the community with information about the protest and perhaps boosting the morale and the sense of organisation of the community. By this time, the alcohol that had been looted at the local taverns and the Zio supermarket just 5 kilometres out of Zamdela fuelled youth. This became difficult for the police to control, thus allowing the protest to spread out widely within Zamdela.

7.4 Conclusion

The way in which youth engage in protest is evolving. Though their underlying motivations for protest are those that are not very different from other urban townships, the way in which they reach out to the state is different. This chapter has discussed the nature of the protest in Zamdela, its leadership and the junctures where the different facets of the community meet. It provided a detailed formulation of the repertoires of collective action by youth and other residents of Zamdela, emphasising on the barricades that were used during the protest, the paths that were taken in the taken during protest, and the instrumental use of the radio station and newer means of organising protests such as social networks, namely Facebook.
Chapter 8: Protest to elections -political participation in Zamdela

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine youth political participation in the period between the protest and the 2014 national elections. First, the chapter examines both participation in political parties as well as the more informal spaces in which youth of Zamdela can be found. It looks specifically at the rise of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the related decline of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) as significant changes in the political landscape of youth politics in Zamdela. Second, it examines the informal spaces of dialogue that youth in Zamdela make use of with particular attention on the Thembalethu flats, the employment forums, social networks and youth political culture. The essence of this chapter is to show that the youth are engaged in politics not only in the party political spaces but in other forms as well.

8.2 Changing political landscape in Zamdela

The politics of Zamdela changed between the January protest and the 2014 national elections held in May. It was transformed by the establishment of the EFF and this affected both the status and functioning of the ANCYL as the dominant political entity in Zamdela, as well as some of the spaces of political participation that were facilitated by the strength of the ANCYL.

8.2.1. The rise of the EFF

The EFF has become a significant political player in South Africa, coming third in the national elections. It was founded in July 2013 by the former president of the ANCYL, Julius Malema, who was expelled from the ANCYL in May 2013. He was surrounded by political controversy after being accused of hate speech and inciting racism among many of his black followers during his ANC rallies, in addition to charges of corruption and tax evasion the following year (Mabanza, 2013). The EFF has developed a strong influence among youth due to many being former members of the ANCYL.

Between the 2013 protests and the elections, some members of the ANC renounced their membership after Julius Malema formed the EFF. Michael (30, male, employed) explained that he joined the EFF because ‘the executive major [sic] is
corrupt, and we addressed the issue provincially, regionally and nationally but those issues were never resolved’. The failure to address issues was not the only reason Michael left the youth league. He also mentioned that there was a difference in how the ANC operated in comparison to the EFF. Unlike the ANC, argued Michael:

In the EFF there is space to raise issues. You can talk to the leadership and they will attend to your issues. It is better than the ANCYL because in the ANCYL you would be told that you will be expelled, that you are selling out the revolution; all these kinds of words; all those threats. But in the EFF there is space to engage if you have issues. Everything is still smooth; it is like at home.

Issues of accessibility to the leadership appear to have been a central problem, and this resulted in some of the members moving to the EFF. Significantly, the EFF won over some of the local leadership that were in the ANCYL, and who effectively became the EFFs local leaders. These were the same people that were in the organisation of the protest in April 2013 when the ANCYL was at its peak. Lerato (21, male, unemployed) was one of the members of the ANCYL who stayed. He describes the relative size and membership of the EFF thus:

In Ward One, where I am from, we used to be in larger numbers. There were seven of us in the gang but I am the only one that is left in the ANCYL; the other six went to the EFF. That did not only happen in Ward One; it happened in most parts of Zamdela…that tells us that the EFF in terms of numbers is dominating us.

Lerato’s interview illustrated the extent to which the EFF had risen and how it had negatively affected the ANCYL in Zamdela. The EFF became the leading political party in terms of youth political participation and membership and with more active members than the ANCYL and the DA.

8.2.2 The decline of the ANCYL

Whereas the ANCYL boomed before and after the January protest, it faced a decline after the protest in April 2013 when the community was waiting for a reply from the demarcation board about the merger of the municipalities. This was evident in one of the meetings attended during the fieldwork in September 2013. Some of the young people who had been leaders in the ANCYL appeared in red berets as representatives of the newly founded EFF. This shattered the strength of the ANCYL in the township
as many of the meetings were called and hosted by the new members of the EFF. In a conversation with Mongezi (22 male, university student) about whether there is still room for conversation between him and the people he knew from the ANCYL, he stated that ‘no some of the people I know went to the EFF because of things that happened in the protest.’ From talking with many of the protesters and to members of the youth league, it became clear that the protest symbolised the failure of the ANC because of the internal tensions within the ANCYL in Zamdela. This explains why many joined the EFF.

The period between the protests was a fragile one for the ANCYL. Within the community, discontent was brewing among members of the ANCYL, particularly related to leadership issues. In addition, the township had recently taken to the streets in protest against the planned restructuring of municipal borders, widely believed at grassroots level to diminish the township and the town’s economic development. Some of the people, as a result, left the ANC. Though he did not join the EFF, Kenny (32, male, unemployed) renounced his membership of the ANCYL at the end of 2013 due to his discontent in terms of how leadership in the league was appointed, and who was doing the appointing. After being asked about the difference between the ANCYL in 2013 in comparison to 2014, Kenny (32, male, unemployed) argued that:

The ANCYL is dead. If you look at the ANCYL regionally, the ANCYL is run by only one person and that person is long out [meaning very far]. The premier is bringing his own candidates, which is wrong. We, as the youth, must elect our own leadership but the premier will come to that conference and say that ‘gentlemen, this is your chairperson and this is your secretary’.

Some of the issues mentioned by former ANCYL members related to unemployment. As mentioned previously, Dawson (2014b) proposed that, at least for Zandspruit in 2011, protests were motivated, in part, by the desire to obtain ‘patronage from below’. I found that the political engagement of young people in Zamdela was broader than what Dawson argues in the case of Zandspruit. Youth do join political parties as a strategic action, but at the same time, young people in Zamdela were protesting against such patronage politics in both the municipality and ANC. Ndumiso (35, male, unemployed) left the ANCYL because his membership was not fruitful in terms of employment opportunities. ‘I want to cancel my membership and join the EFF. The ANC is oppressing us here. Only those people that are known here are the ones that
get jobs. We on the other hand don’t have anything. They only hire friends here’, said Ndumiso. This was not the only discontent with the ANCYL in terms of its 'support' for its members. Seipati (33, female, unemployed) confided on her relinquishment of her ANC membership that:

I left because it didn’t do anything for me. When there are learnerships and jobs they always give away those jobs to people we don’t know while we attend the meetings every day and they say that they forgot about us. How can you forget people that are there every day? There were always about 10 people that are forgotten so I asked myself why I should keep doing this if they keep forgetting us. Even with jobs for sweeping the streets they say that they forgot us.

Only a few of the members remained, maintaining the last of what was once a vibrant ANCYL in Zamdela. For Lerato (21, male, unemployed), ‘the ANCYL is still relevant in addressing the socioeconomical [sic] issues that are facing society at large. I don’t see a need for me to go and fight for society outside the boundaries of the ANC because the ANC is the organisation that is in power.’

8.3 Spaces of dialogue

Cornwall (2004) argues that political participation goes beyond the conventional spaces provided by the government. People create ‘informal spaces’ for themselves in order to have political conversations and mobilise actions. These fill a vacuum left by the government’s failure to provide meaningful engagement through ‘formal spaces’. Some of the new spaces in Zamdela are physical, others are not. Generally, they provide evidence of co-operation and friendship, but not patronage or envy as Dawson (2014a) argues in the case of Zandspruit.

There are several informal spaces where youth in Zamdela hang out and frequently have conversations that often include politics. These ‘hangout’ spots are a form of refuge, perhaps from the boredom experienced when one is unemployed or when they are school students waiting for their institutions to reopen after the recess. I refer to the physical spaces that seem to be the most lively and engaging, and where many young people spend their time ‘hanging out’. In addition, I refer to the non-physical spaces that include social networks, where youth can engage in online discussions that facilitate physical engagement with politics. People converse about
politics in these areas and these are spaces where youth mobilise and are likely to form political cohorts. Below is a discussion of the spaces that were observed and they are: the unemployment forums, the Thembalethu flats, social networks, and an art centre.

8.3.1 Unemployment forums

The unemployment forums exist to offer a meeting place between employers and the unemployed community. Ironically named as an ‘unemployment’ forum, many people go to these forums on a daily basis seeking employment and often to hang out. With over 30 stations spread throughout Zamdela, the unemployment forums are the spaces where a large number of the unemployed youth are found.

The day-to-day happenings in the forums include some of the men sitting, chatting and occasionally playing cards or dice. If not sitting and talking in a group with the men, some of the women would braid each other’s hair to pass the time. For one of the women, the braiding of hair had actually developed into a small business, where she would give the women hairdos very cheaply. Sitting at the forums reflected partly the process of ‘waiting’ as Dawson (2012) argues in her dissertation, perpetually waiting for companies to come and employ them in small vacancies. Some of them would even wear clothes from their previous jobs, signalling to people that they have experience in employment and they were ready to be hired.

Most of the occupants of the forums know each other and are familiar with one another’s situations, with having children and not being able to adequately support them financially and staying unemployed for prolonged periods. This was mostly apparent with the women when they expressed their difficulties in taking care of their children as single mothers. From observation, it became clear that the unemployment forums created social ties, where interactions between people, through the seeking of employment, had developed into personal relationships.

Though the unemployment forums are not created for political participation, they do offer a very distinctive platform for political dialogue among the members. The conversations were along the lines of protest and political parties. There was a high level of resentment and critique of the ANC. Some people explained that being at the unemployment forum was a direct result of the ANC and the local municipality’s inadequacy. Gabi (23, female, unemployed) is one of the people that had recently left the ANCYL. In her words:
When jobs appear, they skip us and they give them away. What is the use of voting then? The ANC is here in Sasolburg and there is nothing happening. Their relatives come from Qwa Qwa and have jobs here while we are sitting here jobless.

At one point in the fieldwork, some of the members of the forum did not want to speak about the politics of Zamdela, arguing that ‘politics is a waste of time’ (Rose, 33, female, unemployed). Talking about the ANC in this regard was taken as yet another example of wasted time where the inadequacies of the ANC are pointed out and there is very little change in terms of their employment. This shows that there is a level of apathy among youth.

