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Twenty Years Later: Perceptions and Understandings of Democracy in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal

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TWENTY YEARS LATER: PERCEPTIONS AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF DEMOCRACY IN DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL

Key Words: Political Science, Regional Studies: Africa

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore perceptions and understandings of democracy in South Africa twenty years post-apartheid. Information from interviews with fifty South African citizens in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal was supplemented with interviews with five experts from institutions relevant to democratic development. Participants agreed that South Africa was a democracy, but disagreed on the meanings of democracy, South Africa's democratic performance to date, and future prospects for democracy. The learner concludes that, in order to improve the quality of democratic governance in the country, South Africans must engage in a national dialogue about what democracy is and where it is meant to take them. Building a common understanding will enable South Africans to exploit significant opportunities to strengthen their democracy in the next five to ten years.

Acknowledgements

This study could not have been completed without the support of key individuals and institutions. First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Rama Naidu and the Democracy Development Programme the support, advice, and opportunities they provided to me throughout the Independent Study Project process. In particular, thank you for inviting me to your annual conference on citizen mobilization, without which I would not have conceived this project. I owe additional thanks to the participants of that conference for acting as gracious ambassadors, openly sharing their experiences and helping me learn new perspectives.

I also owe a special thanks to the SIT Community Health and Social Policy program staff. I owe thanks to Zed McGladdery and Clive Bruzas for their academic guidance, acting as springboards and supporting me through my indecisive phases; to Thula "Zulu Dragon" Majubana for all of his kindness and support, and for driving the SIT van like no one else could; and to Hlobi Masuku for her ever-friendly face and for ensuring that I was fed and housed for the duration of my stay.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for supporting me in studying here, and South Africans at large for their hospitality. Thank you for answering my many questions!

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"I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended."

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*
(qtd. in *Nelson Mandela by Himself* 93)

Introduction

Democracy is a form of governance lauded by the international community. At the 2005 World Summit, heads of state and government from around the world declared democracy a "universal value" (United Nations, "A/RES/60/1" Clause 135). The idea was not new. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states in Article 21 that "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives" (United Nations). It further states that "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government, this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures" (United Nations). The UDHR thus establishes free and fair elections as a human right.

While free and fair elections remain an important cornerstone of democracy, they do not alone constitute sufficient establishment thereof. The 2005 World Summit Outcomes describes democracy as "full participation [of the people] in every aspect of their lives" (United Nations, "A/RES/60/1" Clause 135). A U.S. State Department publication, "Democracy in Brief," explains that "democracy is more than just a set of institutions." Instead, it is characterized by a "well-understood group of values, attitudes, and practices". Among these are majority rule with minority rights; free, fair, and regular elections; localization and decentralization; guarantees of basic human rights; rule of law and due process; separation of powers; a free and independent media; pluralism, cooperation, and compromise; civil society and citizen engagement (Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State). In a similar vein, a handbook on democracy by the South African Democracy Development Programme (DDP) explains that "democracy is about more than just voting" (8). It lists participation; equality; tolerance;

accountability; transparency; regular, fair and free elections; accepting the results of elections; economic freedom; control of the abuse of power; human rights; multi-party system; and rule of law as principles of democracy (9).

Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan explained democracy as an ongoing process, rather than an end state to be attained:

> "…democracy is a dynamic social and political system whose ideal functioning is never fully "achieved". Democratization, furthermore, is neither linear nor irreversible and thus both state institutions and citizens must monitor and maintain oversight of this process. Accordingly, all countries, as well as the international community itself, could benefit from continued strengthening of, and support to, their democratic processes." (Annan 1)

In other words, maintaining democracy takes conscious and continuous effort. Taken into the South African context, the Secretary-General's quotation means that democracy was not "achieved" in South Africa with the first democratic elections in 1994. Instead, it is something that South Africans must take care to maintain every day.

While the fact that democracy is a never-ending process may make it difficult, voices arguing that it is a cornerstone for development echo in the international community. In his address to the World Forum on Democracy, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon asserted that "Democracy is not just a matter of giving people a voice; it advances development" (United Nations, Department of Public Information, News and Media Division). A report from The Hunger Project, in conjunction with the United Nations Democracy Fund, calls participatory democracy "one of the most important factors in human development" (The Hunger Project and the UN Democracy Fund 4). World leaders at the 2005 World Summit emphasized that "democracy, development, and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing" (United Nations, "A/RES/60/1" Clause 135). This interdependence and mutual reinforcement is emphasized again in UN General Assembly Resolution 62/7, which states that democracy is "based on the freely-expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems" (United Nations). In other words, democracy enables and empowers individuals to take control of their own government and lives. Democracy is about enabling people to take ownership of their own government – and ownership is central to development.

Older South Africans can still remember the day in 1994 when many of them cast ballots in a democratic election for the first time.[1] Yet democracy has not been all smooth sailing for South Africans. Speaking at a national conference on citizen mobilization, Professor Samadoda Fikeni of Walter Sisulu University explained that South Africa's democratic transition has been far from perfect, but "fraught with deep contradictions," giving a "sense of dual processes of both decay and renewal":

> "You have a sense that... as democracy was [taking hold], demobilization was taking place… you have a sense that this democracy was able to make one of the most progressive constitutions… but deep systemic and structural challenges have remained with us… [South Africa has] one of the worst and growing inequalities, where the gap between the rich and poor is getting worse and worse. Those are some of the mind-numbing contradictions."

So, as the twentieth year of democracy in South Africa approaches, how have South Africans come to understand democracy? Do they still have faith in democracy as the best form of government? In this study, the learner interviewed fifty South African citizens in the Durban area of KwaZulu-Natal seeking the answers to these questions. Among the fifty citizens were experts from Parliament, academia, Chapter IX organizations, and an NGO.

The answers to these questions are complex. Participants largely agreed that South Africa was an established democracy – but one with problems. They were divided in what they thought democracy meant, in their satisfaction with democracy, and their expectations for the future. These three issues are not unrelated, and reveal a need for serious conversation about the meanings of democracy at a national level. A common understanding of democracy would be useful in ensuring the strengthening of South African democratic tradition, which is by no means a guarantee. The next ten years will see pivotal opportunities for South African democracy, which South Africans will be ready able to exploit if they have a common vision.

This paper begins with a review of methodologies used. This section is followed by a description of findings from citizen interviews, beginning with a review of participants' demographic characteristics. The responses from the citizen interviews are then discussed using

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[1] It does not fall within the scope of this paper to provide a history of the South African democratic transition. Governance history of South Africa is addressed insofar as it is relevant to the quality and perceptions of South Africa today. A wide range of popular and academic publications are available to readers on this topic.

information from expert interviews and secondary sources. The paper concludes with some brief recommendations for further study.

Methodologies

The learner was based in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The learner gathered data for the study through individual interviews with the proverbial "man(or woman)-on-the-street" and through interviews with expert representatives from relevant organizations and institutions. Additionally, the learner attended the conference "The Politics of Public Participation: Toward Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of Citizen Mobilization". Although interviews and the conference are not long-term immersive experiences, they represented the best opportunity to gain an understanding of attitudes toward democracy in a short period of time. Furthermore, this method minimized the inconvenience to each participant. The learner also utilized secondary sources in order to gain a background understanding, design effective interview questions, and gain supplementary information or attempt to explain results.

The Academic Director for the SIT South Africa: Community Health and Social Policy Program, Zed McGladdery, reviewed this independent study project for ethical concerns, and found it to conform to all relevant and necessary ethical standards (see Appendix I: ISP Ethics Review). Participants were also asked to review and sign or verbally acknowledge a consent form (see Appendix II: Example Consent Form).

Sampling Plan

The learner largely relied the convenience sampling method. For individual interviews, the learner used contacts gained in Durban during her previous two months' residency, including homestay families in Cato Manor and contacts in Chatsworth. The learner also interviewed employees of institutions near the SIT Office at Cowey Park. Finally, the learner sought to interview South Africans on the streets of Durban, primarily at public parks and libraries. A limiting factor in finding potential interview participants was the need for relative fluency in English.

The learner set up expert interviews using contacts gained through the program (Janine Hicks, Rama Naidu, Ralph Lawrence) and contacts gained through those individuals (Sayedali-Shah). The learner also set up one interview through cold contact with an organization (the

Independent Electoral Commission). The learner sought additional interviews, but was limited to institutions and individuals that responded to emails and phone calls.

The learner recognizes that the sampling method may have resulted in an unrepresentative sample of Durban residents, of KwaZulu-Natal residents, and of South Africans. The sampling methods utilized, which favored English speakers, the employed, and people in libraries, likely skewed the sample to include disproportionately educated or affluent South Africans. However, since democracy is governance by the people, each individual can be considered an expert in democracy at some level. Thus, responses were worthwhile and informative, even if not representative.

Data Collection

Citizen Interviews

The learner gathered most primary data through formal interviews with fifty South African citizens during the period from 8 November to 22 November 2013. (Expert participants, discussed below, are included in this tally.) The learner asked questions from a standardized questionnaire, which included original questions and questions borrowed with permission from the Afrobarometer Round 5 Questionnaire for South Africa ("Afrobarometer Round 5…"). The questionnaire can be found in Appendix III: Citizen Questionnaire. All but one question were closed-ended, allowing participants to select an answer from a list. The learner read the questions to participants. For closed-ended questions, the learner both read and visually presented the answer choices. Following the interview, the learner and participant or participants often engaged in informal conversation; the learner collected and included data from these informal discussions as well.

The learner recorded data using only hand-written field notes for these interviews. For open-ended questions and informal discussion, the learner made best effort to record as much data as possible as accurately as possible. The learner did not include participant quotations unless she is confident in the precise and accurate recording of their words.

All interviews were conducted in person. Most interviews occurred in public places, often within earshot of others. If a participant requested a more private setting, the interview was relocated to a suitable location. Some group interviews were conducted. Group interviews

generally included two participants, who were presented with the questions simultaneously but answered separately. Participants in group interviews often disagreed. Because the topic of inquiry was not personal in nature and did not include sensitive information, the learner believes that interview settings had limited impact on data collection in terms of participant honesty and sincerity. Some participants did not want the government to be able to identify them, but in such cases participants remained anonymous.

