

fraudulent stop-orders others had mismatched handwriting.

The mitigating view for these irregularities holds that unions like the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (Amcu) hand in stop-orders in bulks hence instead of companies signing each and every notice they simply sign or stamp acknowledgement of receipt on one particular form. But signing each form is the general rule. Hence the NUM has accused Lonmin of tolerating irregularities by others to effect 'regime change'.

Lonmin in retaliation charged NUM shop stewards with altering names from the stop-order forms of the rival union. Consequently three shop stewards were dismissed.

A congenial view holds that the altered names were those of NUM members who found their names on Amcu stop-order forms without their permission or knowledge: a point management purportedly knew but failed to take up against the other union's offenders.

Overall, the professed neutrality of mining companies has been severely blemished. A reputable independent verifier in determining majority status for unions is patently the way to go.

The Framework for a Sustainable Mining Industry entered into by almost all stakeholders in 2013 holds that business commits to 'act in a fair and impartial manner in dealing with unions'. The stakeholders further committed to building relationships that were based on trust and that they would avoid any actions that 'adversely affect this relationship'. It further says that business would 'act in a fair and impartial manner in dealing with unions'.

But Marula Platinum Limited, where Impala Platinum holds majority shares, and also a signatory to the framework is resisting independent verification to determine the majority between NUM and Amcu. This breaches the letter and spirit of the framework

and vindicates the opinion that the agreement is just a public relations exercise.

What is the interest of companies in refusing to use the independent verifier? Conceivably in this fancied murkiness victory by numbers may well be a forged majority with a presiding employer an accessory. Patronage might also be at play to leverage collaboration between the vindicated union and the company.

The envisaged collaboration is the sought after obedience to defeat unions and ultimately the transformation in the mining industry. It is in the nature of oligarchies to rely on obedience and sometimes enforce it by hook or by crook. Either way the tyranny of it is that workers get killed not the bosses.

These desperate manoeuvres could draw the industry back into another round of industrial relations chaos. But the growing calls for independent verifiers demonstrate that the mining oligarchy no longer has unhampered leverage of manipulation.

The temptation to embrace outcomes of murky processes because they favour some sections of the workforce is an unfortunate transitional trend but workers are not fools. The majority of them in their varying divide believe that peaceful co-existence is necessary for further empowerment advances.

A struggle for better living conditions, safe working environments, and a living wage is the pledge that cuts across the divide. Any successful labour relations must be geared towards urgent resolution of these necessities. The sooner the oligarchy's putrid divisive dance is exposed for the tyranny it bears the better for all workers. **LB**

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Service delivery protests in Ntabankulu

Rural society and citizenship in SA

Service delivery protests are not only an urban happening – they also take place in rural areas as citizens exercise their democratic rights that were denied them during apartheid. **Andisiwe Jukuda** and **Siphesihle Dumisa** explore how the protests are playing out.

With the advent of democracy in 1994 previously marginalised and oppressed South Africans hoped to realise and enjoy improvements to their quality of life. Promises that the government would fulfill every citizen's right to have adequate access to water, electricity, sanitation, housing, and economic opportunities were made. The new government was charged with the difficult task of dismantling the institutionalised socio-economic inequalities that once characterised the country under apartheid. The exploitation, poverty, and underdevelopment which prevailed in townships and rural areas (then known as Bantustans) were expected to fast become distant memories recorded in the historical abyss of pre-1994 South Africa.

Undeniably great strides have been made towards realising the ideal of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. Nonetheless, whilst many aspects of the state have undergone positive changes, the vast majority of citizens are yet to enjoy the fruits of the new South Africa. The structure of the economy continues to make it difficult for the poor to escape from their economic circumstances often in spite of their best efforts. Consequentially, the lack of economic transformation has meant that many continue to live under conditions of relative and at times absolute poverty: relying mainly on the provision of government services to survive.

The excluded poor masses constantly show their dissatisfaction and disillusionment through protest actions which have notably become increasingly violent. This violence emanates both from the protesters themselves and from the police deployed to respond to the protests. The death of Andries Tatane following injuries sustained from police brutality during

a community service delivery protest in 2011 is one of the crudest examples of how the culture of protests in South Africa has unfolded over the years. It is indeed telling that a human life can be lost whilst merely exercising the right to protest, and demanding that government fulfills its promise to provide all citizens with decent living conditions deemed necessary for basic human dignity. The tension between the demands of citizens and the inability of government to efficiently and effectively supply services in some areas is indeed troubling.

Until recently, these service delivery demonstrations were typically located in urban areas specifically in townships, where historically protests against the repressive apartheid government were rampant. However, in 2013 several protests occurring in traditionally rural geographic settings such as Ntabankulu in the Eastern Cape were reported in the media. The latest reported protest in Ntabankulu took place on 7 May 2014 – the day of the fifth national and provincial democratic elections. The rising level of political consciousness and agency in rural areas 20 years into democracy begs us to reflect on the evolving nature of 'rural society'. The actions displayed by pockets of politically active rural populations can further be useful in understanding how the right to 'citizenship' in a democratic state is being shaped from a rural dimension.