8.3.2 Thembalethu flats

Compared to other spaces of political participation, Thembalethu flats, a block of black working class apartments, was a temporary, yet significant space for youth in Zamdela. In fact, it hosted most of the informal meetings of the leaders of the ANCYL. When visiting Zamdela on the weekends in March 2013, one would find the majority of the leaders of the ANCYL sitting outside on garden chairs talking about the protest that had occurred a couple of months back. Due to the informality of the hangout spot at the flats, there were seldom women sitting there on the weekend because this was an exclusionary male space, an informal hang out area for the young men. If not talking about local politics, the men would engage in talks about anything ranging from cars to sports. One would often find them on a Sunday morning drinking beer and joking. On several occasions, they would be joined by some of the previous and older members of the ANCYL who come to the informal meetings due to their longstanding social ties with the youth league.

Thembalethu flats complex was a significant space of political participation for youth and many other people in the community in early and mid-2013. This space was important between the January and April protests because it was the place where most of the political conversations and informal planning of the April protest took place. The people having these conversations were the ones leading the protest, mobilising youth to advance the insurgency against the municipality and the demarcation board. Occupants of Thembalethu could then express their own political opinions outside of
the constraints of formal ANCYL meetings, criticising the ANC without the kind of judgments that would normally be present in formal ANCYL meetings.

Through observation it was clear that political engagement at Thembalethu was lessened when the ANCYL began its decline parallel to the rise of the EFF. The development of the EFF had an effect not only on the membership of the ANCYL but on both the level of political engagement in Thembalethu and the membership of the ANCYL. Some of the young men who had been present at the informal meetings, the same people who were leaders and mobilisers of the protests, were seen less as they assumed their roles in the branches of the EFF.

The move of some of the members of the ANCYL to the EFF did not harm only the unity and cohesion of the members, but also spilt over into their personal relationships, thus severing social ties and friendships that had developed among some of the members. Loyalties to the different political parties reflected disloyalties to friendships, thus eventually affecting the occupants of Thembalethu in a much deeper way. Through informal conversations, some of the ANCYL members would regard those that renounced the ANC as ‘sell outs’. This demonstrates how important politics can be to the young people and how it influenced their lives.

Thembalethu flats ceased to be the place where the ANCYL leadership met and consistent political conversation held, and neither was it occupied by the leaders of the EFF. Today, it is a simple residential area with all of its politics broken up between ANCYL meetings at the community hall and the new branches of the EFF.

8.3.3 Social networks as a tool for political participation

As illustrated in Chapter Seven, people use social networks for different purposes. In this case, the use of social media describes another level of political participation, where the informal meets the virtual spaces of political participation. This use of social media, or online platforms, is an enhancement of modern-day communication and, in the case of political dialogue, engagement with the state and even resistance. As Jansen (2001: 41) argues, ‘cyberspace, more so than, say, urban landscape, seems to be a space which can never fully be anyone’s property’, so it can be used with very few limitations, thus providing another ‘terrain of resistance’.

During the Arab Spring, for example, these social networks were used widely to distribute information and to protest against the government without the need of physical mobilisation. They became a crucial instrument for youth who were absorbed
into the use of social networks on a daily basis, and added to the physical protests, thus increasing the level of participation and mobilisation. In South Africa, the use of social networks is relatively new in the context of the working class but increasing exponentially. Five years ago, for example, even though these social networks existed they were mostly used in the developed northern hemisphere, and many working class people in South Africa could not afford them. Today, more people have access to them due to the quickly decreasing costs of smartphones and connectivity (Goldstuck, 2013: 44).

Facebook became important tools for political participation in Zamdela. It was used, and is still being used, by the community of Zamdela, both as platforms of dialogue, for resistance and mobilisation against the demarcation board in 2013 and other community issues in 2014, and to maintain frequent contact with community members about general issues that affect the township. The leaders of the MCR created a group with the same name as the organisation. Youth created groups named the Metsimaholo Progressive Dialogue and the Youth Progressive Forum, and publicly broadcasted their discontent with local government. When asked about the use of Facebook during the protest, Sehlogo (29, unemployed) commented:

A lot actually. When something happens, they will post it on Facebook and things can go around on WhatsApp via group chats. Whenever something happens, it would group chat with my closest friends on WhatsApp and information is transferred very quickly.

Facebook became an important tool in terms of communication and gaining support to act against the merger of the municipalities, as well as distribution of plans and ideas. The protest in April 2013 was the one that received the benefits of the use of Facebook, more so than the one in January of the same year. With reference to the protest on the 18th April 2014, Facebook was used to inform and to gain support from Facebook users. This was the beginning of the increased use of social networks by youth of Zamdela. Organisation became very simple and the dates of meetings could be communicated. An example includes a screenshot from the MCRs pages, which reads:
With both the MCR and progressive dialogue having over 2500 and 700 members respectively, it means that there could be effortless communication between the residents, and thus political participation.

8.4 Youth culture and politics

The entire essence of youth culture is that the youth are different in comparison to other generations. It is the outcome of the process of 'youth navigating the tortured period of their adolescence, go through as they seek a community that is distinct from that which has come before. It is a period rich in self-expression, catalysed by the negotiation of social boundaries' (The Guardian, 2011). With relatively easy access to technology and the internet, young people have now found enhanced ways of expressing themselves and forming a culture of their own, often on a global level. If not creating new groups on Facebook, youth are making and engaging with politics through music, fashion and visual media to tell their stories.

In Zamdela this youth culture is facilitated by an art centre; a space where politics discussed and where young people express themselves in different artistic ways. The centre provided artistic freedom as well as a temporary escape from the realities of unemployment and boredom. Many of the artists are in their early twenties and they participate almost daily in the activities of the centre. However, in this
research I will only focus on the video that was posted on YouTube and the music that was recorded by one of the artists after the protest.

King James, as he is known, created a short rap video of his opinion of the government and the social circumstances that he is constantly faced with. Though the use of hip hop music in making a political statement is not new and derives its heritage from black neighbourhoods in 1980s New York, however this is relatively new in the South African context. King James’s video begins with him staring at a wall painted with President Jacob Zuma’s face on it, advertising the ANC government with the president happily smiling (see image 8.2).

The poster is brightly drawn with the well-known black, green and gold colours of the ANC emblem with a catch-phrase at the bottom boldly proclaiming that ‘together we can build a better community’ (see image 8.2). Colourful banners such as Image 8.2 are often painted during election campaigning and are often left unchanged for years, thus continuing advertising the brand of the ANC (or any other political party), and reflecting the scale of ANC campaigns during election times.

Image 8.2: King James video snapshot

![Image 8.2: King James video snapshot](Source: YouTube)

Image 8.3 depicts one of the scenes in King James’s video. What is most significant here is the posture of the young man and his facial expression when looking at the smiling president. He initially has his back to the camera, and is staring directly

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15 A type of popular music of US black origin in which words are recited rapidly and rhythmically over an instrumental backing.
at the drawing of the smiling president. Contrary to the president's joyful expression, something that is very typical of any advertisement or campaign, King James observes the president with an unequivocal look of despondence and anger.

Image 8.3: King James video snapshot (ii)

The difference between his and the president's joyful expression on the wall is that his face is austere, and reflects the detachment between the state and the community; something that the banner clearly states that it stands for. After half of a minute of the stare at the president on the wall, the young man proceeds with his rap in the music video. In the video, he raps:

\[
\begin{align*}
I \text{ am a soldier; a counter revolutionary suspect born at the dawn of my freedom, of my native kingdom;} \\
I \text{ am a heartbroken go-getter, shape shifter;} \\
I \text{ am a descendant of Basotho}^{16} \text{; those who roll rocks down Thaba Busiu}^{17} \text{ in defiance of an oil-seeking beast from overseas;} \\
I \text{ am a soldier; I stand behind Muhammad Gadhafi in defiance of a no-fly zone;} \\
\text{Fuck your propaganda; I am a nigga from the last letter street, Zamdela.}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{16}\) Collective word for the Sotho people, some of whom live in Lesotho and some in South Africa.

\(^{17}\) Thaba Bosiu is a sandstone plateau with an area of approximately 2 km wide and is 1,804 meters above sea level. It is located between the Orange and Caledon Rivers, 24 km east of the country's capital Maseru. It has historic and spiritual significance.
His words clearly exhibit his repudiation of the government as not a betterment of social ills, but as an inhibitor to change. They suggest a large extent of separation from the government and the perceived futility of democracy in South Africa. His depiction of his life and future is one that is bleak, constantly having to ‘shape shift’ through daily life in Zamdela. Most importantly, this constant problem of navigating, of ‘shape shifting’ comes from a ‘born free’, a custodian of a democratic South Africa. Being ‘born free’ is expressed by King James in this image as an overstatement, a contradiction of the new government in which youth are supposed to have an identity and a future. This is not realised in the township of Zamdela, particularly under the yoke of a capitalist state and society, of which, in this case, youth are expressing themselves to be conscious and critical.

The video continues. King James can be seen running away from the township, past the Sasol petrochemical plant and away to an undisclosed, and perhaps unknown place, closing with a last remark that ‘we keep running in the name of Zamdela’. Though this is different from South African protests, it is a personal and political method of exhibiting discontent. It describes the same issues that many young people in Zamdela are facing without the act of taking to the streets and marching. It is also a break away from the way the older generation used to protest against the state, and unconsciously, one that creates a short history upon which one could reflect and revisit whenever possible.

Similarly to the use of YouTube by King James, some of the youth from the art centre in Zamdela are making political statements in the music they produce. This is an artistic mechanism of political engagement with the state, set aside from the marches and party politics that are popular in many communities. Kopano (male, 26, unemployed) is a member of the ANCYL and an artist at the local art centre. When the protest occurred in 2013, he was the secretary of the local ANCYL branch, as well as a musician focusing on Kwaito\textsuperscript{18} music in the township. He has succeeded in releasing an album of five songs that speak directly to the problems that faced by youth of Zamdela, highlighting the brutality exhibited by the police during the protests and how this is harming the community.

\textsuperscript{18} A music genre originating in the 1980s that is a mix of hip hop and house music that is sung mostly in vernacular with lyrics structured around life in the township.
The videos and the music demonstrate, yet again, that youth are actually interested in politics; that politics are an important part of the content that they are producing and the circumstances in which they live. Youth are thus not necessarily disengaged from politics; however, they do not necessarily reflect their interest by going to the ballot box. They make music and videos that are reflective of politics.