The questionnaire was written, read, and presented in English. Unfortunately, this qualification limited participants to those citizens fluent in English. Some participants asked for additional explanation of questions or answers, which the learner gave. In particular, the learner often found it necessary to restate "the most essential characteristic of democracy" as "the most important characteristic for a democracy" for Questions 4-7. In one instance, the daughter of a semi-fluent participant also interpreted for the participant when necessary. However, the participant was fluent enough that the learner was able to confirm that the answers were the participant's own, and not the views of her daughter.

Participants received the learner's email address to contact here in case they wish to withdraw their data or receive a copy of the completed study.

Expert Participant Interviews

The learner also conducted interviews with five expert participants from relevant institutions and organizations. The experts included Mawethu Mosery, Provincial Electoral Officer (PEO) for KwaZulu-Natal at the Independent Electoral Commission; M. Rafeek Sayedali-Shah, Member of Parliament (MP) for the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Deputy Shadow Minister for Tourism; Ralph Lawrence, professor of government and public policy at University of KwaZulu-Natal; Janine Hicks, Commissioner at the Commission for Gender Equality; and Rama Naidu, Executive Director of the Democracy Development Programme.

In addition to the citizen questionnaire, administered as detailed above, expert participants responded to a questionnaire of all original questions, which can be found in Appendix IV: Additional Questions for Experts. The learner drafted the questionnaire after consulting a number of secondary sources, including Mamphela Ramphele's *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters,* Nicola de Jager and Pierre du Toit's *Friend or Foe? Dominant Party*

Systems in Southern Africa: Insights from the Developing World, the Democracy Development Programme's *Democracy and You,* Jay Naidoo's "Get Up, Stand Up South Africa!," and Steven Friedman's "An Accidental Advance? South Africa's 2009 Elections." The questions in the expert questionnaire were more complex and all were open-ended. The learner sometimes added questions for clarification or to elucidate points the expert participants made. Like citizen interviews, the informal discussion often followed formal interview. The learner also recorded data from these discussions. Unlike with citizen interviews, the learner used a voice recorder to record expert interviews.

The learner also conducted expert interviews in English, in which all experts were fluent. Although fluency was not a constraining factor for experts, some experts were constrained or influenced by their institutional affiliations. However, experts appeared to be honest when this limitation occurred. Experts received a final copy of the study via email.

Citizen Mobilization Conference

The learner also attended the conference "The Politics of Public Participation: Toward Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of Citizen Mobilization – A South African Perspective" at the Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel in Durban on 28-30 October 2013. Where feasible and appropriate, the learner took notes on her laptop; otherwise, she took field notes by hand. As before, the learner did not include participant quotations unless she was confident in the precise and accurate recording of speakers' or participants' words.

Secondary Sources

The learner supplemented data from interviews and the conferences with information from secondary sources. The learner read books and articles recommended by academic advisors and participants, as well as various literature provided for free at the aforementioned conference. Furthermore, the learner used sources of which she had prior knowledge through her background in international affairs and public policy, such as the websites of the United Nations, the United States State Department, and the National Endowment for Democracy. Using terms from these secondary sources and from primary research, the learner used the Google search engine to find supporting information or clarifications.

Data Analysis

The learner will used the results of the interviews to conduct both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The learner compiled the information from citizen interviews, displayed it graphically, and compared this data to results from the Round 5 Afrobarometer Survey Data for KwaZulu-Natal. However, the learner decided not to perform tests to determine whether the difference in results were statistically significant. Unlike Afrobarometer, the learner was not able to ensure a representative sample. Thus, differences in the data could be attributable to differences in sampling, and not represent significant change over time. The learner then attempts to explain the quantitative results of the survey using primary data collected during expert interviews and informal conversation with participants, as well as from secondary sources.

The learner did not differentiate survey responses according to demographic data such as race or gender due to time limitations. Furthermore, the learner limited information about the African National Congress (ANC) to what was deemed most necessary and relevant, also due to time constraints. The learner believes that the study includes an overview of all components necessary to painting a basic overview of perceptions of democracy in South Africa, although it should be noted that each component individually merits further attention and study.

Characteristic of Participants

The learner interviewed fifty participants in the Durban area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Participants were asked to identify their age range, race, and neighborhood of residency. The age profile of participants is displayed in Figure 1 below. Due to ethical considerations, people aged less than eighteen were not allowed to participate. Most participants were quite young, with nearly half of participants (twenty-four, 48%) aged twenty-nine or less. Eleven participants (22%) were aged thirty to thirty-nine. Fewer participants fell into the older age groups: three (6%) were aged forty to forty-nine, six (12%) were aged fifty to fifty-nine, and four (8%) were aged sixty to sixty-nine. No participants were seventy or older, and one participant did not indicate his age.
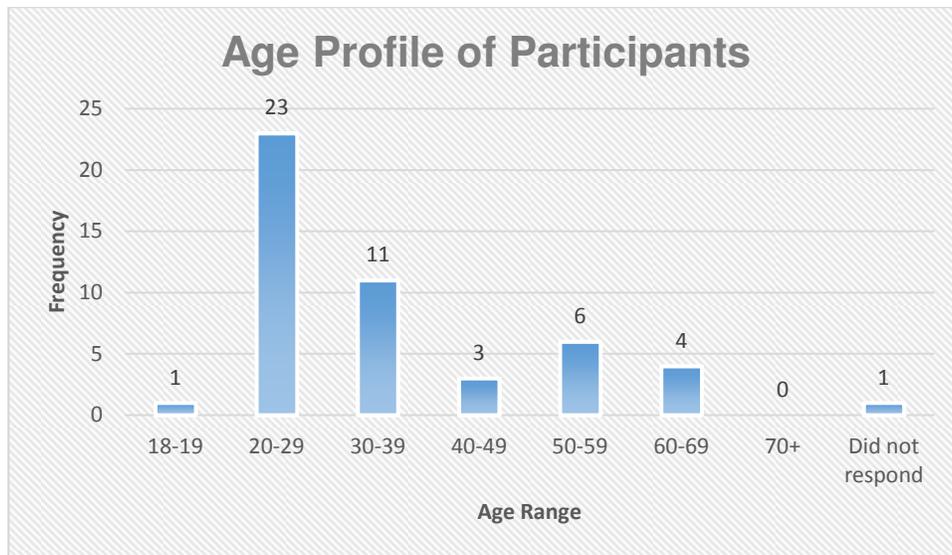
Figure 1: Over half of participants were under the age of forty, and none were seventy or older.

Due to the historical context in South Africa, participants were also asked to self-identify race. Figure 2 below displays the racial profile of participants. Twenty-four participants (48%) identified as Black or African. It should be noted that seven participants deliberately used the term African, rather than Black. The next largest racial group was White/Caucasian, with seven participants (14%), followed by Indian/Asian/Asiatic, with seven participants (14%). Three participants (6%) identified as Coloured. Six participants (12%) declined to identify their race, and three participants (6%) chose to identify as South African.
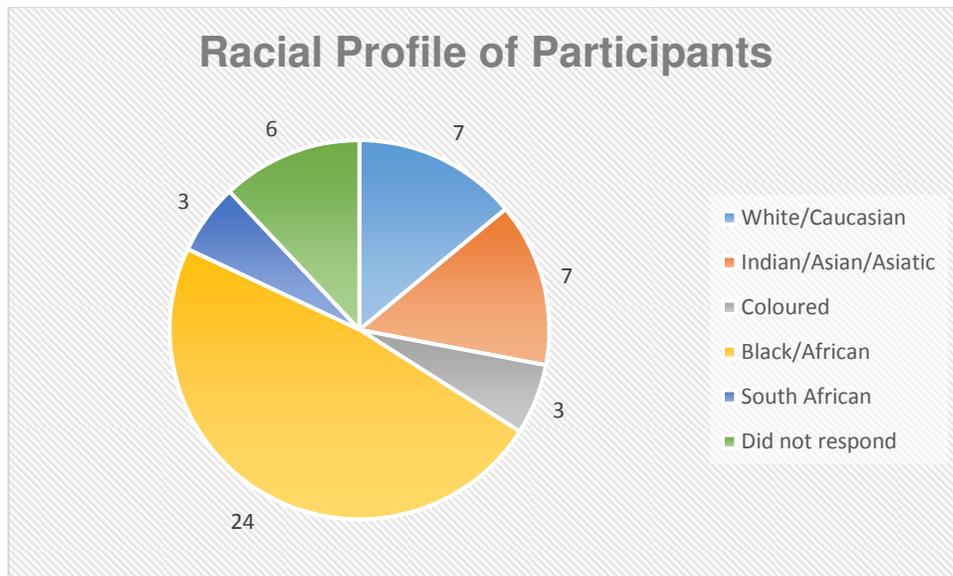
Figure 2: Almost half of participants were Black/African. Other represented groups include White/Caucasian, Indian/Asian/Asiatic, and Coloured. Some participants did not respond or simply identified as "South African."

Participants resided in at least twenty neighborhoods across Durban. While all participants were interviewed in Durban and all were South African citizens, two participants resided in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal, and one resided in Bramley (Gauteng). No more than four participants who indicated area of residency lived in the same neighborhood. Seven participants did not indicate their area of residency. For more information on the geographic spread of participants' residencies, see Appendix V: Geographic Spread of Participants' Residencies.

The learner did not formally collect data on gender of participants, but can report that significant populations of both male and female participants were interviewed, including at least twenty of each male and female.

As previously noted, the sampling methods utilized means that the sample of participants is not representative of the Thekweni municipality or of KwaZulu-Natal. Additionally, the conference on citizen participation that the learner attended was national, and therefore participants were not representative of Thekweni municipality.

Description of Findings: Citizen Interviews

The results of the citizen interviews have been separated into three sections: the meaning of democracy, the status of democracy in South Africa, and the future of South African democracy.

Meaning of Democracy (Questions 1, 4-7)

Participants were asked five questions, one open-ended and four closed-ended, about the meaning of the term "democracy". The first question of the survey, before participants were prompted with any other questions or answer choices, asked participants to consider what came first to mind when they think of the word "democracy." Table 1 displays aspects of democracy that participants mentioned or recognized. Although answers ranged widely, some large trends and interesting points did emerge. Thirty participants mentioned freedom, more than any other aspect. Some participants also mentioned specific freedoms, including expression or speech, movement, religion, political association, choice, culture, thought, and shopping. Additionally, two participants specifically recognized reasonable limits on the exercise of freedoms within the democracy. The next most common response, given by twelve participants, was an expression of dissatisfaction with democracy or a recognition that the reality of democracy in South Africa did not match what it is supposed to be.