The objective is therefore to explore how rural populations own and express their rights and responsibilities as citizens in the new South Africa, and the implications this has on our understanding of the notion of 'rural society'.

HISTORY OF PROTEST MOVEMENTS

Social movement protests in South Africa became an

internationally renowned activity particularly in the 1960s in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre. Mass mobilisations against the oppressive apartheid regime included workers' strikes in the 1920s; various demonstrations under the defiance campaign in the 1950s; student uprisings and the resurgence of worker strike actions in the 1970s; as well as the popular decision taken by liberation activists in the 1980s to make South Africa ungovernable. The streets of peri-urban townships were therefore sites of regular protest activities and rebellion in an attempt to dismantle the apartheid administration.

Whilst most of the protests and demonstrations took place in urban areas, rural communities also rose against the apartheid regime at various times. The Pondoland Revolt stands out as one of the most significant and protracted protests in the rural areas, having unfolded between 1950 and 1961. The Pondo people located in the former Transkei (one of two Bantustans forming the now Eastern Cape province) vehemently resisted the Bantu Authorities system through continuous spontaneous revolts. Rural protests are therefore not a new occurrence; however they are significantly few and far between.

Whilst the rights of all non-white South Africans were denied by the apartheid government, rural communities unmistakably suffered the worst from the discrimination. The legacy of extreme underdevelopment in these areas as a result of apartheid policies continues to be manifested today. The legacy of apartheid is still obviously visible, calling on the state to act swiftly in mending the past. It is therefore no surprise that the state's inability to meet citizens' demands – especially in reducing inequalities and levels of poverty – has seen countless South Africans taking to the streets.

According to Peter Alexander writing in *Amandla* magazine South Africa boasts one of the highest public protest action rates in the world. However, rural citizens are essentially not known to take their demands for better services to the streets through protests. This is an important factor considering that rural areas generally remain far less developed than townships where most service delivery protests occur. This is partly due to the governance system which incorporates traditional leaders in rural areas; and also a result of the way in which the notion of citizenship has developed in rural communities pre- and post-1994 in relation to the structural conditions defining a rural society.

In the context of pre-1994 South Africa, Janet Cherry and Leslie Bank in their article 'A tale of two homelands - Transkei and Ciskei', describe the socio-political dynamics in rural areas as follows:

'This system of power, authority, and control in rural areas has been an instrument of political domination and repression in the Transkei since the colonial days. It has been premised on the denial of the democratic rights of rural people.'

RECENT RURAL PROTESTS

According to the Department of National Treasury 'rural areas are defined as areas that include large settlements in the former homelands, which depend on migratory labour and remittances as well as government social grants for their survival, and typically have traditional land tenure systems.' Twenty years into democracy large parts of the Eastern Cape epitomise the contemporary marginalisation of black people through their confinement to rural spaces.

Johan Fredrik Rye writes that the classic notion of a rural society is traditional, passive and close netted. Whilst literature on 'rurality' exists very little about 'rurality' and political activity is available. To understand the mushrooming of rural protests in South Africa one has to understand the relationship between rural societies and government.

Daniels, Partridge, Kekana, and Musundwa suggest that the rural sector is undergoing a form of compositional change, with a distinct process of de-agrarianisation. Households are becoming more dependent on government grants while moving away from agricultural-based activities. Undoubtedly rural populations have put much of their fate on the government and its ability to deliver on its promises. As a result of the state's failure or delays in implementing development plans, rural societies have opted for political activism.

Protests have become a political avenue not only to reject the status quo but also to assert their democratic rights as citizens. Although rural areas are geographically and economically marginalised, they refuse to be unseen and unheard. Henceforth, the formation and mobilisation of protest movements, as well as their fundamental concerns illustrate the evolving nature of citizenship in rural South Africa. On the surface these protests merely signal citizens' dwindling patience for socio-economic emancipation. Deeper analysis though indicates that social change is taking place. Subsequently, this change indicates a need to rethink the notion of rural society in South Africa within the framework of the rights of citizenship as we

commemorate 20 years into the consolidation of democracy.

It is a well-established part of our history that social movements played a crucial role leading up to the demise of apartheid. Currently, citizens continue to choose protests as the best way to express disgruntlement with government. Isolated rural protests considered alongside the incidents at Marikana and the Western Cape wine farms in 2012, signal an imminent change in the political landscape as the groups of citizens who fall into the category of the most marginalised and disempowered in society (migrant labourers, farm workers, and 'peasants'), recognise and begin to exercise their political power. In the rural areas specifically, change in political agency and increasing activism amongst some in the population, should be viewed as a catalyst to the transformation of rural society. The new ways in which citizenship is being displayed in rural areas, should accordingly lead to new ways of understanding rural society. ^{LB}

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