8.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined youth political participation between the protest and the 2014 national elections. Firstly, I demonstrate how young people engage with party politics. Secondly, I demonstrate how the rise of the EFF negatively affected the ANCYL. I have also showed that young people do not only engage in politics in terms of political parties but also have a wider resonance. While there is a politics of waiting as Dawson argued, there is more than this. Discussions, whether at unemployment forums or elsewhere, are often explicitly political- they complain about government and consider the merits of protest. Youth are also expressing themselves, and developing new identities in spaces away from parties and streets, notably through social media and arts. If we expand our horizon, we see that young people are more political than often assumed. Additionally, their levels of apathy are not as high as many scholars assume them to be. Contrary to Dawson (2012), political participation goes beyond patronage and shows a much wider concern and interest in politics.
Chapter 9: The 2014 national elections

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the attitudes of youth towards elections and political parties before and after the 2014 national elections. These attitudes are traced throughout four time periods. These periods include the period after the January 2013 protest, between November and December 2013 including the day of elections registrations, the time immediately before the elections and the period after the elections. The reasons for voting and abstinence are analysed using the following themes: governance, liberation legacy, identification with political parties and ‘change’. These themes are developed from existing literature, particularly with reference to a recent study by Paret (unpublished) who earlier conducted a study on the 2014 national elections. Though this analysis is relatively similar to that of Paret’s, there are three key differences. One, Paret uses a wider sample of people from the age of 18 to pensioners that participated or voted in the elections whilst this analysis looks only at youth between the ages of 18 and 40. Secondly, Paret (unpublished) used quantitative data to explain the themes whereas I use both quantitative and qualitative methods in the research. Finally, he looked only at the short period post-elections whereas I look at four time periods in the space of a year and a half.

Alongside the above, I also make a detailed analysis in this chapter of the post-election results from a survey conducted at the end of May 2014. These results are analysed and compared to those of the exit poll survey as well as the data from the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC). With these results, it was possible to analyse the way in which young people participated in protest, the voter turnout, the support for parties and whether or not the results corroborate Booysen’s (2007) ballot and the brick analysis of the relationship between protest and elections.

9.2 Perceptions and attitudes of youth towards elections and politics: January to May 2013

Before the analysis youth attitudes on the elections, it is important to elucidate on the meanings of the themes that were used in analysing the data. Governance refers to the provision of services over time, corruption, and leadership. This theme describes the discontent of the people how this influences their abstinence and participation in electoral politics. The second theme, liberation legacy, entails almost exclusively the
power that the ANC wields in terms of its position as the party that brought freedom to the people. A theme further cements the ANC’s hegemony among other parties in elections (Paret, unpublished). Identification with other parties also emerged in this thematic analysis. This refers to identifying oneself with political parties because of their familiarity with them, and their valuing of certain political leaders that motivate them to support certain parties. Democratic duty emerged as another theme in the analysis, entailing the youth expressing the view that voting is a democratic duty in which they, and every citizen in the country, should carry out. This is seldom connected to political parties and has more to do with the duties of South African citizens. Finally, comes the theme that a considerable number of people that vote for opposition parties to the ANC often cite, the theme of ‘change’. This term is used in many contexts and thus lacks a precise definition. However, in this dissertation the closest I came to defining it is the change of ANC rule in the country.

9.2.1 Attitudes towards governance and the ANC: after 2013 protest

Whilst interviewing people after the 2013 protest a number of themes emerged. One of the most prominent themes was a critique on governance. This refers to young people’s perceptions about the government and its leaders, looking at corruption and leadership, which were the major influences in youth participation or abstinence in the 2014 national elections. Youth criticised ANC leadership in particular instead of a holistic critique of the ANC as a whole. ANC officials became unpopular after the outcry from the community that was supposed to be addressed by public officials, but was not. Samuel (over 30, male, unemployed) a member of the ANCYL, criticised the ruling party’s leadership openly that:

The ANC is not failing us; we are being failed by the leaders here. They are very corrupt and are looking at their own pockets. They do not represent what the people want or even what the ANC wants. So as long as Brutus Mahlaku is here, they will keep disappointing us.

These were very strong criticisms of the ANC and the way the local municipality and province were governed. People criticised the leadership in the ANC, but often separating the leaders from the ANC, and how such leadership had become very corrupted and self-serving. This was particularly directed at the executive mayor in the
Metsimaholo municipality, Brutus Mahlaku, in relation to the protest that had just occurred. Of course, party politics informed a large part of the cynicism towards elections as a whole. However, at this time, the protest had made the ANC infamous in the perspectives of many of the residents as well as those people closely linked to it through the local ANCYL.

Perspectives about the elections and the ANC were mixed at this time, and a critique of governance and leadership was juxtaposed with the theme of loyalty to the ANC, which stems from the familiarity with the liberation struggle that many young people seem to value. In his analysis of the 2014 national election, Paret argues that the ANC’s support is encapsulated in the liberation legacy that many black South Africans are familiar with. It ‘continues to reap a significant ‘liberation dividend’, due to its role as the hegemonic leader of the national liberation struggle’ that has subsequently lead to what the South African government is today (Paret, unpublished). The above was demonstrated by many young people in Zamdela because even after the protest, youths that had been personally involved in the protest, which directly called out the deficiencies of the ANC, argued for the ANC, stating, for example, that ‘when I was growing up, the only party that I knew was the ANC. It was the party that fought for us and brought us freedom’ (Sandile, 37, male, unemployed). Samuel (over 30, male, unemployed) also argued that even though there is tension between the community and the ANC, ‘I will support it as long as I am still alive. I can proudly say that I am black, green, and gold [referencing to ANC logo colours].’ The legacy appears to be very important to many of the youth in Zamdela, and they consistently express that this is a large part of their motivations for voting, and voting particularly for the ANC. This effectively caused a stalemate between them protesting against the ANC and voting for it.

9.2.2 November/December including registrations

On the weekend of the ninth to the tenth of November 2013, the voting registers were available for the community of Zamdela to register to vote in the following 2014 national and provincial elections. The weekend attracted many people from all over Zamdela, many youths wanted to register and some were there just to observe and perhaps abstain from the registrations.
What was visible on the day of registration was that there were many young people in the voting districts in some locations in the township. Youth from the ANC particularly were in large numbers as they were campaigning and motivating others to register and to vote for the ANC. The registration stations were beset with black, green and gold ANC banners as the party members campaigned. The campaigning was followed by a long session of song and dance and occasional blowing of the vuvuzela\textsuperscript{19} to call people in. The only other dominant party campaigning at the time was the EFF, with some of its members driving to and from different stations to urge people to vote for the party. However, unlike the ANC, the EFF did not have such a large display of party merchandise and resources. As for the DA and COPE, their only forms of campaigning on the day of registration were posters displaying some of the party members’ faces and their logos.

The number of young people at the voting stations was surprising to say the least, particularly for those that were not campaigning or affiliated with any of the political parties, and with reflection on the cynicism that was widely present in March 2013 after the protest. Some of the voting stations, particularly the Thembalethu Flats and Nkgopoleng Secondary School, are places where youth are present at all times as detailed in Chapter 8; some to study at the school and some to simply ‘hang out’ at their usual places. The schools provided easy access to registrations for the learners eligible for voting and made it relatively simple for them to register for the 2014 elections. This meant that the registrations could include many young people who would be voting for the first time, including the ‘born-frees’. Additionally, instead of the youth going to voting stations far away to register, the registration desks were placed at the places where the youth socialise and spend most of their time. These included places like the unemployment forums and ‘hangout spots’, including Thembalethu. Thus, many youths were able to register without commitment to election politics.

I conducted short qualitative interviews with the people about their registration and voting in order to find out whether or not elections were important to them, who they were voting for, as well as their reason for choosing certain parties. In the interviews, young people continued to reference governance amid the large elections campaigns that were put forward by the different political parties.

\textsuperscript{19} Vuvuzela is a long plastic horn that produces a loud monotone sound. It is very popular in South Africa and is mainly used by fanatics in soccer matches and often in protests.
At this time the political environment had faced some changes since the protest in January 2013. The anger and frustration from the community had subsided and elections campaigns were underway, and the ANC received less criticism in relation to the protest that had occurred in 2013, and more criticism as a political party to vote for as a whole. For example, Donald (19, male, student) argued that:

Voting is not necessarily and answers for life. Voting is not important as such, because politics is the thing that many people nowadays don’t consider it seriously because of what is happening within the government.

In other ways, inadequate governance by the ANC devalued the elections. Voting in this context is seen as voting for the ANC and not simply a democratic duty that every citizen has the right to undertake. The failure of the ANC is experienced as the failure of electoral politics, which has partly discouraged some young people from participating in elections.

The formation of the EFF in mid-2013 was significant in the altering of people’s identification with political parties, particularly with the ANC. Identification with parties was not mentioned as much as the other themes after the January 2013 protest. The DA in Zamdela at this time had not gathered a large following, leaving the ANC to capture a large share of the young electorate. COPE had collapsed since its entry into the 2009 elections and there were no branches or strong support for the party in the township. Julius Malema was still very active in the ANCYL before he was expelled in May 2013, three months after the protest in Zamdela. Party identification meant two options for many of the youth; to either support the ANC due to the lack of a viable opposition party, or becoming inactive in local politics that often leads to non-participation in electoral politics.

By November the EFF had been formed and subsequently gained popularity among youth in Zamdela, acting as a viable alternative to the ANC and a party that offered something that interested young people. Sehlogo (29, male, unemployed) argued that:

The reason is that this president of EFF has revealed something that I’ve been interested in for so long. He talked about the policies of the ANC in 1954; the Freedom Charter. It mentioned that the time the ANC became the ruling party there will be
greener pastures in terms of land and everything. But now that has happened and the ANC has not done anything about these things. This is why I support the EFF.

The EFF was formed a year before the elections and with charterist policies that spoke directly at the redistribution of land and wealth, encapsulated in what they call ‘economic freedom’. These charterist policies appealed to the youth and the EFF was viewed favourably in late 2014. For example, Teboho (21, male, student) states that ‘I don’t think I can say that this one has better policies but the EFF has caught my eye, but it is difficult to align myself with them. I like their policies. But then I don’t think I’m ready yet to join the EFF. But if I were to vote I would vote for the EFF’. The EFF was thus in a lot of people’s minds; considering it as a viable party aside from the ANC. By looking at the responses of the youth, it shows that the formation of the EFF had politicised some of the young people and had at the same time offered them an alternative to a political environment that was for a long time without a lot of options.

Though the EFF gained considerable popularity among youth, there was still heightened loyalty towards the ANC as it continued to capitalise on its liberation legacy. This was continuously emphasised by many young people. With the elections agenda in people’s minds and sight, many of them were reminded through campaigns of the legacy that the ANC had created for them. From posters to television advertisements, key names were consistently punted, such as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Steve Biko. Though this mostly appealed to the older generation, some young people still emphasised the importance of the ANC as the bringer of freedom and democracy. Mongezi (22 male, university student) demonstrated this as he expressed that:

We all fall under the ANC and I recognise that it has done a lot. Young people today get to go to universities and students like myself who cannot afford education get to study. We have opportunities that our parents don’t have.