All other aspects were cited by fewer than ten participants. The most common of these were equality and rights, with nine and eight mentions respectively, followed by a recognition of contextual or historic meaning, with five mentions. Voting or elections; access or services, resources, or support; and expectations of betterment of the country or movement toward prosperity each garnered four mentions. Three participants mentioned participation. Unity or sense of belonging, opportunity, transparency, and majority rule were all mentioned twice. Finally, the presence of multiple parties, fairness, accountability, minority rights, the Constitution, and ubuntu were each mentioned once.

Table 1: Question 1 – What does democracy mean to you? What comes to mind when you hear the word "democracy"?

Aspect of Democracy Mentioned/Recognized	Frequency
Freedom	30
Freedom of expression/speech	11

Freedom of movement	1
Freedom of religion	1
Freedom of political association	1
Freedom of choice	2
Freedom of culture	1
Freedom of thought	2
Freedom of shopping	1
Recognition of limits to freedoms	2
Rights	8
Voting/Elections/Right to vote	4
Participation	3
Unity/Sense of belonging	2
Equality	9
Opportunity	2
Contextual/Historic Meaning	5
Dissatisfaction/Recognition of democratic deficit	12
Access (to services/resources/support)	4
Multiple parties	1
Betterment of the country/Prosperity	4
Fairness	1
Transparency	2
Accountability	1
Way of being	1
Majority rule	2
Minority rights	1
Constitution	1
Ubuntu	1

Participants were also asked to identify the most essential or important characteristic of democracy from a list of four characteristics in four different question. Figure 3 below displays the results.

Question 4

- Government narrows the gap between the rich and poor
- People choose government leaders in free and fair elections
- Government does not waste any public money
- People are free to express their political views openly
- None of these

Question 5

- Government ensures law and order
- Media is free to criticize things government does
- Government ensures job opportunities for all
- Multiple parties compete fairly in elections
- None of these

Question 6

- The legislature closely monitors the actions of the President
- Government provides basic necessities, like food, clothing, and shelter for everyone
- People are free to form organizations to influence government and public affairs
- Public services, such as roads, water or sewerage, work well and do not break down
- None of these

Question 7

- People are free to take part in demonstrations and protests
- Politics is clean and free of corruption
- The court protects ordinary people if the government mistreats them
- People receive aid from the government, such as food parcels, when they are in need
- None of these

Figure 3 In four different questions, participants were asked to identify the most important characteristic of democracy from a list of four characteristics.

Notably, in no question did a majority of participants identify the same characteristic as most important. In Question 4, a plurality of fifteen participants (30%) chose "People choose government leaders in free and fair elections" as the most important characteristic of democracy. This response was followed by "People are free to express their political views openly" (thirteen participants, 26%), "Government narrows the gap between rich and poor" (eleven participants, 22%), and "Government does not waste any public money" (ten participants, 20%). In Question 5, the most popular answer was "Multiple parties compete fairly in elections" (sixteen participants, 32%) followed by "Government ensures job opportunities for all" (thirteen participants, 26%), "Media is free to criticize things the government does" (eleven participants, 22%), and "Government ensures law and order" (nine participants, 18%).

Questions 6 and 7 saw participant responses less evenly distributed between characteristics. In question 6, a plurality of nineteen participants (38%) chose "Government ensures basic necessities, like food, clothing, and shelter for everyone" as the most important characteristic of democracy. Fifteen participants (30%) designated "People are free to form organizations to influence government and public affairs" as the most important characteristic. Less than 20% of participants designated the remaining choices, "Public services, such as roads, water or sewerage, work well and do not break down" and "The legislature closely monitors the actions of the President" as the most important characteristics of democracy (eight participants, 16%, and seven participants, 14% respectively).

In Question 7, even more participants chose the most popular answer. 42% of participants (twenty-one participants) designated "Politics is clean and free of corruption" as the most important characteristic of democracy. Thirteen participants (26%) chose "People are free to take part in demonstrations and protests" as the most important form of democracy. Fewer than ten participants each chose "People receive aid from the government, such as food parcels, when they are in need" (nine participants, 18%) or "The court protects ordinary people if the government mistreats them" (six participants, 12%).

Status of Democracy in South Africa (Questions 2-3, 8)

In Question 2, participants were asked about the extent of democracy in South Africa. As Figure 4 shows, the vast majority of participants believed that South Africa was a democracy, but not without problems. When asked how much of a democracy South Africa currently is,

twenty-one participants (42%) chose to describe South Africa as a democracy with major problems, while nineteen participants (38%) described South Africa as a democracy with minor problems. Three participants (6%) designated South Africa as a full democracy, and three participants (6%) designated South Africa as not a democracy. Four participants (8%) declined to choose any of the designations provided. Interestingly, three of these participants rejected the premise of the given options: they believed that South Africa did have problems, but that did not disqualify it from being a "full democracy". Other participants also demonstrated a recognition that democracy does not preclude problems, yet that does not mean that the democracy is imperfect or not working.
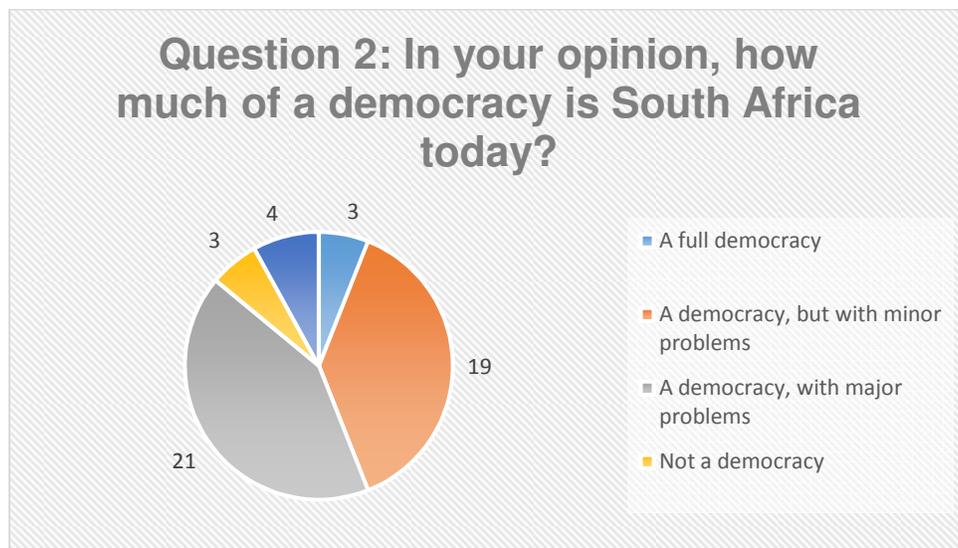
Figure 4: Most participants believed that South Africa was a democracy, but not without problems.

The participants were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the way democracy works in South Africa; results are displayed in Figure 5. Half of participants expressed satisfaction with the way democracy works in South Africa, with seven participants (14%) choosing "very satisfied" and eighteen (36%) choosing "fairly satisfied" as their response. Nearly an equal number of participants expressed dissatisfaction with how democracy works in South Africa. Nineteen (38%) participants were "not satisfied" with the way democracy works, while five participants (10%) said they were "not satisfied at all".
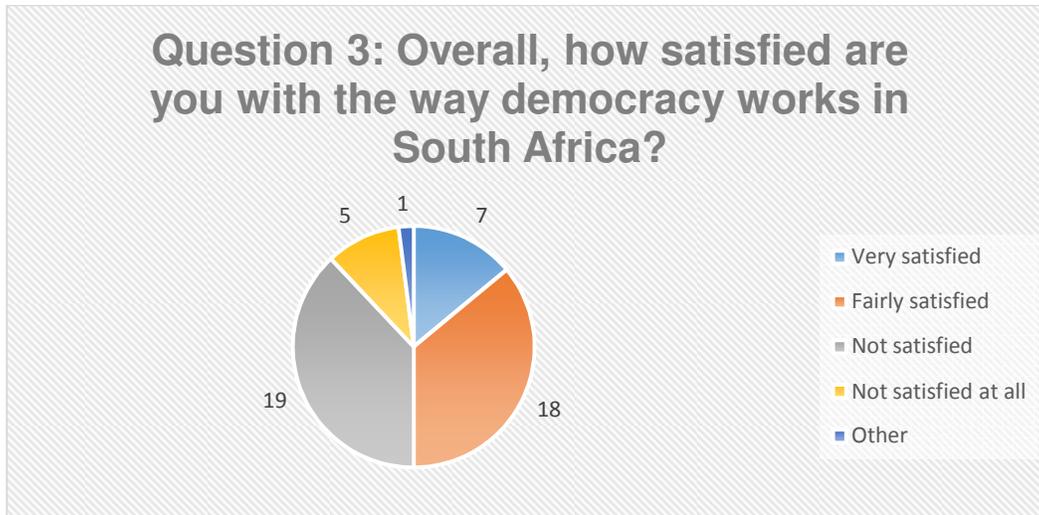
Figure 5 Participants were nearly evenly divided between satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the current operation of democracy in South Africa.