The age gap between the young and older generations might give rise to arguments about how both generations perceive the liberation legacy, and some in the past have argued that youth today are less likely to be influenced by the liberation legacy since they did not get to live in the apartheid era (see Schwartz, 2010). This argument has its merits; however, there is a generational transference of the liberation
legacy from parents to youth. Both generations are experiencing the same realities in the township; similar socioeconomic problems such as living in the same RDP houses provided by the government, concerns over the lack of general provision of services by the government, and support for political parties that is shared by households instead of individually by separate members of the families. Kgotso (18, male, unemployed) argued in this regard that he would vote for the ANC since it is the party that his family voted for, stating that ‘my parents are my parents; anything good that happened to them I will support. If my parents are free today, then I am free as well’, he concludes. This is one way that youth often identify themselves with the ANC, and this provides a tentative explanation as to why some youth cite the liberation legacy without having lived in apartheid South Africa.

From the period between November and December, the ANC was critiqued on the basis of its inability to provide people with services, jobs and other material things that would reflect good governance, leading to youth applying critiques to both the ruling party and the elections. This produced the reluctance to go and vote, as well as deepening the scrutiny on political parties that would contend in the elections in May 2014. Parallel to the critique of governance, youth demonstrated a certain loyalty to the ANC, emphasising the importance of the liberation legacy in their support for the ANC. A few factors come into play in this regard; the familiarity with the ANC as a popular party, the reluctance of voting for a new party, and the cross-generational transfer of political opinions that usually occurs within households. Though many of the youth aligned themselves with the ANC at this time, the presence of the EFF as a viable alternative appealed to youth. With Julius Malema leading the party, it was simple for the youth to familiarise themselves with the EFF, which in turn decreased the monopoly that the ANC had in the township, and perhaps helped in inciting people to go and vote whereas they would have not.

9.2.3 Pre-elections

This period was when the elections were forthcoming and the ANC along with other political parties were actively campaigning and trying to get increased support from the electorate. The protest had happened over a year ago and the township was awash with party banners and pamphlets that promoted the elections. The time period looked at in this section is the period immediately before the elections. These
interviews were conducted from the third of May 2014 to immediately after the elections on the seventh of May to capture the attitudes of the youth towards elections and politics. Political campaigns at this time had reached their peak, and the township had numerous voting stations where people could go and vote. Because the day of elections is a public holiday, many people, from workers, to pensioners and schoolchildren were in the streets, with some sitting outside the voting stations in large numbers while party campaigners travelled around Zamdela urging people to go and vote, and to vote for certain parties.

Bandile (32, male, unemployed) who just some time before the elections changed his mind about voting, and motivated his change of mind that he was ‘one of the people thinking that voting is not valuable. I thought I’d be wasting my time’. Though governance by the ruling party and elections were highly criticised after the protest and in November through December, this was changing. The most notable change was the critique on the elections. More people were looking at the elections in a more favourable way than they did in the two preceding periods.

At this time however, the excitement towards the entry of the EFF in the elections had subsided when approaching the day of elections. Though the EFF had been popular in the last year, the ANC had overshadowed it as the second round of heightened campaigning began. Filled with placards, posters, banners, and a plethora of walls painted in ANC colours to advertise the ANC as the party to vote for in the elections, many young people had either changed their minds in terms of abstaining from the elections or voting for opposition parties. They had relatively different opinions about the ANC compared to the others in the two time periods prior to the elections. Whereas it had been trending well when the registrations began, some youths had now been looking at it differently. ‘We are going to vote for the ANC so no EFF for us. We don’t want anything to do with the EFF. We know they are there but we don’t want anything to do with it’, says Mable (35, female, unemployed). What this demonstrates is the change in the attitudes of youth towards the elections, and the continuing support for the ANC. At the same time however, the EFF, and in some cases, the DA had some of the support, but not much, from the young electorate.

Parallel to the above was the consistency of the way in which people viewed the liberation legacy in relation to the ANC, which had not changed between the three time periods. It had given the ANC leverage in the elections since its winning of government in 1994. Though there are existing criticisms in terms of how some young
people viewed elections and political parties, it is evident that the breakaway from the liberation legacy is little compared to the loyalty that the ANC receives through it. Similarly to what had been expressed by some of the youth in November, Rose (33, female, unemployed) describes that her support for the ruling party stems from what she has adopted from her parents and it is something that she will transfer to her own children. She expressed that she was going to vote for the ANC ‘because it is the party that my parents and my grandparents voted for. We have freedom because of the ANC, and my child as well.’ In addition to these expressions, Mable (35, female, unemployed) stated that she ‘cannot simply go to the DA without seeing its works’, while Mathapelo (26, female, unemployed) in another conversation argues that ‘these new parties are just baby parties and they are just nonsense. I don’t think they will last so long’. Bandile (32, male, unemployed) concluded in his views of the ANC, DA and other parties that:

All these people are just complainants against the ANC and none of them are talking about what they are offering. Even the DA is always pointing at ANC’s mistakes and not promising anything better. Even if we know that there are empty promises we don’t really care, but we will vote for the ANC.

The liberation legacy in this case has demonstrated two key things. One, it has allowed the ANC to retain much of its support from the older electorate and the younger ones partly through cross-generational transference of political opinions. The parties that the current voters vote for are often the parties that the newer generations similarly vote for as Rose expressed. Families instead of individuals tend to support similar parties. Secondly, the legacy has reinforced the doubt in other parties from the young electorate. The idea that no other party has governed the country since democratisation in 1994 is still a concern for most young people such as Mathapelo and Bandile regardless of how they perceive the ANC’s governance. Breaking away from a party that has governed for over twenty years is still a radical move by the electorate. With these perspectives, it was yet again evident that the ANC still had a lot of loyalty from some of the youth.
9.3 National elections results: 2009 and 2014

In the elections held on 5 May 2014, the ANC won 62.2% of the votes nationally. For the fifth time it had obtained a landslide victory. In a sense, though, these figures inflate the ANC’s achievement. Since 1994, the proportion of the voting age population (VAP) that actually votes has been declining, and the percentage of the VAP supporting the ANC has gone down from 53.8% in 1994 to 35.0% (Collete and Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014: 25).

The ANC faces growing electoral opposition from the EFF and the DA. This was especially marked in the municipality that includes Zamdelal, Metsimaholo. This is reflected in Table 9.1, which compares the 2014 results with those of 2009. In South Africa, national and provincial election are held on the same day. The figures below are all taken from the national elections, so ‘Free State’ refers to the province’s national election results (not the provincial results). In the province, the ANC’s vote declined from 71.1% of the total to 69.9%, a drop of just 1.2%, but in Metsimaholo, it fell from 66.8% to 58.8%, a drop of 8.0%. At each level, support for the Democratic Alliance (DA) increased, and support for the Congress of the People (COPE) collapsed. Given that the EFF was only formed shortly before the elections, it did remarkably well. Interestingly, it obtained a higher proportion of the vote in Metsimaholo, with 10.3%, than it did in the province, 8.2%, then nationally at 6.4%.

Table 9.1 shows results from the three voting districts (VD) where the Zamdelal protest was mostly concentrated and where there was most of the destruction of property. The picture is not strikingly different from elsewhere. In analysing these figures, we should keep in mind that people do not have to vote in the VDs in which they are registered. Unfortunately, I could not obtain VAP figures at VD level.

Taking from the three VDs together, the number of votes cast as a proportion of the registered voters declined from 72.8% to 67.4%. This drop of 5.4% is slightly greater than the national figure, where there was a reduction of 3.8% from 77.3% to 73.5%, but it is not very different (Collete and Schulz-Herzenberg 2014, 2014: 23). As elsewhere, COPE collapsed and the DA improved its position. For the three VDs, the ANCs vote moved downwards from 79.3% to 73.8%, and they remained easily the dominant party.

---

20 In comparing the ANC to other parties, one has to consider all parties’ votes as a proportion of the VAP, and, in 2014, support for all opposition parties combined was only 21.3 percent of the total VAP.
Table 9.1. 2009-2014 results at National, provincial and municipal level at three VDs: %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>COPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>11 650 748</td>
<td>1 311 027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>734 688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal:</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>37 483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metsimaholo</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three VDs</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>3166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: IEC

The EFF did rather better than elsewhere in the municipality, the province and the country, obtaining about 12.8% of the vote. So they did well, but not by a large margin. The problem with official statistics is that they are not sensitive to age. So in order to overcome this limitation, I corroborated the results with the exit poll data collected by the Research Chair in Social Change and collected my own data.

9.4 Protest and elections: 2014 national elections results from exit poll data

Table 9.2 show the results of the Research Chair in Social Change’s exit poll surveys that were conducted in Zamdela on the fifth May 2014, the day on which the national and provincial elections were held. Researchers used convenient sampling in finding the participants, which meant simply asking those who voted to participate in the survey as soon as they walked out of the voting venues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in protest in past two years</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social Change exit poll

The survey provided results of those that had both voted and protested. This was a general survey conducted with all people of all ages in the township and the results
were significant. Table 9.2 demonstrates that only 27% of the people surveyed at all age levels, from 18 to 73, and voting districts participated in protests in the past two years.

Table 9.3: Participation in elections by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How old are you?</th>
<th>Under 40</th>
<th>Over 40</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social Change exit poll

What Table 9.3 demonstrates is the proportion of youth that cast the ballot in the election in comparison to that of the older residents. The table shows a higher turnout of youth in the elections, at 55.7%, demonstrating that youth participate more in the 2014 elections in comparison to the older residents who only had a presence of only 44.3%.

For those that had both taken part in the 2014 elections, there was a slightly higher support for the ANC when we include the wider sample, see Table 9.4. The ANC in this regard took home 83.9% percent of the votes in the exit poll data, giving it a huge victory over the other parties.

Table 9.4: Parties voted for in 2014 national elections around the VDs, IEC, and exit poll survey data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>IEC</th>
<th>Exit Poll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social Change exit poll and IEC

In the exit poll survey there was a slightly lower support for the EFF in this case, at 11.2% of the votes. The DA did not do well either, however this was as expected, with only 2.1% in the wider sample. There is a problem with the sample size of the exit poll data given that its size is very small compared with that of the IEC. Though this may be, the results of the exit poll data are very similar to that of the IEC in areas around the three voting districts.

When split by age, the results in the exit poll are similar to those of the post-election survey, see Table 9.5. The ANC is still at first place with the majority of votes
collected, at 77.7%. This is followed by the EFF that did relatively well as a newcomer at 18.5%, and followed by the DA and other parties with 2.5% and 1.3% respectively.