Later in the interview, participants were also asked to reflect on how the quality of South African democracy has evolved. Figure 6 shows how participants believed the quality of democracy had changed since it began in 1994. Most participants (54%) believed that the quality of democracy improved over the twenty years since its institution. Fifteen participants (30%) thought that the quality of democracy had gotten "much better" and twelve participants (24%) thought it had gotten "somewhat better". Only one participant believed the quality of democracy had remained "about the same" since 1994. On the other hand, ten participants (20%) believed it had gotten "somewhat worse" and seven participants (14%) believed it had gotten "much worse".
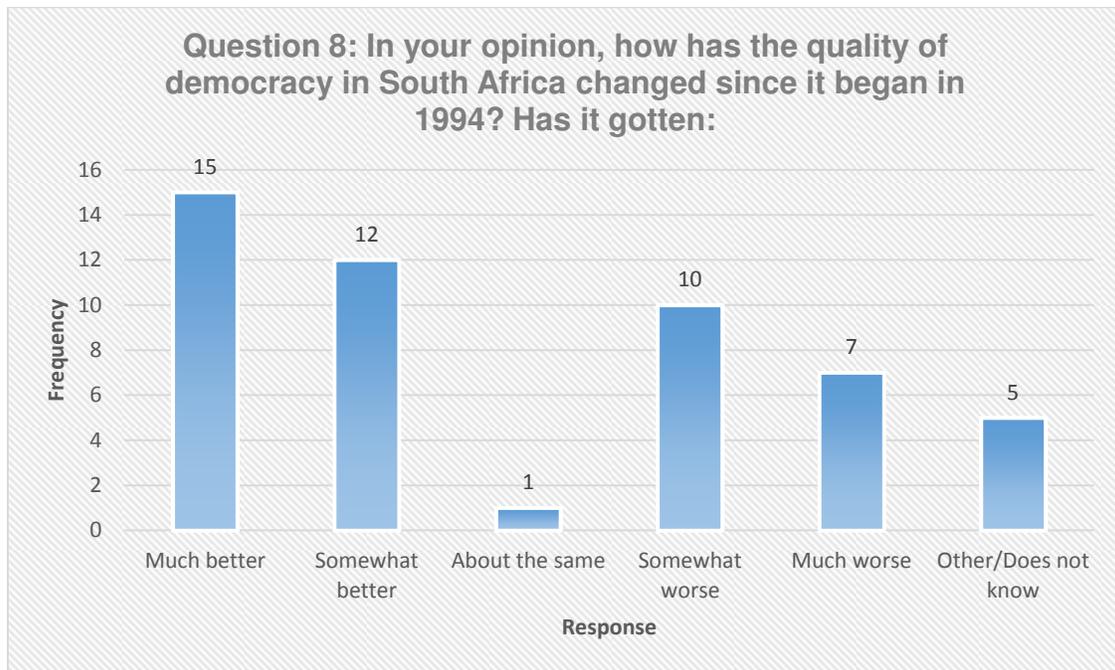
Figure 6: Participants were divided on whether or not the quality of democracy has improved over the last twenty years. More participants believed that the quality of democracy had gotten better than worse.

Future of Democracy (Question 9)

At the end of the survey, participants were asked to reflect on the future of democracy in South Africa. In Question 9, participants were asked, "Looking into the future twenty years, how do you expect the quality of democracy will compare in 2033 to today?" Results are displayed in Figure 7 below. Over half of participants (twenty-eight participants, 56%) believed that the quality of democracy would be either "much better" or "somewhat better" twenty years from now (sixteen and twelve participants respectively). Only eleven participants (22%) believed that the quality of democracy would decline, becoming "somewhat worse" or "much worse" (two participants and nine participants respectively). Six participants (12%) believed the quality of democracy would be "about the same" in twenty years. Five participants declined to designate any of the choices, because they thought that none of them were acceptable choices or they did not know what the quality of democracy would be like in the future.

Question 9: Looking into the future twenty years, how do you expect the quality of democracy will compare in 2033 to today? Will it be:
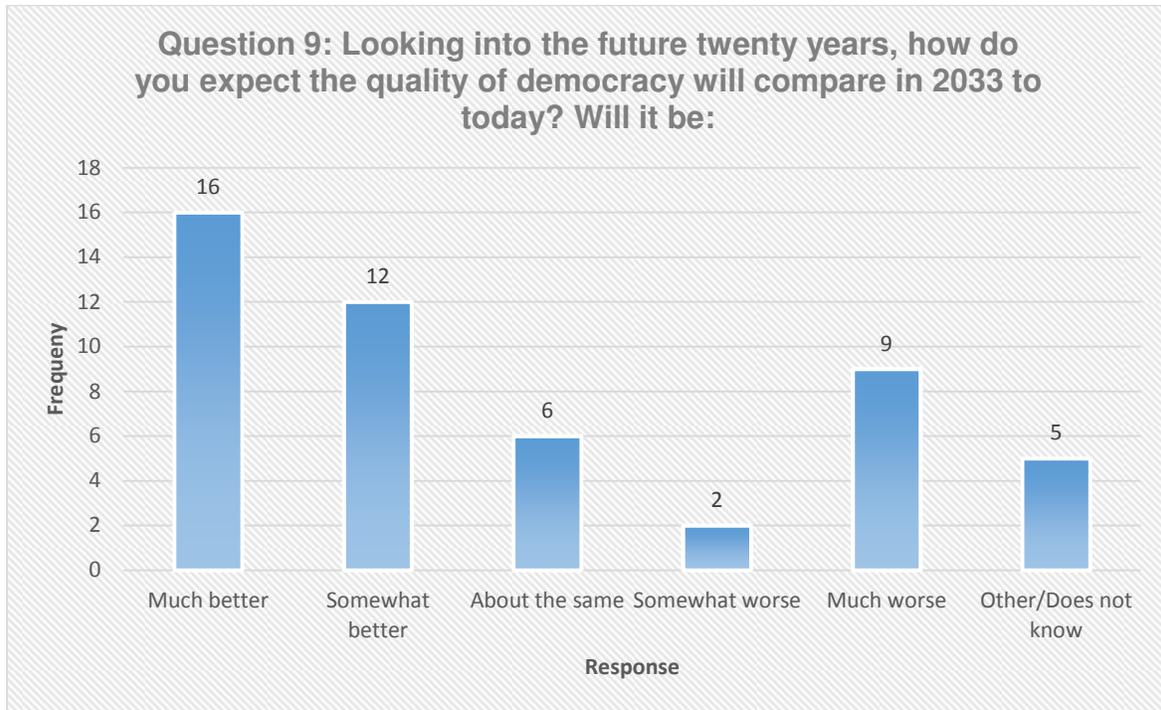
Figure 7: Participants were also divided when asked about the future quality democracy in South Africa, although over twice as many participants thought it would get better than thought it would get worse.

Discussion of Findings

Discussion of findings is separated into two sections. The first considers the state of democracy in South Africa, including strengths and weaknesses, and how unclear meanings and expectations may lead to dissatisfaction with democracy. The second section considers the path for democracy in South Africa moving forward.

The State of Democracy in South Africa

Overall, participants were fairly united in acknowledging that South Africa was a democracy, albeit with problems. Forty participants (80%) classified South Africa as a democracy with either major or minor problems. On the other hand, participants were much divided when it came to satisfaction with democracy and whether or not the quality of democracy had improved. Half of participants expressed satisfaction with the way democracy works in South Africa, and just under half (twenty-four) expressed dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in South Africa. Twenty-seven participants believed South African democracy had improved since it began, while seventeen believed it had gotten worse.

In Afrobarometer's Round 5 Survey for KwaZulu-Natal, participants were even more unified in recognizing South Africa's democratic stats, with 96% of participants describing South Africa as either "a full democracy", "a democracy with minor problems" or "a democracy, but with major problems". Yet participants showed similar divisions in terms of satisfaction with democracy, with 60% either "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied," and 39% "not satisfied" or "not at all satisfied". Like in the learner's survey, in no question did a majority of participants agree on the most essential characteristic of democracy ("Afrobarometer Online Data…"). Why were participants relatively united in their recognition of democracy and of problems within South African democracy, but divided when it came to satisfaction?

South African democracy has enjoyed some clear strengths and successes, but is also plagued by definitive weaknesses. Most of the success resides in the institutions and frameworks of South African democracy, while shortcomings lie in the failure of those institutions to transform society. Ultimately, the explanation for participant divisions in terms of satisfaction with democracy and the evolution of quality thereof may originate from divergent understandings of what democracy is supposed to be and do: in institutional terms, South African democracy has proven a great success; in transformational terms, it leaves much to be desired. South Africans disagree about what democracy means, and a clear need for a national dialogue exists in this regard.

Strengths and Successes of South African Democracy

Democracy in South Africa has had some clear success and built key strengths which should be celebrated. First of all, as forty-three participants agreed, South Africa is in fact a democracy. Expert participants pointed to the existence of democracy as a considerable success in itself. MP Sayedali-Shah noted with approval the "relatively peaceful transition" from apartheid to a democracy. In the same vein, Professor Ralph Lawrence said the largest success of South African democracy "that it has survived twenty years," with regularly scheduled elections occurring. PEO Mosery explained that regular elections occurring "creates stability in order for all other things to work."

At the foundation of South Africa's democratic existence is the Constitution, which is hailed as "one the world's most progressive constitutions (Democracy Development Programme 11). Lungelo Makhathini (aged 20-29, Black) from Chesterville acclaimed the South African

Constitution as "the greatest constitution in the world." Dr. Naidu also praised the South African Constitution as a "really amazing" document. The Constitution successfully laid the framework for governance in South Africa. PEO Mosery identified the "institutional frameworks" and "structural arrangements of South African democracy" are working well. Likewise, Commissioner Hicks lauded South Africa's "institutions of democracy" as working "very well." Commissioner Hicks and Dr. Naidu also cited Chapter IX institutions particularly as a key pillar in South African democracy. There is "broad consensus" behind the sentiment that the Constitution and its institutions are legitimate (de Jager 156).

South Africa has also succeeded in developing key watchdogs to act in defense of democracy. According to de Jager, "the media and other civil society groupings, together with the judiciary (in particular the Constitutional Court), provide essential checks and balances," ensuring the continuance of democratic culture in South Africa (160). The judiciary has served as a reliable defender of South African democracy. Commissioner Hicks cited the courts as a strong point in South African democracy, noting "very little evidence of political interference with judicial systems". Dr. Naidu identified the Constitutional Court particularly as a strength, noting that "it has made some really significant judgments both for and against government". Civil society also remains a defender of South African democracy, especially when they can rally around a large threat. Commissioner Hicks particularly emphasized the organizing against Secrecy Bill and the Traditional Courts Bill as examples of vibrant civil society. The organization of such campaigns has occurred without "brutal oppression" (Hicks). Finally, Dr. Naidu recognized "a fairly free and powerful media" as a strong point of South African democracy.

Perhaps the half of participants who expressed satisfaction with democracy thought of these successes as they responded to the questionnaire.

Shortcomings and Areas for Improvement in South African Democracy

Unfortunately, South African democracy still suffers from some key weaknesses and shortcomings. Policy implementation is the Achilles heel of South African democracy. Lungelo Makhathini (aged 20-29, Black, Chesterville), who praised the Constitution, regreted that "we just haven't found the right people to implement it yet". Commissioner Hicks likewise cited "policy implementation" as an area of failure in South African democracy, and Dr. Naidu also

lamented a "serious lack of capacity of government to be able to deliver on its mandate". There are several ways of explaining this capacity deficit. Dr. Naidu partly attributed the deficit to historical legacy and the relatively "rapid transition to the new democracy". According to Commissioner Hicks, this problem is due to a mismatch "skill sets" in civil service, which has the "wrong people in the wrong jobs".[2]

The less malevolent results of mismatched skills sets are "misdirection of resources" and a lack of monitoring and evaluation of policy programs (Hicks). The darker side of this mismatch is "civil servants who don't care about ordinary South Africans" and "politicians who manipulate process to their own end" (Hicks). As a result, "everyday, insidious maladministration, inefficiency, [and] corruption is rampant" (Hicks). Another expert, PEO Mosery, cited similar concerns. He more politely called the "unprofessional and unethical conduct in the public service" a "disappointment". While corruption is easier to detect in the upper echelons of the civil service, Commissioner Hicks explained that South Africa's institutions are not strong enough to root out corruption that occurs every day at the lower levels.