Table 9.5: Party voted for in 2014 national elections by youth between 18 and 38.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


9.5 Post-election survey results

The following survey was conducted post national elections in September 2014. It was conducted in and around the voting districts, which are within the area in which the January 2013 protests were concentrated. It was conducted with 258 respondents around the three voting districts primarily to determine their participation in both protest and elections with a breakdown in terms of age and gender. All the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 39.

9.5.1 Participation in protest

The demographics of the January 2013 protest in Zamdela were not very surprising. As in many protests around the country, the participants of the protest were predominantly males. Table 9.6 shows that close to half of the males surveyed participated in the protest, about 47.9%. This is a relatively large number in comparison to the women. At least 33.9% of the women took part in the protest, demonstrating that men have a higher propensity to protest than women do.

Table 9.6: Participation in protest by gender across the three VDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you take part in protest in the past two years?</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>answer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was an even spread of the participants in terms of age as well. Though not by a large margin, and similarly to the exit poll data, Table 9.7 shows that among those that said they took part in the protest, the younger youth are slightly more likely to have participated in comparison to the other ages and the least likely to take part in protest being those aged in their late thirties. The table shows in particular that the likelihood of participation in protest decreases as age rises.

Table 9.7: participation in protest by age across the three VDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age band</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the last two years have you participated in a protest?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


9.5.2 Voter turnout in the 2014 national elections

Table 9.8 shows the numbers of people in the survey who participated in the 2014 national elections by age. Out of the 254 people that responded to the questions, 68.5% of them cast their ballot in the national elections.

Table 9.8: Participation in 2014 national elections by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age band</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you vote in the 2014 national elections?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>no.</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Post-election survey, 2014
Against expectations, which were based on the qualitative research, youth participation in the elections was high. In the interviews, youth appeared cynical and unlikely to vote, but this was not reflected in the survey. However, as one might predict from registration data, confirmed by interviews, the proportion of oldest youth who voted was greater than the proportion of youngest youths. The former 82.4% said they voted compared to 60.5% of the latter.

### 9.5.3 Protest and elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voted in 2014 national elections</th>
<th>Participation in protest</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes no.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No no.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Post-elections survey.

I analyse in Table 9.9 the participation, or lack thereof, of young people in the 2013 protest and 2014 national elections. The table categorises firstly, those young people that protested in both protest and elections, secondly, those that took part in elections only and thirdly, those who voted and did not protest in 2013, and lastly those who neither protested nor voted. The first category refers to young people who are highly active in political processes locally and nationally, while the second and third describe those who are partially active.

From Table 9.9 it can be seen that 77.8% of young people were active in both protest activity and elections, higher than those who are partially active. More so, it shows that young people are more political than not. In comparison to the exit poll’s results as well (see Table 9.2), participation in protest and elections by youth is higher in Table 9.9 above. This shows strong evidence in the case of Zamdela that young people are more likely to participate in both protests and elections.

Among the 80 people that did not vote, only 30% of them took part in the protest in comparison to the 70% of those that had abstained from both the political events. Many simply decided to stay at home when both the protests and elections occurred, demonstrating their apathy in these forms of political participation. Note however that what is reflected as apathy towards politics is not a definitive conclusion given that
there is evidence of other existing spaces of political participation outside of protests and elections. Additionally, that there are many young people that did not vote due to administrative barriers such as not having identity documents, not registering, or in a way showing their rejection of not only politics, but the ANC as well. This is discussed in more detail in section 9.5.5 below.

9.5.4 Support for parties

In terms of support for parties, the results of the survey were very similar to those of the IEC for the three VDs considered above, see Table 9.10. More so, they were very similar to the results of the exit poll data conducted by the Research Chair in Social Change that collected the data on the day of elections. In the survey, which covered voters aged 18 to 39, the ANC collected 72.0% from those who said they voted in comparison to the 77.7% of the same sample age group in the exit poll survey, see Table 9.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In contrast, 16.6% of the survey voters supported the EFF, slightly more than supported this party in the three VDs that were analysed. In the survey, the EFF did better among those aged 19-29 than among 30-39 year olds, 18.6% compared to 15.1% of survey voters. These results are very similar to those of the exit poll. The exit poll shows an 18.5 percent in the votes for the EFF, thus demonstrating significant verisimilitude to the post-election survey.

Thus, in the VDs where the protest had the greatest impact, the ANC secured widespread support, even among youth. Nevertheless, in these areas the EFF did
relatively well, especially among the youngest youth. However, what, if any, is the relationship between protesting and voting?

9.5.5 Post-elections: reasons for voting for the EFF and ANC

I show thematically in Figure 9.1 the reasons that people voted for the ANC and the EFF. For those that voted for the ANC, it is notable that a high number of people stuck to the argument that they will vote based on their inheritance of the legacy provided by the ANC. At least 41.1% of the respondents in the sample stated that they will vote for the ANC because ‘it brought freedom’, or ‘because of Nelson Mandela and his legacy’. This continues to provide evidence that many young people still regard the ANC’s legacy as an important factor in voting, and the ANC is continuously benefiting from it in times of elections.

![Figure 9.1: reasons for voting for ANC and EFF](image)


Second and supplementary to the theme of liberation is party identification and personalities. 20.2% of people positioned themselves with the ANC in relation to the May 2014 national elections. The most common reason for voting in terms of how they identify the ANC is that they ‘like’ the party, and often without explaining further what this really means. Thus, youth voted because of their familiarity with the ruling party.

Material benefits came into place as a theme in the reasons youth voted for the ANC. Many forms of service delivery that have occurred are attributed to the
government of the ANC. Several of the people alluded to their voting reasons that they voted for the ANC because ‘we have RDP houses’, with some stating that ‘I voted for the ANC because I thought I would gain something from it’.

For those that voted for the EFF, the notable theme in their reasons for voting is ‘change’. As Paret (unpublished) warned in an earlier analysis of the 2014 national elections with the use of a wider sample in comparison to the one supporting this dissertation, change is abstract if not complex, and is ‘often expressed without indication of what change means’ (Paret, unpublished). The results found in the post-election survey are very similar to what Paret (unpublished) found in his analysis. A lot of the people that opted to vote for opposition parties such as the EFF referenced change frequently, with some saying the same about the DA. Those that voted for the EFF stated that they voted because the EFF ‘will bring change in the future’ and that ‘Malema stands for change’. Those who supported the DA stated that their reasons for voting for the DA are because they ‘want change and the DA will bring those changes’. With 16.8% of the total number of people seeking change, young people did not only demonstrate dissatisfaction with the ruling party as Paret (unpublished) elucidated, however there is an increasing rate at which the young electorate is considering voting for alternative parties away from the ANC.

What the above trends demonstrate is that the people participating in elections along with their reasons for doing so are complex, and thus there is no standard way of explaining how they vote and why they vote. In all four time periods, people expressed their perspectives towards elections in different ways, however when those views are explained thematically, we get to see some of the underlying reasons for participating in elections and supporting various parties. Governance is still highly critiqued, but as time went by it was overshadowed by the evidently strong liberation legacy that the ANC has benefitted from for the past two decades. In fact, the critiques towards the ANC decreased towards the elections and the young people became supportive of the ANC once ‘unviable’ and newer parties officially challenged its hegemony. This legacy is demonstrated to be still important for the youth, facilitated by cross-generational learning between the young and the older generation.

9.5.6 The relationship between Zamdela’s protest and the elections turnout.

The relationship between voting and protesting is one that is complex to establish. Booysen (2007) attempts to establish this relationship by looking at voting patterns in
previous years. In her argument, protests are used as a way of engaging with the state and voicing out discontents and equally as mechanisms to attain better service delivery. Booysen (2007) implies that the people that participate in protests are the same people that vote for the ANC.

Table 9.11 provides evidence relevant to this debate. Again, it is based on the survey of 18-39 year olds in the three VDs closest to the protest, and note that this age group is the one whose participation in protest is dominant compared to other age groups. Most of the respondents who protested and voted actually voted for the ANC. However, the contrast between the ANC and the EFF voters is significant. With the former, only 39.5% participated in the protest, but with the latter, the figure was 73.3%. That is, young people who voted for the EFF were far more likely to have participated in the protest than people who voted for the ANC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party voted for in 2014 national elections</th>
<th>In the last two years have you participated in a protest?</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC votes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA votes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF votes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other votes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total votes</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Since 2006 there has been significant changes in the South African political landscape that have influenced the way in which people vote as well as their parties of choice. For the purpose of this dissertation, firstly, the so-called ‘born frees’ were eligible to vote, which is different from the time when studies on elections were made. Secondly, there is the EFF, which is the first break from the ANC that has gone politically to the left, and COPE as well, which was formed just before the elections of 2009. In 2006 there was neither the EFF nor COPE, so the only significant opposition was the DA. And for many reasons, no matter how dissatisfied people were with the ANC, voting
for the DA is a big step and in the minds of many people this is not a viable alternative. What we have now in 2014 with the EFF as a viable party that appeals to young people and is therefore a considerable alternative to the ANC. Though there is still significant support for the ANC, the votes that the ANC received are mostly from those people that abstained from protest action in the past two years, which makes up 60.5%. Therefore, in the case of Zamdela, the people that do not participate in protest are more likely to vote for the ANC.

It is those that protested that had a higher rate of support for opposition parties, which in this case is the EFF, and very minimally but still important, the DA. This shows that people are not necessarily uncritical of the ANC and can therefore shift to supporting opposition parties. More so, since we are looking at youth, it is interesting that it is young people that participated in the protests and subsequently gravitated towards the EFF. The dual-action repertoire therefore cannot fully explain the increased rate of protest action parallel to the dominance of the ANC.

9.6 Conclusion

The qualitative interviews, like the survey, involved people who did not participate in the protests, as well as those who did. Partly through ongoing involvement in the area, I think it is possible that my data reflects an actual change in the mood and consistency in other terms. In the immediate aftermath of the protest, at the beginning of 2013, there were heightened levels of cynicism towards governance. This was directed against the failure of politics to improve people’s lives, hence politicians in general and the ANC in particular. By tracking these criticisms throughout the four time periods, it is evident that there are changes to the criticisms when coming close to the elections. The ANC’s leverage is however attributed to its position as the party that brought freedom, which over time becomes a consistent basis for why people support it during elections, indicating that the liberation legacy is still of importance to many young people today. By tracing this liberation legacy throughout time, it can be seen that the ANC still retains much of its influence and loyalty from youth and this loyalty stems from different sources in the lives of young people.

Though the ANC is still supported, the formation of the EFF served two things; as a magnet for many of the more political youth and revived their interest in campaigning and encroaching upon the support of the ANC. It stirred an argument
and pushed the youth, as well as older people, to take sides. People thus identified themselves differently with different parties, with the ANC because of their familiarity with the party, and some with the EFF because if served as an alternative to other existing parties.