It is no mystery that eight participants also mentioned corruption as a major governance issue. Perhaps this problem is why so many participants (twenty-one, 42%) cited "Politics is clean and free of corruption" as the most important characteristic of democracy in Question 7, more than any other characteristic in any of the meaning of democracy questions merited. This answer received a plurality of responses (37%) in Afrobarometer's Round 5 Survey for KwaZulu-Natal as well ("Afrobarometer Online Data…"). As one participant (aged 20-29, Caucasian) stated, "Corruption adversely affects everyone."

The position and conduct of the African National Congress (ANC) was also a cause of concern among expert participants. MP Sayedali-Shah identified "the blurring of the line between party and state" as a major weakness in South African democracy. He criticized "the ruling party's arrogance and taking people for granted," its corrupt practices, and its intolerance of criticism (Sayedali-Shah). One might assume this criticism is merely the rhetoric of the opposition, but other experts voiced similar concerns. Professor Lawrence said the greatest

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[2] For readers interested in why this skills mismatch and problems in the public service occur, see pages 158-160 in *Friend or Foe: Dominant Party States in Southern Africa.* De Jager explains the negative outcomes of the ANC's strategy of cadre deployment in the public service. While the account is interesting, the learner chose limit the inclusion of institutional culture of the ANC.

weakness of South African democracy is "an inability to distinguish between the interests of the ruling party and the interests of the country". Commissioner Hicks stated frankly that the ANC has become "arrogant and entrenched and unaccountable." The ANC has become too comfortable in power, which is bad news for the quality of democracy in South Africa. In the words of Mamphela Ramphele, "the conflation of the state, government, the governing political party and political leaders remain the greatest threat to the entrenchment of our constitutional democracy" (35).

These weaknesses could account for the dissatisfaction of participants who reported being "not satisfied" or "not satisfied at all" with how democracy works in South Africa.

Symbolic Meaning of Democracy: The Notion of Belonging

At one point in his interview, MP Sayedali-Shah said of South Africa, "we sink or float together". One idea that was not commonly mentioned but merits consideration is the symbolic meaning of democracy as a place where all citizens feel they belong. When asked what democracy means or brings to mind in Question 1, two participants talked about unity or a sense of belonging. Senzo Majozi (African, aged 20-29, Claremont) said that democracy is about "unity…working for one purpose – one people with one goal". Majozi also mentioned ubuntu, the African idea that we are only people through other people. Dr. Naidu similarly responded that democracy means "a country where all citizens feel they belong… [and] have a voice".

In his interview, Professor Lawrence explained why this idea is so important in the South African context. Professor Lawrence noted that many formal theories of democracy take that aspect of democracy "for granted". Yet in South Africa it carries special weight because "in many respects, apartheid was founded on the notion that you did not belong". The Truth and Reconciliation Commission worked toward building this sense of belonging for people who participated: "Through [telling] stories, it felt like they mattered. They were being validated as human beings" (Lawrence). The Promotion of Reconciliation and National Unity Act stated in its preamble that "the pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society" as ground for establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2).

According to Professor Lawrence, "to many [South Africans], that [sense of belonging is] the kind of primordial attachment that they have to democracy, irrespective of its flaws". The notion of belonging is what Nelson Mandela drew upon in his inaugural statement as President on 10 May 1994:

> "We enter into a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world."

So, has South Africa succeeded in making its citizens feel welcome in their own country?

Democracy's Failure to Transform Society

Unfortunately, "there was a sense that somehow [the rainbow nation] would happen magically," but that has not occurred (Naidu). This failure has cost South Africans dearly. Mamphela Ramphele puts it in frank terms: "The failure to transform socio-economic relations inherited from the apartheid state has made freedom an empty dream for the majority of South Africans who remain at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder" (117). Without this freedom, democracy cannot function fully. Continuing inequalities in a society can threaten the ability of democracy to survive and thrive (de Jager 151 and 156).

Democracy has failed to address the divides within South African society. The first of these divides is economic: South Africa is often cited as having the highest Gini coefficient in the world, or at least one of the highest (Rawson Property Group, Rumney, Naidu, Ramphele 77, and de Jager 151). Liberation veteran Jay Naidoo wrote in 2012 that South Africa has "failed dismally the poor in this country". Participants also expressed concern about wealth and equity issues: three participants cited concerns that the wealth gap was only getting wider, and two participants also cited rising costs of living as a major concern.

The second major divide is racial. Four participants indicated that race as still a pervasive issue in politics and governance, particularly minorities. One participant, Jayane Naidoo (aged 30-39, Indian, Chatsworth) referred to current practices as "reverse racism," and another (aged 60-69, Asiatic, Durban city center) even called democracy "apartheid in reverse". Three minority participants also voiced consideration of leaving the country, or stated that many people already were. Meanwhile, programs put in place to correct racial disparities have only succeeded in

creating new class disparities. Expert participants named Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action as failed programs, plagued by abuse and successful only in creating a new black elite, rather than equalizing society (Sayedali-Shah and Naidu).

These divides appear to feed a cycle of violence. MP Sayedali-Shah described the criminal justice system "overwhelmed" and subject to a "vicious cycle" of release and re-arrest. He fears that the level of crime "will only get worse until… we… create jobs and give hope to young people that are graduating from colleges and universities". His affiliation with the DA may influence his criticism of the criminal justice system, but he is not alone in thinking the system is not working. Eight participants also cited rise in crime rates as a failure of democracy to deliver.

In Question 1, four participants mentioned betterment of the country or prosperity as key features of democracy. If that is the standard used to judge democracy in South Africa, it will likely lead to disappointment. Commissioner Hicks explained that "democracy should translate to a better life for all" and is meant to end the "brutal divide" on the basis of race, but has failed. In considering Question 8 on the evolution of democracy in South Africa, Commissioner Hicks identified the quality of democratic institutions, such as the courts, as "about the same" as it was in 1994. Yet overall, Commissioner Hicks said that the quality of South African democracy had gotten "somewhat worse" since 1994 "because of what it's not been delivering for ordinary people". Commissioner Hicks elaborated:

> "I would expect those things [democratic institutions] to work, but with a view towards an end – that it's not just about having this open democracy with things that work. It's no good if it's not transforming society. Surely that's why we believe in those important things…. We can't carry on for fifty years with ticking all the boxes of meeting a perfect democracy and all the ingredients are there and we're creating this messed up [system] where people are not experiencing any benefits for living in this lovely democracy. What's the point of everything being shiny and working well if people's lives are brutal?"

Perhaps these transformations will simply take time, but how much? Commissioner Hicks recalled seeing an impoverished elderly man on television bidding people to "be patient… these things take time," and thinking "this old man is going to die before he sees any change." Dr. Naidu remarked that the mantra that "democracy takes time… wears a bit thin after a while," because in the meantime people are dying.

Commissioner Hicks and Dr. Naidu do not stand alone in these concerns. One participant (aged 20-29, Caucasian) complained that the problems present in South African society today are "the same problems that were there before," during the period of apartheid. Two other participants (aged 60-69, Asiatic, Durban city center; aged 30-39, Black, Glenwood) lamented that South Africa might be a democracy "on paper," but not in practice. These participants failed to see how democracy had improved their daily lives, even if all the institutional elements of democracy could be checked off. Perhaps those participants who expressed satisfaction were reflecting on institutional elements of democracy, while those participants expressing disappointment focused on its failure to create a more equitable and prosperous society.

One participant (aged 50-59, White, rural area) stated that they are "delighted that [democracy] works as well as it does in terms of participation… but other aspects of democracy are handled very superficially." Achieving the rainbow nation will require paying more attention the "soft issues of social cohesion," or talking about and healing problems of the past so that a common future can be created (Naidu).

The Need for National Dialogue: The Paradox of the Developmental State

When it comes to the meaning of democracy, perhaps most notable throughout participant responses is the general lack of consensus. In the closed-ended questions about the meaning of democracy (Questions 4-7), in no question did the majority of participants agree on the most important characteristic of democracy. The same is true in Afrobarometer's Round 5 Survey for KwaZulu-Natal as well ("Afrobarometer Online Data…"). In the questionnaire's open-ended question, only one aspect of democracy – freedom – was mentioned or recognized by more than a quarter of participants. Yet the vast majority of participants agreed that South Africa was a democracy. How can something that is so well recognized be so ill-defined?

Interestingly, one participant (aged 50-59, White, rural area) consistently answered that none of the choices provided in the closed-ended questions were the most important characteristic of democracy. Rather, this participant believed that the most important characteristic of democracy "lives in the national discourse about what it means to be a democracy." This participant described South Africa as an "emerging democracy" that still needs to "unpack the deeper meanings of democracy". This need to better define South Africa's democracy is clear in the divided nature of participant responses.

One example of an area that lacks clear development and discussion is the role of government service delivery in the notion of a developmental state. While this study's results and Afrobarometer's Round 5 Survey results for KwaZulu-Natal vary, they both point to a clear trend. In Question 6, a plurality of participants identified "Government provides basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter for everyone" as the most essential characteristic of democracy; this response also received a plurality of 31% of responses in Afrobarometer's Round 5 survey for KwaZulu-Natal ("Afrobarometer Online Data…"). In Question 5, the second most popular response for the most essential characteristic of democracy was "Government ensures job opportunities for all," with thirteen participants (26%). In Afrobarometer's equivalent of Question 5, the same characteristic received a plurality of 45% of responses ("Afrobarometer Online Data…"). Participants expect their democracy to provide for their socioeconomic security in a developing state.

At the same time, PEO Mosery cited "expectations of the voters" as a weakness in South African democracy: "they seem to expect what the government cannot give them". Commissioner Hicks similarly called these expectations "false expectations" that are not achievable with the resources available, and Dr. Naidu regrets "too many promises on delivery" of services.

Yet these expectations are not unfounded and should not be surprising. The expectations have a "historical context" in apartheid (Mosery). MP Sayedali-Shah explained that they spring from the belief held by many South Africans that "simply because they did not have what whites had in this country under apartheid, and therefore they are entitled to have the same." The nature of apartheid meant that "the new state had no options but to support individuals and individual families" (Mosery). Any post-apartheid state would make rectifying inequalities of the past a high priority, and the idea that democracy would fix the problems of apartheid was useful to "re-inspire" South Africans to aspire for democracy (Naidu). Furthermore, Professor Lawrence explained that "the state as the benevolent leader goes back for centuries in this country, it's just that there have been different beneficiaries". As a result, the idea of the state as a "benevolent leader" is "very well entrenched" in South Africa (Lawrence).

However, the state simply cannot deliver on these expectations (Naidu, Sayedali-Shah). MP Sayedali-Shah argued that "it is not the job of government to provide food and clothes and

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shelter," and the expectation that it should is "cause for concern." PEO Mosery instead suggested that a democratic state should "create an enabling environment and an open opportunity society" where citizens can flourish on their own .In a "mature and old democracy… government is more about opportunities" rather than ensuring job opportunities or building houses for the people (Mosery).

These expectations may be difficult to discourage, however. Three expert participants recognized that the government has had a hand in actively encouraging these expectations. Unfortunately, "the government actually perpetuations" citizens' expectations in order to stay in power, even though it is not sustainable (Sayedali-Shah). Commissioner Hicks regretted that "we've made and we've created citizens as passive recipients of government handouts," and Dr. Naidu described the view of citizens as "clients in waiting" in a "one-sided exchange" between citizens and the state. The state does not have the resources to sustain such handouts, but if you challenge the government in this regard, accusations of disloyalty and impatience are leveled (Hicks). Hicks also cited "fairly brutal oppression" against ordinary people when they mobilize against the government to demand services or explanations.

Professor Ralph Lawrence proposed that the expectations for state provision should be "tempered, not eradicated" because it is impossible to erase historical legacies. On the other hand, Dr. Naidu suggested that the problem is not service delivery itself – great progress has been made in twenty years – but rather "how it is communicated" to citizens. The issue could be better viewed as "the inability to co-create a common future, in which we all see our contribution," as a larger disconnect between the citizen in the state and a failure to engage. According to liberation veteran Mamphela Ramphele, "the critical question is to what extent people are genuinely and meaningfully participating in their own government" (17). Current reconstruction and development efforts have followed a top-down approach has instead created a "dependency syndrome" among the poor (Ramphele 166).

The disconnect between the populace and the government may be perpetuated by an electoral system which favors political parties and patronage over constituency-based governance, and is not conducive to accountability or the empowerment of citizen voices (Naidu). Mamphela Ramphele calls the use of party lists in the current electoral system a "cancer" which insulates political leaders from the citizens who put them into power (45).

Whatever the precise nature or cause of the service delivery failure, a clear need for further national dialogue exists in this regard. In the words of Jay Naidoo, "Can we have a real debate on performance?"

The Path Forward: The Future of Democracy in South Africa

While South Africa has experienced triumphs and tribulations as a democracy so far, it is also important to consider how South African democracy will fare moving forward. Democracy is not static, and democratic gains are never guaranteed as permanent. In the words of PEO Mosery, "South Africa has probably not really crossed the Rubicon… in terms of our transition". Participants were also divided in this regard, although more were optimistic than fearful about the future. Difficult though it may be to predict the future, several key trends emerged when participants spoke of the future. The ability of South Africa to grow and consolidate its democracy depends on the next generation of South Africans and on the course upcoming elections take. While it seems unlikely that South Africa would revert to an authoritarian regime, the path forward seems to present more opportunities than it does guarantees. Hence, it is not unreasonable that participants remained divided in terms of future prospects for democracy. Overall, more participants (twenty-eight) believed the quality of democracy would improve in the next twenty years, than believed it would worsen (eleven).

Youth Participation and Education of Future Voters

One factor which could make huge differences in terms of how democracy develops in the future is the generation who steps up to take the reins. Commissioner Hicks suggested that a change in leadership within the ANC may break the cycle of nonresponsive government. Although she referred specifically to Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, this new leadership could easily come rise up from the current youth. Jay Naidoo sounded the call for a new generation to step up to the plate in his opinion piece "Get up, Stand Up South Africa": "We need a new generation of fearless leaders who will confront arbitrary power with the truth, and we need them today."

To this end, Lolita Nkoane (aged 20-29, African, Queensburgh) cited youth education and participation as an issue to watch when considering the future of South Africa. Nkoane explained that the older generation of liberation veterans are going to die out and younger people will have to step into positions of power. This younger generation did not grow up under

apartheid, and will only learn about it by educating themselves. The future will depend on whether or not the younger generation educates themselves enough to make mature and informed decisions when they vote (Nkoane). Another participant (aged 30-39, Black, Morningside) explained that the generation in power now – the generation of liberators – have a sense of ownership over the country and the people because they "gave them freedom". This participant believed that a new generation will rise to power that is "more interested in building policy and democracy" rather than maintaining their role as liberators.

Will the new generation be able to rise to challenge? At the Democracy Development Programme's annual national conference on citizen mobilization, "The Politics of Public Participation: Toward Deepening our Understanding of Citizen Mobilization," youth participation was a recurring concern. In his interview, PEO Moresy noted that "it will be a challenge for any youth… to realistically visualize the political future of the country as a reason to participate in democracy and democratic processes." He explained that South African youth are not apathetic, but South Africa "has not engaged [their] youth enough about our democracy and possibilities of participation". The little youth engagement that they have done has not been in the "appropriate medium" or used "appropriate approaches" (Mosery). PEO Mosery noted that notes that youth participation is a problem in many democracies, but they did not expect to experience it so soon in South Africa. To safeguard its democratic establishment, South Africa will need to address this issue.

Another issue in need of attention is education. MP Sayedali-Shah asserted that "true democracy cannot function in a society which is illiterate," and the future of the country will depend in part on literacy rates and the quality education, which could have a large impact on how born-frees exercise their democratic rights, especially in rural areas. Lungelo Makhathini (aged 20-29, Black, Chesterville) specifically lamented that ANC leaders used to be better educated, but now people join the party and expect the party to educate them – and instead just fall victim to propaganda. Two anonymous participants (aged 20-29, Caucasian; aged 60-69, South African, Bramley) also identified lack of education as a serious problem in maintaining South African democracy, and another anonymous participant (aged 40-49, Coloured, Morningside) believed that many voters have not demonstrated an ability to think and decide for

themselves. It will be difficult for South Africans to feel ownership over their government without first taking ownership of their political thought.

Upcoming Elections: The Future of the ANC and Opposition Parties

Two expert participants and one anonymous participant (aged 50-59, White, rural area) identified the next five to ten years – the two election cycles following the 2014 elections – as pivotal moments in defining the future of South African democracy (Sayedali-Shah and Naidu). Each election offers an opportunity for shifts in power among political parties. MP Sayedali-Shah, of the opposition Democratic Alliance, believed that the ANC will fall out power in the 2019 elections. As discussed above, ANC entrenchment presents a challenge for South African democracy. PEO Mosery believed that South Africa does "need strong opposition parties". Commissioner Hicks affirmed that the rise of opposition parties "is possible… and it is important." One anonymous participant (aged 60-69, White) put the need for a changed in government in even more dire terms: "as long as this party is in power, we'll never come off our knees". Will the ANC maintain its hold on power, or will opposition parties rise up to take the stage?

Part of the answer to this question lies within the ANC itself. Several expert participants noted that fractures within the ANC alliance are beginning to show. PEO Mosery observed that the ANC "disagrees with themselves." Professor Lawrence said that the fate of opposition parties "depends more on fractures within the ANC than anything else." Dr. Naidu reported that "even the tripartite alliance is beginning to flounder, [and] cracks are beginning to appear because it's being held together with a very tenuous link," that is the need to stay in power. MP Sayedali-Shah observed "competing interests in the ruling party," and pointed to globalization as driving a wedge between the ideology of factions within the ANC alliance (presumably COSATU and the SACP) and the pragmatism that ANC leaders in power are forced to adopt. He described the alliance as "imploding already" and believes it will not last for more than six or seven more years. Not only is the alliance imploding, but "each segment of the alliance is imploding within itself". Infighting within the ANC might lead the ANC to "drop the ball," and a smart and prepared opposition might be ready able to pick it up (de Jager 166).

Thus, the second part of the answer lies within the opposition parties. According to Commissioner Hicks, if the ANC does not prove that it can improve performance on issues

important to voters, "more and more people are going to be attracted to the DA and other parties." PEO Mosery believed that "it is possible to have strong opposition parties, although he notes that "there are far too many registered political parties" in South Africa, and foresees a necessary consolidation of opposition parties. Dr. Naidu likewise believed that the rise of the opposition "will only be possible through a coalition," which could be difficult to form.

As a result of the diversity of opposition parties, the voice of the opposition is "fragmented," and "the opposition is struggling in the sense of finding an agenda for itself" (Mosery). This fragmentation runs counter to the need to establish a well-defined policy platform with cross-racial appeal to oppose the African National Congress. Dr. Naidu cited "no clear vision of policies" as a hurdle for the opposition, and PEO Mosery explained that opposition parties need to develop non-personalized agendas with broader appeal. The ability to present a united front, including a defined agenda, is important because, as Professor Lawrence explained, "people tend to back winners," and so opposition parties still need to reach a critical mass where people believe they can win power in order to gain the funding support necessary to win.

Currently, the strongest of the opposition parties is the Democratic Alliance (DA). Dr. Naidu called the Democratic Alliance a "major force" in South African politics, and sees it has the likely party that would organize the opposition coalition. Opposition parties lack "infrastructure and machinery to take on any significant challenge to the ANC," with the exception of the DA (Naidu). MP Sayedali-Shah, of the DA, foresaw consolidation of opposition parties and believed that other opposition parties "will have no choice but to join us [the DA]" as the DA earns enough votes to challenge the ANC.

Commissioner Hicks pointed out that the "ANC majority power base is being eroded". Shifts are already beginning to show in voting patterns. The ANC lost ground in every province except KwaZulu-Natal, the province from which President Jacob Zuma comes, in the most recent national election in 2009 (Friedman 112). The ANC's share of the national vote may have dipped below 60%, one estimate says, if it were not for their strong showing in KwaZulu-Natal, President Jacob Zuma's home province (Friedman 112). In the same election, the DA won an absolute majority in the Western Cape (Friedman 112).