Seen in this way, protest may have turned people, youth especially, against official politics and partly against the ANC, while politicising them in a way that made it possible for a radical voice to gain attention. That voice had a particular appeal to youth who had participated in the protest, but its tone and volume forced larger numbers to take renewed interest in voting. It is difficult to explain the shift that occurred between the protest and the election without the mediation of the EFF.

The exit poll data and the post-election survey do describe these shifts. Youth took part in the elections at the end and in large numbers and the EFF received a lot of support. This suggests that the political landscape is undergoing a slow but significant transformation. People, particularly youth, are increasingly supporting opposition parties, in the form of the EFF in this case, and it is those people that predominantly have involved themselves in protest in the past two years. The DA and COPE could not achieve what the EFF had achieved in the past two elections, mainly so because the DA would be a last option for many of the voters, and COPE having relatively the same politics and policies as the ANC. The EFF stands to the left of the ANC, and thus has increased its chances of gaining support from youth and presented a new form of politics that have not been there before. As such, it does not seem as though youth are apathetic of politics and elections in the country, many are simply conflicted between the lack of services from the ruling party and the lack of alternatives in times of elections.

The data presented in this chapter helps to shed light on the nature of South Africa’s party political system which Southall (2003; 2005) and Mattes and Southall (2004) described as a predominant party system. The data presented in this chapter demonstrates that South Africa can still be described as a predominant party system given the continued electoral dominance of the ANC. There are, however, important changes in the political landscape since the formation of the EFF which has eroded some of the dominance of the ANC. It remains to be seen whether the EFF will be able to build upon their gains in the 2014 national elections. This will need to be a subject for further research.
Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This research aimed to understand how and why young people in Zamdela engage in community protest and how this impacts on their participation in political activity including voting in elections. Using a mixed methods approach, the dissertation engaged with the questions that built upon the conceptualisation of youth and how the concept is understood from below, the spaces in which youth participate politically and the implications of their views on politics and national elections. It engages with these questions by using Zamdela’s protest as a case study; a protest whose size, composition, violence and destructiveness demonstrates yet another case of widespread community disgruntlement with the decisions of government.

This chapter sums up the arguments in the dissertation and how I have dealt with the research question. It begins with a summary of the major findings on how youth is understood sociologically and the factors that forge youth identity in Zamdela that include language and translation. I build upon the way in which protest is analysed with the use of maps. By mapping I captured a timeline of events, a process that is seldom used when investigating protests and one that provides new and deeper insights in the study of such events. Additionally, it discusses findings on youth political participation in Zamdela; demonstrating with evidence the ways and spaces in which the youth participate in political activities that include protest and elections. I argued that the extent to which youths are engaged in such politics is looked upon in a limited manner that does not fully capture the full extent of their political participation (Dawson, 2012; Dawson, 2014a). In addition, I make arguments based on the data from the post-election survey data against Booysen’s (2007) argument where she argues that communities in revolt use a dual-action repertoire in their engagement with the state. In closing, the chapter discusses the important aspects of the research that were not fully researched upon and subsequently provide suggestions for further research.

10.2 Main findings and contributions to literature

Below are the major findings from the dissertation as well as the contributions to existing literature. The sections focus on the concept of youth and how it is understood,
the analysis of the protest in Zamdela as well as the different methodologies that were used, political participation in Zamdela and how it relates to other researches as well as case studies, and finally the link between protest and elections.

10.2.1 The concept of youth in Zamdela

In this dissertation I build upon the definition and understanding of ‘youth’. Institutional definitions have for a long time pigeonholed the concept of youth based on age categories and have branded youth in South Africa as those young people between the ages of 15 and 35 (RSA, 2009). Though age is acknowledged as a defining factor in understanding youth, I found that when adopting a sociological approach the concept of youth is complex and cannot be understood or quantified by age as many interpretations conventionally argue. It reveals that youth can be understood in a multifaceted way. This dissertation reveals that although youth may belong to the same cohort of people politically, they have characteristics among them that not only show their similarities, but also accentuate their differences.

Firstly, youth can be looked upon through a lens of two categorisations. By conceptualising older and younger youth in this manner helped to analyse their heterogeneity. The older youth are those young individuals that are over or around the age of 24 and are old enough to have ‘realised’ democratisation in the 1990s in comparison to the younger youth under the age of 24, that have relatively lived their lives in a democratic state. The older youth are the ones that have participated in the elections in both 2009 and 2014, thus possessing relatively more political experience whereas the younger ones, including the ‘born frees’, were only eligible to register for the 2014 national elections. However, most importantly, though the older and younger youth are political, they exhibit differences in their politicisation and loyalties in party politics. The older youth are not as volatile as the younger ones in terms of party political allegiance. They are more critical of the leadership within their parties whereas the younger ones critique politics in a much wider way. In addition, whereas the older youth are more likely to engage in their local politics to change structural factors within the political parties in which they are members, the younger ones are more likely to relinquish their membership of the political party entirely. These differences have political significance because these groups can finally be distinguished and be studies in the context of politics and elections.
I also found that there are new factors that perhaps complicate the understanding of youth, particularly in the context of black working class youth. I found that the language that is used at the time as well as the context could significantly affect the understanding of what youth are. I show in the dissertation that there is a certain politicisation of the term ‘youth’ when it is interpreted in English in comparison to South African vernacular languages. The way in which youth is understood in English is not necessarily the same way that it is understood in vernacular languages. Due to the political history of youth in South Africa, the word ‘youth’, and youth themselves, are often contextualised within political and protest action. As such, the understanding of youth is defined along political lines. In addition, language is new and different in defining the concept of youth. It is not only that youth is distinguished from adults or a child, which is the general connotation in English, but is also that it is being distinguished from an individual young person to a collective, thus bringing about a collective identity. This is so because in occasions where youth are referred to in English they often belong to an organisation or structure that has youth as a subcategory of the members.

This is not the case in vernacular languages. In Sesotho in particular, a very dominant language in Zamdela, batjha, referring to ‘youth’, is defined along the lines of unruly adolescence, thus depoliticising the term youth into its social form. Some use the word often to refer to individuals, particularly referring to their behaviour in the household and community, and they sometimes do this in a derogatory manner. The concept, its usage, and its definition are thus different from what is argued about youth in literature and what is actually happening from below.

10.2.2 The analysis of protest in Zamdela

I analysed the protest in Zamdela using two maps; one to describe the distance between Zamdela and Sasolburg as well as the size of the former in relation to the latter. What is significant about the process of mapping is that it provided a sense of scale, which researchers do not necessarily get on other works researching protests (Von Holdt et al, 2011 and Dawson 2012 for example). Researchers count protest (Alexander, 2010 for example) and they do not completely draw out the important events that happen during the protests and the aftermath. Some of these protests are small and some are large, some have significance to a large number of people and...
some are so to a small number of people. Some have political significance and some do not. Therefore, the question of scale will enable researchers to illuminate on these important aspects of protest.

Secondly, mapping can help in drawing out the form of the protest. In the case of Zamdela, the protest was going towards the town centre. It was not only a conflict between the protestors and the police, people were beginning to threaten the status quo and controlling space. The community was not only on the defence but also on the offense as they blocked of the streets and were going into other parts outside of the township while at the same time restricting access to it.

The significance of the way in which I analysed the protest is that it is an analysis over time instead of lumping everything that happened throughout the protest. The day-to-day analysis of the protest allowed me to provide the scale of the protest but at the same time demonstrate the organisation and activity of protestors. This takes away the seemingly spontaneous nature of the protest which we now can explain and understand. Protests are spontaneous often but it does not mean that people are not thinking consciously about what they are doing. The day-to-day account aided successfully in comprehending what happened, and by the use of a map I was able to provide a sociological insight into what happened during the protest.

The dissertation in this regard did not just make a theoretical contribution to literature but a methodological one as well. Mapping is a subfield of sociology, a way to illustrate in detail the events of a certain occurrence visually. As such, this research establishes a new way of conducting researches on protests that can ensure and facilitate accuracy and imagery; something that is seldom done in the research and description of protests.

10.2.3 Political participation and politicisation of youth in Zamdela

The way in which Dawson (2012) depicts the youth is that the youth are in a process of waiting for long periods of time and do not do anything. The waiting that Dawson (2012) depicts is a rather disheartened space in comparison to my findings on political participation in Zamdela. Yes, young people are waiting by virtue of being unemployed but this does not necessarily mean that their time is unused or sometimes used unproductively. Therefore, the waiting is not necessarily negative. Dawson (2012) has underestimated the extent to which youth are political because there are a lot of things
happening in the different spaces that youth occupy and a lot of political discussions within that waiting. They do engage in the politics of the townships continuously, and in different ways that are often unconventional. Some youth use the conventional spaces that are provided for them in the community such as community meetings and local party branches, and others engage with politics socially in hangout spots and social networks. Social networks in particular provide a simple way for youth and the community at large to engage in political dialogue. With discussion forums created on social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp, youth become involved, and they involve others in current dialogues around the township.

The videos and the music within youth culture demonstrates yet again that youth are actually interested and that politics are an important part of some of the content that they are producing. They have widened the idea of political participation by using their talents to critique the government and its inadequacies while at the same time advancing youth culture within the township. Music and technology, particularly of the same form and genre that youth are listening to in a wider context reveals the underlying forms of political participation that are seldom paid attention to. This shows that youth are not necessarily disengaged from politics; however they do not necessarily reflect their interest by going to the ballot box. They make music and videos that are reflective of politics.

Although patronage, ‘waiting’ and envy play a large role in the politicisation of youth in South African townships. Dawson (2014) demonstrated the way in which the youth find opportunities in client-patron politics in Zandspruit. The findings in this dissertation show that these may not necessarily be the only impetus of youth political participation. Perhaps this is the case in Zandspruit; however I argue that youth involve themselves in local politics out of their own agency because the state is not providing them with adequate service delivery, and additionally to fight against patronage politics within the ANC and municipality. The way that this dissertation represents the youth is that they are politically conscious and active, politically critical and they have their own thoughts and ideas about politics in their community and in South Africa as a whole. This does not suggest that youth are generally political, but what was found is that a lot of them are political. They have ideas and they are talking about them in different spaces.

This is also a methodological point because as a young, male, and black researcher I could do observation work that young others could not. By virtue of my
gender as well I was in an advantageous position because many young men could speak with me about things that they normally could not in the presence of a person of the opposite gender. At several occasion in the research I sought help from a young female research assistant to aid with the driving so that I could accelerate the pace at which I was collecting data, and on those occasions, I noticed that the data that was provided to me was not as blunt as the data I had collected before. Many young men would either not disclose some of the information I sought, such as unemployment, drinking habits, children and their dependence on social grants. Therefore, the significance of this is that if I were outside my social location I would have a different insight. So race, and gender and often ascribe class are therefore important factors that may affect the nature and form of the data that we collect as researchers.