Interestingly, in the face of dissatisfaction with ANC rule even while ANC loyalties remain high, the phenomena of abstaining from voting or split voting have become increasingly

common (Lawrence). Split voting is the practice of voting for the ANC at the national level while voting for opposition parties at the local level. Participants Thabani Sibiya (aged 20-29, Black), Nokubonga Mkhize (aged 20-29, Black, Mayville) and Sne Xulu (aged 20-29, African, Chesterville) admitted that they would not vote because, in Sibiya's words, they've "got no one to vote for". Another participant, Lungelo Makhathini (aged 20-29, Black, Chesterville), explained that he voted for the ANC at the national level for loyalty reasons, but voted for the DA locally. Commissioner Hicks expected that an eroding power base could be the "wake up call" that the ANC needs that "force[s] the party to evolve". Dr. Naidu agreed that "the system needs a bit of a shake up right now". Opposition parties could be the answer, forcing debate into the public domain rather than within the internal halls of the ANC, which bypasses citizens (Naidu).

Another question that remains is whether or not opposition parties rising to power will improve South African democracy. PEO Mosery suggested that "opposition politics have not really helped to have a unified South Africa that is moving in one direction," although this is "the nature of competition". Commissioner Hicks and Dr. Naidu also expressed fears specifically about the Economic Freedom Front (EFF) and Julius Malema. Dr. Naidu claimed that parties such as the EFF "could really push politics into quite a different kind of arena" by introducing emotions of "anger and resentment" into politics and destroying the civility of politics. Meanwhile, Commissioner Hicks feared that they would bring dated policy, such as nationalization, back to the fore, in which case South Africa "would be on a path to hell".

When it comes the Democratic Alliance, Commissioner Hicks pointed out that they have not fared that much better than the ANC or raised standards in municipalities where they hold power. At the same time, "the ANC stranglehold" will be broken, and has already begun to break. Perhaps South Africa will have more vibrant political parties, but Commissioner Hicks feared "ordinary people being trampled on" as those parties vie for power.

Like Commissioner Hicks, Steven Friedman believes that the decline of the ANC could lead to stronger democracy in South Africa, but will not necessarily:

> "Breaks in the political logjam are essential if democracy is to advance. But, while a more fluid politics opens opportunities, it also creates threats. There is no guarantee that

the new government will continue to respect the constitution. The institutions that could be imperiled in this case are the judiciary, the media and, perhaps, the academy." (118)

Thus, the rise of the opposition may present an opportunity for improving democracy and governance, but would be no guarantee.

A Constitutional Challenge: Would it Hold?

The belief that opposition parties may take the reins within the next decade relies on a crucial assumption: that the ANC would relinquish power if it lost elections. Is this a valid assumption to make?

MP Sayedali-Shah believed that whether or not the ANC would give up power depends on a number of factors including the margin of victory, the unity of the opposition, and how key security institutions inter alia the military and intelligence services react. He pointed out that the history of liberation movements indicates that "they are not easy losers," and the ANC is already trying to undermine DA rule in the Western Cape (Sayedali-Shah). Yet the fact remains that the ANC *did* allow the DA to take power in the Western Cape. Attempts to undermine the DA can be understood as standard attempts of the opposition to undermine the ruling party.

Aside from MP Sayedali-Shah, expert participants generally expressed faith in the Constitution as an effective check on the ANC. Professor Lawrence noted that "it is easy to point to the lapses," but "to a considerable extent" the ANC still abides by the Constitution and legislative frameworks. PEO Mosery concurred, stating that "it is safe to say that I have not seen a matter where the Constitution is being undermined," which he finds promising for the continuance of democracy. Dr. Naidu also agreed that the ANC hasn't "interfered seriously with the Constitution". Important to note here is that in the 2009 national elections, the ANC's share of the vote dropped enough to bring them below the number of seats necessary to unilaterally achieve a two-thirds majority (Friedman 112). It is thus no longer possible for the ANC to change the Constitution on its own (Friedman 112).

PEO Mosery noted that proper channels for litigation exist such that, if the Constitution is violated, the opposition will not leave it unchallenged, and Dr. Naidu pointed out that "they have been taken to court" already. As previously stated, the courts remain a strong defender of democracy in South Africa, and so they can be reasonably expected to protect the Constitution in the case of a challenge thereto. Furthermore, as previously stated, civil society has demonstrated

a good ability to mobilize against serious threats. Civil society would probably quickly organize against a serious constitutional breach by the ANC (Naidu).

Commissioner Hicks observed that when the ANC fails to play by the rules, "it gets its wrists slapped and embarrassingly so." She also cited the courts, as well as Chapter IX institutions and the media. Corruption is difficult to detect, "but where [corruption and crime] has been exposed, they pay" (Hicks). Commissioner Hicks pointed out instances where party leaders in high positions have been arrested.

One promising point which none of the participants mentioned was that the ANC has, at the least, established a tradition of periodic changes in leadership within the party. De Jager points out that "the ANC has… instilled a culture of leadership change". South Africa has seen four different presidents since its democratic transition. While these presidents have all come from within the ANC, these transitions at least differentiates South Africa from a dominant party state like Zimbabwe (157).

Moreover, Dr. Naidu believed that South Africans would not accept an entrenched ANC, because the memory of an authoritarian and oppressive government is "quite fresh in [South African] minds". Old activists are already beginning to say, "this is not what we fought for" (Naidu). Prime examples of this phenomenon are Jay Naidoo and Mamphela Ramphele, who have written pieces encouraging South Africans to demand the democracy they fought for, but which has begun to slip away. Moreover, both PEO Mosery and Dr. Naidu made the point that South Africa has developed a black middle class. That new middle class could prove a democratic anchor, because it has a "vested interest in keeping a country that is stable" (Naidu).

Not only would South Africans reject undemocratic ANC rule, but the international community would be likely to stand against it. Dr. Naidu made the point that "South Africa is on the global stage". As previously mentioned, the Constitution is prized by South African as one of their greatest democratic accomplishments. The South African Constitution has garnered much attention internationally, so infractions thereupon will not go unnoticed (Naidu). In the words of Dr. Naidu, "the world is watching us".

Literature Review

Afrobarometer. "Afrobarometer Online Data Analysis." *Afrobarometer.* Afrobarometer, 2012. Web. 27 Nov. 2013.

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Afrobarometer is a well-established project which coordinates partner organizations gathering data on the political and socioeconomic situation in thirty-five African countries. Afrobarometer and partners use standardized questionnaires administered on a regular basis, with rounds typically occurring every two years, so that data can be compared across countries and over time. The first round of surveys began in 1999. Information on all of Afrobarometer's methodologies as well as data collected in past rounds are available for public use at http://www.afrobarometer.org. The learner used and adapted questions from the most recent round for South Africa, conducted in 2011, to construct her citizen questionnaire. The use of the questionnaire allowed the learner to use pre-developed survey questions. It also allowed the learner to compare results with a representative sample from KwaZulu-Natal. This data is available through Afrobarometer's "Online Data Analysis," where users can obtain data from any country in any round and sort it according to demographic characteristics. The learner used data from Round 5 for South Africa and sorted data by province to isolate the data from KwaZulu-Natal. This data was based on a sample of 488 participants and was weighted to simulate a representative sample.

Ramphele, Mamphela. *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters*. Johannesburg: Penguin, 2012. Print.

Mamphela Ramphele has transitioned from being an anti-apartheid activist (she was the life partner of well-known activist Steve Biko) to a leader of South Africa in the post-apartheid era. She has served as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Cape Town and Managing Director at the World Bank. Mamphela Ramphela wrote *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters* in order to connect with younger generations, and have a frank conversation with them about the triumphs and failures of post-apartheid South Africa, with particular attention to how the ANC has turned on its traditional values and captured the South African state. Ramphele urges the

younger generation to overcome fear, speak out about the governance issues they see around them, and take part meaningfully in constructing their country's future.

Friend or Foe? Dominant Party Systems in Southern Africa: Insights from the Developing World. **Ed. Nicola de Jager and Pierre du Toit. Claremont: UCT Press, 2013. Print.**

This anthology of essays examines single party states, or states which are at least procedurally democratic but where one party remains influential or in power for long periods of time. The anthology focuses on Southern African countries of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe; it also includes cases from India, South Korea, and Taiwan, where dominant parties have fallen out of power, for comparative purposes. Dr. de Jager and Professor du Toit, who wrote the introduction, conclusion and chapter on South Africa and edited the book, are concerned about the impact African National Congress dominance will have upon the quality of democracy in South Africa. De Jager and du Toit work in the Department of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch. The learner found Chapters 1, 8, and 10 to particularly helpful in achieving understanding of the ANC's role in South African democracy.

Naidoo, Jay. "Get up, Stand Up South Africa!" *Daily Maverick* **26 April 2012. Web. 24 Oct. 2013.**

Jay Naidoo wrote an open letter to South Africa on the eighteenth birthday of democracy in South Africa. Naidoo is the founding general secretary of COSATU, served in several ministerial posts under President Mandela, and chaired the Development Bank of South Africa. He is currently serving as a board member of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and chair the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. In his letter, Naidoo admits that democracy in South Africa failed in some respects. After the democratic transition, South African citizens, "the engine of [the] freedom struggle became passive bystanders" awaiting delivery on government promises. As for those who lead the charge to democracy, their "arrogance grew with time and the hierarchical leadership that followed." The result was a dissonance, where a select group of leaders has decided what will would be "best for the country," but were woefully out of touch with the country itself. Naidoo calls South African to have a frank and open dialogues about the problems that remained some eighteen years after election.

Friedman, Steven. "An Accidental Advance? South Africa's 2009 Elections." *Journal of Democracy* **20.4 (2009): 108-122. Web. 23 Oct. 2013.**

Steven Friedman is director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy, a joint Rhodes University-University of Johannesburg initiative. In this article he analyzes the results of South Africa's 2009 elections and their implications for the development of democracy in South Africa. Friedman explains how "seemingly inevitable electoral arithmetic" in past elections has allowed the ruling African National Congress insulate itself from the South African people, yet South Africans continue to vote for the ANC because identity-based politics (110). While the 2009 elections were widely hailed by the media as an ANC victory, Friedman's more careful analysis of the election shows that it marked the beginning of what may be an ANC decline. If so, the ANC may be forced to become more responsive to the South African populace, which could meaningfully improve the quality of South Africa's democracy.

Democracy Development Programme. *Democracy and You: A Community Manual on Governance and Participation in the New South Africa.* **Ed. Andy Mason. No location: Democracy Development Programme, 2007. Print.**

This forty-eight page "community manual" for South African democracy was published by the Democracy Development Programme, a South African non-governmental organization. The contents of the book are based on two days of discussion among a group of twenty young South Africans. It includes chapters on the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, elections, government structure, how laws are created, and citizen participation. In addition to traditional prose, the handbook presents issues as dialogues and debates among people through cartoons. It also includes questions to spur discussion about democratic issues among readers. The publication is useful to this study because it provides a clearly articulated South African explanation of democracy.

Conclusion

Reflecting on democracy in South Africa, Professor Samadoda Fikeni explained that it is a "simple fact that we are not where we were in 1994. We are a different society, but at the same time we are not where we intended to be… we find our self in a place between places and a time between times, and our democracy being at the crossroads."

While participants may largely agree that South Africa is a democracy, they do not agree on what that means and whether or not it is working. This disjuncture is understandable, when the way one defines democracy impacts the standards used to judge its performance. At the same time, the disjuncture is cause for concern if South Africans hope to move forward country together. Participant responses ultimately highlight a need for greater national dialogue about what democracy is supposed to achieve.

Working to develop a common vision will be instrumental in planning for the future to preserve or improve the quality of South African democracy. If participants are correct in their assertions, the next five to ten years will present plenty of opportunities – not guarantees – to improve the state of democracy and governance in South Africa.

South African democracy is about to begin its third decade of existence. South Africans should appreciate the distance they have come, but as they reach this landmark, many hills remain to be climbed. For with freedom comes responsibility, and the long walk to democracy has not yet ended…

Recommendations for Further Study

This study gave only a brief overview of the state of democracy in South Africa, and was also constrained by a number of limitations. The field is ripe for further study, which could include:

- **The breakdown of data into differentials** – Although the learner addressed the issue of race in South African democracy, she was not able to break down responses to individual questions by race. These insights would prove useful in tracking the ability of South Africa to create a society not segregated by race. Breakdown by other demographics may also prove insightful, such as breakdown by age. Participants of the born-free generations may have very different impressions of democracy than liberation veterans.

- **Study of the history culture of the ANC** – The shift from a dominant liberation movement to a dominant political party is a common experience in new democracies, and it is clear that this transition affects how the dominant political party functions. The learner touched briefly on ANC culture insofar as its largest impacts on the quality of South African democracy, but the area certainly merits further study.

- **Multinational comparative study on understandings of democracy**– One trend the learner observed was the lack of consensus with regard to meaning of democracy. The learner, an American, was also surprised by the responses chosen as essential characteristics of democracy that where popular in South Africa. It would be interesting and perhaps provide insight on the future of South African democracy to see how popular understandings of democracy compare in more longstanding democracies.

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Appendix I: ISP Ethics Review

SIT Study Abroad
a program of World Learning

ISP Ethics Review

(Note: AD must complete this form for every student's ISP. A signed copy of this form must accompany any ISP selected as outstanding and sent to the Brattleboro office.)

This ISP paper by Jennifer Hamilton has

been reviewed by John McGladdery (Academic Director)

and <u>does</u> conform to the ethical standards of the local community and the

ethical and academic standards outlined in the SIT student and Faculty Handbooks.

Academic Director: John McGladdery

Signature:

Program: SFH Durban Community Health and Social Policy

Date: 30 November 2013

Appendix II: Example Consent Form

SIT Study Abroad
a program of World Learning

CONSENT FORM

1. Brief description of the purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions and understandings of democracy in South Africa almost twenty years post-apartheid. The learner will interview South Africans in the Durban area of KwaZulu-Natal, including citizens and expert representatives of democracy development organizations.

2. Rights Notice

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

a. *Privacy* - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.

b. *Anonymity* - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless you choose otherwise.

c. *Confidentiality* - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to you.

I understand that I will receive **no gift** or direct benefit for participating in the study.

I confirm that the learner has given me the address of the nearest School for International Training Study Abroad Office should I wish to go there for information. (404 Cowey Park, Cowey Rd, Durban).

I know that if I have any questions or complaints about this study that I can contact anonymously, if I wish, the Director/s of the SIT South Africa Community Health Program (Zed McGladdery 0846834982).

_____   _____

Participant's name printed   Your signature and date

_____   _____

Interviewer's name printed   Interviewer's signature and date

I can read English. (If not, but can read Zulu or Afrikaans, please supply). If participant cannot read, the onus is on the researcher to ensure that the quality of consent is nonetheless without reproach.

Appendix III: Citizen Questionnaire

1. As a South African, what does democracy mean to you? What comes to mind when I say the word 'democracy'?

2. In your opinion, how much of a democracy is South Africa today?*
    2.1. A full democracy
    2.2. A democracy, but with minor problems
    2.3. A democracy, with major problems
    2.4. Not a democracy
    2.5. [Don't read] Do not understand question/do not understand what 'democracy' is
    2.6. [Don't read] Do not know
    2.7. [Don't read] None of these

3. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in South Africa? Are you:*
    3.1. Very satisfied
    3.2. Fairly satisfied
    3.3. Not satisfied
    3.4. Not satisfied at all
    3.5. [Don't read] South Africa is not a democracy
    3.6. [Don't read] Do not know
    3.7. [Don't read] None of these

4. Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. If you had to choose only one of the things that I am going to read, which one would you choose as the most essential (important) characteristic of democracy?*
    4.1. Government narrows the gap between the rich and the poor
    4.2. People choose government leaders in free and fair elections
    4.3. Government does not waste any public money
    4.4. People are free to express their political views openly
    4.5. [Don't read] none of these
    4.6. [Don't read] do not know

5. And here is another list. Which one of these things would you choose as the most essential (important) characteristic of democracy?*
    5.1. Government ensures law and order
    5.2. Media is free to criticize things government does
    5.3. Government ensures job opportunities for all
    5.4. Multiple parties compete fairly in elections
    5.5. [Don't read] none of these
    5.6. [Don't read] do not know

6. And here is another list. Which one of these things would you choose as the most essential (important) characteristic of democracy?*
   6.1. The legislature closely monitors the actions of the President
   6.2. Government provides basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter, for everyone
   6.3. People are free to form organizations to influence government and public affairs
   6.4. Public services, such as roads, water or sewerage, work well and do not break down
   6.5. [Don't read] none of these
   6.6. [Don't read] do not know

7. And here is another list. Which of these would you choose as the most essential (important) characteristic of democracy?*
   7.1. People are free to take part in demonstrations and protests
   7.2. Politics is clean and free of corruption
   7.3. The court protects ordinary people if the government mistreats them
   7.4. People receive aid from the government, such as food parcels, when they are in need
   7.5. [Don't read] none of these
   7.6. [Don't read] Do not know

8. In your opinion, how has the quality of democracy in South Africa changed over the twenty years since it began in 1994? Has it gotten:
   8.1. Much better
   8.2. Somewhat better
   8.3. About the same
   8.4. Somewhat worse
   8.5. Much worse
   8.6. [Don't read] None of these
   8.7. [Don't read] Do not understand
   8.8. [Don't read] Don't know

9. Looking into the future twenty years, how do you expect the quality of democracy will compare in 2033 to today? Will it be:
   9.1. Much better
   9.2. Somewhat better
   9.3. About the same
   9.4. Somewhat worse
   9.5. Much worse
   9.6. [Don't read] None of these
   9.7. [Don't read] Do not understand
   9.8. [Don't read] Do not know

10. Do you wish to remain anonymous? [If not] What is your full name?

11. If you feel comfortable answering, which age range do you fall into?

11.1.   18-19
11.2.   20-29
11.3.   30-39
11.4.   40-49
11.5.   50-59
11.6.   60-69
11.7.   70 or older

12. If you feel comfortable answering, what race do you identify yourself as?

13. If you feel comfortable answering, what neighborhood do you live in?

*Adapted or borrowed from Afrobarometer's "Afrobarometer Round 5: The Quality of Democracy and Governance in South Africa."

Appendix IV: Additional Questions for Experts

1. What have been the strongest points or largest successes of South African democracy?
2. What have been the weakest points or areas for improvement in South African democracy?
3. Democracy is government by the people and for the people. So in a way, it is up to citizens to define exactly what their democracy will look like. In a 2011 Afrobarometer survey, a plurality of respondents (39%) identified "government ensures job opportunities for all" as the essential characteristic of democracy. In a later question, a plurality (29%) identified "Government provides basic necessities, like food, clothing and shelter, for everyone" as the essential characteristic of democracy. These are just a few of the questions asked, and the answers were chosen by only a plurality, not a majority. At the same time, I have read and heard about fears that democracy here is not as healthy as it could be because South Africans act as subjects rather than citizens. Should these responses then, which place government provisions as an essential trait of democracy over personal responsibilities in a democracy, be concerning? Or should they just be viewed as a South African vision of democracy?
4. Are you familiar with the Dinokeng Scenarios? [If yes] It has been almost five years since the Dinokeng scenarios were conceived. What scenario do you think best describes the trajectory that South Africa is currently on? Why? Do you this trajectory is likely to change?
5. Dr. Nicole de Jager and Prof. Pierre du Toit from the University of Stellenbosch describe dominant party states as states that are at least procedurally democratic but where one party remains influential and in power for long periods of time. South Africa fits this description, with the ANC as the dominant party. How does ANC's leadership role help and hurt South Africa's quality of democracy?
6. Dr. de Jager says that the future of democracy in South Africa depends on whether or not the ANC abides by the democratic rules it instituted in 1994. In your opinion, to what extent does the ANC still play by "the rules of the game" (the Constitution and legislative framework)?
7. Do you think it is or will be possible for other political parties to end ANC dominance?
8. If there were one message you could send to the world about the state of democracy in South Africa, what would it be?

Appendix V: Geographic Spread of Participants' Residencies

Neighborhood Named	Frequency
Did not respond	7
Westville	3
KwaMasxha (Cato Manor)	2
Chesterville	3
Durban (in the city/city center)	4
Chatsworth	4
KwaMashu	2
Pinetown	1
KwaNdengenzi	1
Clarendon	1
Durban Point Waterfront	1
St. George's	1
UMlazi	3
Umhlanga	1
Mayville	1
Seaview	1
Queensburgh	1
Phoenix	1
South Beach	2
Glenwood	2
Morningside	3
Claremont	2
Rural area (KZN)	2
Bramley (Gauteng)	1