10.2.4 Protest, political participation and elections

This dissertation provides a window on a particular period in time, between the protest and the elections. Most studies look either at the protest or at elections individually. They do not have the opportunity to look at the period between the two. I instead show the changing political attitudes over time and this enabled me to trace political attitudes through time, between two important events.

The first time period was time immediately after the protest. Throughout this period there were negative attitudes towards the ANC and politics in general. Many young people were critical of the ANC and the local government. More so, they were critical of the leaders in the party and held them responsible for the social issues that they are facing. Though this was the case, the negativity was juxtaposed with the loyalty that many young people had towards the ANC, thus maintaining a large part of the good standing that the ANC had with its loyal supporters.

The second window was between the establishment of the EFF and the registrations for the 2014 elections. Hostility towards the ANC had reduced at this time, and people were faced with ANC campaigning throughout, highlighting the liberation legacy that the ANC has built. Many young people agreed to voting for the ANC for this particular reason and thus maintaining some of the loyalty towards the party. However, at the same time, the EFF was in the race for the presidency. The entry of the EFF was important at this juncture because it was the one that largely caused the decline of the ANCYL in Zamdela as it served as an alternative to the ANC, offering a
new set of politics and deteriorating some of the loyalties that youth had towards the ANC. At the same time, it was a party that politicised many young people in the township, presenting itself as an alternative to those young people that abstained from politics and elections, as well as those that protested.

In the third period approaching the elections, attitudes had changed. Perhaps due to the large scale campaigning and a plethora of ANC banners, posters and television advertisements, the ANC became popular again. The ANC's liberation legacy-based support, which had been present throughout, became stronger because it appeared to have been important to young people more that was expected. This was partly because the liberation legacy and ANC loyalties are in some cases transmitted intergenerationally, in families, between parents and other family members. Young people do not only develop their political points of view but also learn from other mediums such as parents and local organisations. The EFF had reached its peak at this time, campaigning as much as they could and having built up significant support from young people. However, the party was still overshadowed by the ANC and its campaign that reached heights that the EFF could not. After this period and post elections, the Research Chair in Social Change and my own survey on the elections were conducted and analysed.

Booysen (2007) argues that communities use a dual-action repertoire in their politics. They protest to satisfy their grievances and at the same time vote for the ANC. Booysen has termed this dual-action repertoire as the ‘ballot and the brick’. The research drew a number of conclusions from the survey data that is contradictory to Booysen’s findings. First of all, my findings demonstrated that a high proportion of young voters who were surveyed had both voted and protested. This contradicts Alexander’s (2012) assertion that people that protest do not vote. However, the findings of the survey demonstrated that young people involved in protest were more likely to have voted for an opposition party. This refutes Booysen’s view that areas of protest display undented support for the ANC.

Part of the reason why the findings in this dissertation differ from Booysen’s is that since she made her original ‘ballot and the brick’ argument the political landscape of South Africa has changed. This is particularly with the introduction of the EFF, which in relation with young people’s politics was significant. It politicised many young people and became a viable party for which to vote. COPE had declined significantly, and when it was in the competition for government in 2009 it did not have considerable
support from the youth. The DA as well did not have a lot of support in townships as well. Therefore, a combination of the protest, the creation of the EFF and the fact that the elections occurred shortly after the protest politicised youth, which is very different from the time Booysen made her argument in 2007. This caused the split between the people supporting the ANC and the EFF.

10.3 Recommended future research

The understanding of youth in this research is multifaceted and complex in nature. To further achieve a more nuanced understanding of youth and their identity in South Africa, there is a need for more research on the new generation of ‘born frees’ to allow further assessment of the way they create their identity and their relationships to party politics. They have recently become part of the voting age population, which means that they can now form political opinions and form party loyalties that can formally be recognised. As such, it is important to conduct research on them to discover how they navigate local and national politics, their methods of engaging with politics and the basis of their political perspectives as people that have lived in a democratic country their entire lives.

There also should be further scrutiny of the languages that are used in research. In a more general sense, this highlights the importance of black sociologists. Most of the sociology in South Africa written thus far is coming from people whose first language is English and Afrikaans (See Alexander et al, 2014). What we have not done enough of in South Africa is to look at the world from the bottom-up to see how ordinary people see the world as a way of adjusting or changing how concepts are used. There is this framework of concepts that is imported by sociologists in a standard and operational approach and I aim to understand youth from below. This is not only a methodological approach but it is also in the way that we think about different concepts. When people are talking about the youth or other concepts they also have to think about how others are using these concepts. Therefore, what I am adding here is not only an extension of the concept of youth but it is to also make a bigger point about thinking about things in the vernacular. Researchers will then uncover a significant nuance to the understanding of concepts. This has implications not only for sociology in South Africa but elsewhere. We need to think about the words that researchers select to translate concepts and how the words are conceptualised. A
point to note is that there is not necessarily a big separation between methodology and findings that we impose in the way we do our research. The methodology in a sense is accentuated by the findings.

Researchers should also do more mapping in their research and analysis of protest action. By mapping, I was able to achieve certain things that provided nuance to the analysis and to build stronger findings. This is important sociologically because most research is conducted long after the protest has happened thus making researchers rely largely on media reports, so we do not often interrogate sociologically what happened and when.

Additionally, there is a need for more case studies on the political participation of youth in urban townships in South Africa. More so, there should be a larger focus on non-voters as they may shed light on the reasons for their abstention from politics and elections. More focus is put on voters and this has become a large omission in literature on elections and political participation. The ways in which political participation is expressed and understood in this dissertation may not necessarily be the same in other urban townships in the country. Zamdela is a small area in comparison to other townships near large cities, thus further research may well be beneficial.

Finally, gender seemed to have been an important part of the findings in the dissertation, however because of the nature of the research question, limited resources and time I did not pursue it. This is worth researching in future studies as it adds value to research on youth identity and protest.

10.4 Conclusion

This dissertation has focused directly on Zamdela with the aim of understanding how and why youth in Zamdela engage in protest and how this has impacted on their political participation including voting in elections. This research is important because it takes a sociological approach in understanding youth, as groups of people that lack a standard definition in contrast to institutional definitions that focus on age alone. It has shown that youth are a collective of individuals that can be understood in different ways that include cultural and linguistic factors. More importantly, youth are more political than they are assumed to be. They are often engaged with politics in ways that are often overlooked and under-researched. They do not necessarily employ the
dual-action repertoire in protest action. Youth that participate in protest and politics do not just get involved because they are bored or because they want to exploit opportunities that come with protest action. There is politics among youth aside from the above, a lot of it.
Appendix

A: Information form

My name is Mahlatse Rampedi and I am a fieldworker from the Sociology Department at the University of Johannesburg.

I am doing research titled *Youth, Political Participation and Protest in South Africa: the Case of Zamdela, Sasolburg*, in order to understand how and why young people in Zamdela engage in community protests and how this impacts on their participation in political activity including voting in elections.

I would like to conduct an interview with you about the protests that have happened in your area, the young people that were involved in it, including you, and the youth’s general political activities. I would like to know what happened in the protests, why young people were involved, what has happened since the protest and how these protests have influenced young people’s political activities. I would also like your permission to record or take notes during any discussions or contact we have.

You are free not to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with and can withdraw from the interview at any point. If you would like a transcript of the interview this can be made available by request. In addition, you will not be identified by name in the study and the greatest care will be taken to ensure that you cannot be identified by other means.

I aim to use this information for the completion of a Master’s Degree in Sociology at the University so your participation will be highly appreciated. If you would like to find out more about the research you can contact me on 0731816808 or mahlatserampedi@gmail.com.
B: Consent form

Title of Project: Youth, Political Participation and Protest in South Africa: the Case of Zamdela, Sasolburg

Name of Researcher: Mahlatse Rampedi

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions;

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons;

3. I agree to take part in the above study;

4. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio recorded;

5. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being video recorded;

6. I agree to the use of fake names in the research.

Name of Participant    Date    Signature

Name of Researcher    Date    Signature
C: Semi-structured interview schedule

Schedule of Questions

Personal Questions:
Perhaps we can start by you telling me a little about yourself
Were you born and bred in Zamdela?
If not, probe: How long have you lived here?
Where were you living previously?
Why did you move here?
How old are you?
Are you working?

Probe (if not working): How long have you been unemployed? How do you make ends meet?

Have you completed high school? Any other courses of further training?

Youth and Political Activity
In your own words define what ‘youth’ is.
Would you consider yourself as a youth? Why or why not?
What kind of person should be regarded as youth?
Do you socialise with other young people? How often and what do you do?
What is it like to be a young person in Zamdela?
What challenges do you and other young people face in Zamdela?
Are you a member of any political party or civic organisation?

Probe: How long have you been a member?

If no longer a member of a political party, why.

Do you belong to a church? Probe: Which one? Why not?

Do you belong to any youth organisation? E.g. ANCYL.

Probe: How did you get to be involved?

Probe: If not, why not?

Probe: What do you do when other young people are actively participating in political activities?

Why do you think young people get involved in politics? / Why do you think they don’t?

Tell me about youth leadership.

What are the age groups of the leadership?

Tell me about their backgrounds.

What is the relationship between the youth and the older activists here?

Do older people participate in youth organisations and politics?

If yes, how old are these people?

What role do they play in the youth organisations?

How often does the community hold meetings?

What kinds of issues are raised in these meetings?

**Protests, Participation and Voting in Elections**

We are aware that there have been service delivery protests in your area and I would like to find out more about them.

Tell me about any protest that you remember that happened in this area?

What was it about?

What caused the protest? [What was the trigger?]

What happened before the protest? Did people try to meet with the councillor or the municipality before the protests?

Were you personally involved? If not, why?

Do your parents know about your involvement in the protests? (If under 18)

What role did you play in the protests?
What role did other young people play in the protests? Where and how did they mobilise?

Do people in Zamdela use social networks to communicate?

What do they talk about?

Do you personally use Social Networks to communicate?

What do you mostly talk about?

Can you relate the use of social networks with the mobilisation of young people into politics or protest?

How many people that are your age did you see during the protest?

Would you say the protest was violent?

If yes, why do you think it turned violent? Do you think it is right for people to protest violently?

What happened after the protests?

Do you think people in your community will protest again?

Did you like the outcomes of the protests? Why?

Has the *toyi* affected the way you view politics? How and why?

Has the *toyi toyi* affected the way you view political parties in any way? How?

Do you think elections are important? Why or why not?

Have you registered to vote? If not, why not?

If yes, would you perhaps tell me which party you are going to vote for and why?

Would you encourage other people to vote? (Even if not registered)

How do you decide which party to vote for? Or not to vote for?

Did you vote last in the last elections? (If over 23)

Did you vote for the same party you will be voting for next election? Why? (If over 23 and registered)

Are you active member of the party you are going to vote for? How and for how long?

If not registered:

Has the *toyi toyi* affected the way you view politics? How and why?

Did the previous *toyi toyi* influence your choice in abstaining from registering elections?

If so, how?

Are you abstaining from elections or politics in general? And why?
D: Survey schedule

YOUTH, PROTEST & POLITICAL PARTICIPATION SURVEY 2014

Community name: Zamdela

Questionnaire #: ....................

Time of interview: .................

Please circle the appropriate answer. All answers are confidential.

[1] Gender: Male (1) Female (2)

[2] How old are you (years)? ...........................................

[3] Are you?

Employed full-time (1) Employed part-time (2)

Unemployed (3) Student (4) None of the above (5)

[4] In the last two years have you participated in a protest? For example toyi toyi, road barricade or march? Y(1) N(2)


ANC (1)   EFF (2)   IFP (3)   PAC (4)   DA (5)   COPE (6)   NFP (7)   AZAPO (8)   UDM (9)   Spoiled Ballot (10)   other party (11):……………….. Refused (12)

[7] Why did you vote for this party OR spoil your ballot?

[If quote is exact, please put “ ” marks around the quote]

[8] If you did not vote, explain why.

[If quote is exact, please put “ ” marks around the quote]

[9]

Formal dwelling – owned (1)

RDP House (2)

Informal dwelling – not backyard (3)

Other (4)

Formal dwelling – rented (5)

Flat/Hostel (6)

Informal dwelling – backyard (7)
E: Sesotho and IsiZulu quotations

Note: Due to colloquialism, these quotations contain phrases and words that are not native to the original language spoke.

Bandile:

*Obvious* uyazi ukuthi kukhona abantu abazi uAce Magashule; abamuzwisayo. Yibo abatshela abantu lana ekasi vele, uyabona (pg. 47).

Umuntu omusha ngim'bala nge age, *from 18 to 35* (pg. 60).


Camilla:

Rona ne re nka di *hair piece* tsa mahala ntate, diBrazillian tse turang di *thousand*. Mahalahala!! (pg. 77).

Gabi:

Mesebetsi ha e hlaha mona ba fana ka eona. *So what is the use* ea hore nna ke voute? ANC e teng mo Sasol mara ahona ntho e etsahalang. Di *relative* tsa boke di hlaha Qwa Qwa empa bana le mesebetsi rona resena eona (pg. 88).

Jabu:

Motjha ke motho o eleng hore ha bana *vision* ka hore *most* ea bone *nowadays* otlha thola hore ditavern diatlala. *Every time* o kase thole *library* e tletsi okile oa bona. *You don’t find* batjha ba balang hore ba bone mo babatlang hoya teng *in life*. Motjha ke, hai ajetsebe hore kereng hore motjha ke eng (pg. 64)

Katlego:

*Stadium* ‘ne hosena moferefere, *because* ha esale re baemetsi azankhe batle. Kea kgoloa re dutsi until 12 re emetsi hore batho ba batle ba buisane le rona, azankhe
batla. Nese re dutsi nako etelele empa bona habatla hore joetsa hore hoetsahala eng. Azankhe batle ka hore oa tseba hore batho badipolotiki bamashano (pg. 50).

Sekgoa sena sere ‘life begins at forty’, *which I think is wrong* ka hore ka nako eo o tshwantse obe o netsoe, otlameile o etse dintho tse batho ba nyetsoeng. Ha monna oa hao aea ko di tavern wena oaea kakwa mo honang le maBen Ten. Hase bangkgwatha bana ba okeeke ware ona le monna so ke tlare ‘come here boy I will be your sugar momma’ (pg. 63).

**Mable:**

Ha kele mme kena le haha ke moo ketlareng ke mme. Rena le bana fela ha ere hore re hodile. Akeke kere ke motjha hobane ke nyetsui ebile kena le bana; ke kgona ho ke zamela phufu (pg. 62).

**Margaret:**

Ha ona le bana akeeke kere o sale motjha (pg. 60)

**Ndumiso:**

Bese kunzima ukwazi ukuthi uzothengaphi. Ufanele usuke lana uhambe uye’dolobheni laphe o Sosolburg ukuyothenga ughesi. Umaungena mali uzomele uhambe ngezinyawo isikhathi eside (pg. 56).

Umuntu omusha ngumuntu onganazo izingane, ongane lutho, agayenzi fokol, ubheke yena kuphela (pg. 62).


**Seipati:**

Ke phomotse *from* ANC hobane kebone hosena molemo o ntsoelang. Ha ona le di learnership, hona le mesebetsi e hlahang, ha re babotsa base bafile batho mesebetsi

**Setsumi:**

Batho bane ba roba, ba tshisa dikoloi. So ene ele strike, re tshwatla di *property* hore re thole *that attention*. So batho ba vandalaiwa *police station* le Zio (pg. 53).

**Sehlogo:**

Sehlogo: Nere kwetsi *highway* ena ea R57 e hlahang Vandebijl to Vereeniging. Ka metsotso nyana maponesa ba lwana le sechaba, gothunyanoa, go thujoa dishopo. Im *sure this thing* e nkile beke. Maponesa *then* ba organaiza di *colleagues* tsa bona joale moferefere oa theoha, ya. *Today* hara thaba *because* hona le batho ba baileng ba thunyoa ke maponesa (pg. 51).

*A lot actually.* Ke hore if ever hona le *something* e etsahalang batho batla posta mo facebook and neng neng batho ba kgona go communikheita le batho babangata ka di *group*. If ever gona le *something* e etsahalang rona le majita arona so *information* e vaya *fast* jwoalo (pg. 90).

**Simphiwe:**

*When I came back* Zam dela ne e tshile hosena le transpart. 'ne ke tlameile hore kettle ka maoto *from town* to kasi …then hwaba le *starvation* mo lekeisheneng. ke ha hosena mo re ka tholang bothotho teng, bo lebese, bo eng eng. Batho bane baphela ka dijo tse esale ba dingka daar. Kasi ea fetoha hannyane, hwaba le botsotsi, batho bakeneloa because hontse hosena order wabona. 'ne di thabile ditsotsi. Ene ele *opportunity* ea hore bahlae; ene ele nako ea ntho tse snaaks (pg. 56)

**Sylvia:**

Ere ke ho bolelle. Kena le bona banana, ditloholo tsaka. Ngoana oya mo a batlang, motsoadi oya mo a batlang. Ban aba joale, okeke oare tsamaea tsela e keetsamaileng ena ore ke nako ea sejoalejoale oseke watlo njoeatsa ka nako tsa kgale. Ke bua joalo
ka hore kena le ditlohole, ebile ke banna joale, ke ba nako tsa joale. Ngoana o nka nako ea hae tsela hobane ha o kgetha o kgetha sephiring sahaho, pelong ea hao. Okeke watseba hore ngoana o kgethile se, hore o rata eng (pg. 67).

**Sylvester:**

So batho ba protesta because batho ba eleng gore bahlaho mo habana menyetla mo, habasana di *opportunities* tsa mona Sasol. Gona le di pleke tse disenang moylakase, *air pollution* e baie. *And January this year* rene ra afektoa ke sogogola, wabona. Yanka matlo *but those people* haba thusoa, bafelletsi bale joalo fela. Ntho engoe le engoe e tlogetswi fela ele joalo. *So Zamdela errata di protest because* batho bamo ba batla hoba sharp but habakgoni hoba *sharp because* of dipolitiki tse (pg. 48).

*Actually* aowa hobane ntho tse ngata dine di senyehile. Dine dili painful hobane batho babang bathunyilo, babang bana le di scars, banang Habana dijo and di ATM tsakoaloa. Batho baile ba affektega *hamper*. Tsona ne dili sharp hohang (pg. 57).

Motjha ke motho o eleng hore obatla ho tswela pepe, obatla ho bona ntho engoe le engngoe ele sharp hore a kgone go enjoya botjha ba hae a phele hantle asale monnyane. Motjha *at the same time* o rata *entertainment*, ke motho e aleng *active* ka dintho tsengata (pg. 64).

*What happened* ke hore hona le motho a kgonang hoya Karabo FM a kgona horefa *information* eo, ho tsebisa batho ka *merger*. So ra etsa di *research* ra fumana hore kennete (pg. 80).
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List of Interviewees

Bandile (23, male, unemployed), 20 May 2014, IsiZulu and Sesotho.

Camilla (26, female, unemployed), 23 May 2014, Sesotho.

Dika (age unknown, male, station manager), 25 January 2013, English.

Donald (19, male, student), 03 December 2013, English.

Eric (24, male, unemployed), 27 November 2013, English.

Estelle Boers (age unknown, female, Librarian), 02 March 2013, Personal Comm.

Gabi (23, female, unemployed), 24 May 2014, Sesotho.

Jabu (23, male, unemployed), 03 December 2013, Sesotho.

Katleho (29, female, unemployed), 23 May 2014, English and Sesotho.


Kgotso (18, male, unemployed), 09 November 2013, English.

Kopano (26, male, unemployed), 27 April 2013, 09 November 2014, English.

Lerato (21, male, unemployed), 09 November 2014, English.

Mable (35, female, unemployed), 03 November 2013, Sesotho.

Margaret (26, female, unemployed), 23 May 2013, Sesotho.

Maria (41, female, night-school teacher), 28 November 2013, English.

Mathapelo (26, female, unemployed), 03 November, Sesotho.

Mongezi (22 male, university student), 04 December 2013, English.

Michael (30, male, employed), 09 November 2014, English.

Mthembu (age unknown, male, Member of MCR), 24 May 2014, English.

Ndumiso (35, male, partly employed), 28 November 2013, Isizulu.

Nomasonto (22, female, student), 24 January 2013, English.

Samuel (age unknown, male, employment status unknown), 19 March, English.

Sandile (37, male, unemployed), 19 March, English.
Seipati (33, female, unemployed), 23 May 2014, English and Sesotho.

Sehlogo (29, male, unemployed), 03 December 2013, Sesotho.

Setsumi (19, male, student), 28 November 2013, Sesotho.

Simphiwe (20, male, unemployed), 04 November 2013, Sesotho.

Sylvia (81, female, pensioner), 07 May 2014, Sesotho.

Sylvester (28, male, unemployed), 03 December 2013, Sesotho.

Rose (33, female, unemployed), 23 May 2014, English and Sesotho.

Tebogo (21, male, student), 09 November 2013, English.

Xoli (27, male, unemployed), 05 December 2013, English and Sesotho.