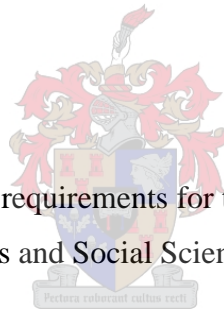# A REVIEW OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

By

Lauren Amber Martin

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Supervisor: Dr C.L. Steenekamp

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Declaration

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Abstract

Political participation by citizens is regarded as a key principle or core component of a democratic system. South Africa is relatively newly democratised country and relies on this participation from its citizens to build legitimacy. Since democratisation, all South Africans (of voting age) have had the opportunity to participate in free and fair elections. Elections and participation in elections (i.e., electoral behaviour) are essential for building legitimacy in a democratic political system, the government and its incumbents. The act of voting is also considered the most popular form of political participation. More recently, empirical evidence reveals a downward trend in electoral behaviour in South Africa. While this trend alone does not necessarily threaten the legitimacy of the political system, it is worrisome that the decline in conventional political participation (such as voting) has been coupled with an increase in more unconventional forms of political protest (such as protest).

This study investigates political participation in a democratic South Africa with a focus on conventional and unconventional political behaviour. More specifically, this study identifies the various ways in which South Africans participate in the political system and explores some of the possible explanations for political participation. In order to address the research questions, a comprehensive review of conventional and unconventional political participation in South Africa was conducted, using South Africa as the chosen case study and employing a qualitative desktop analysis method.

This study demonstrated that South Africans are largely withdrawing from participating in acts of a conventional nature, which is largely being exhibited in the declining trends of both voter registration and voter turnout. Acts of an unconventional nature, on the other hand, are being employed more often, across broad spectrums of society, and for a myriad of reasons. The most popular form of unconventional political behaviour, protest action, has increasingly become a prevalent mechanism in the South African political landscape and is not likely to dissipate any time soon.

Opsomming

Politieke deelname deur landsburgers word beskou as 'n kardinale komponent van 'n demokratiese sisteem. Suid Afrika is 'n redelik jong gedemokratiseerde land, en maak staat op hierdie deelname van haar burgers om kredietwaardigheid op te bou. Sedert demokrasie, het alle Suid Afrikaners van stemgemagtigde ouderdom die reg tot deelname aan vrye en regverdige verkiesings. Verkiesings en deelname aan verkiesings (i.e. verkiesingsgedrag) is noodsaaklik om kredietwaardigheid in 'n demokratiese politiese sisteem, die regering en sy posbeklêers op te bou. Deelname aan 'n verkiesing word ook beskou as die mees gewilde vorm van politieke deelname. Meer onlangs egter, dui empiriese bewyse op n afwaartse neiging in verkiesingsgedrag in Suid Afrika. Alhoewel hierdie neiging alleen nie noodwendig die kredietwaardigheid van die politieke sisteem bedreig nie, is dit kommerwekkend dat die afname in konvensionele politieke deelname (soos om te stem), gepaard gaan met onkonvensionele vorme van politieke deelname (soos in proteste).

Hierdie navorsingsstudie ondersoek politieke deelname in 'n demokratiese Suid Afrika met 'n fokus op konvensionele en onkonvensionele politieke gedrag. Meer spesifiek, identifiseer hierdie studie dan die verskeie maniêre waarop Suid Afrikaners deel het aan die politieke sisteem, en dit verken ook sommige van die moontlike verduidelikings vir politieke deelname. Ten einde die navorsingsvrae aan te spreek, was 'n omvattende resensie van konvensionele en onkonvensionele politieke deelname in Suid Afrika uitgevoer, deur Suid Afrika as die gekose gevallestudie, en 'n kwalitatiewe lessenaar-gebonde analitiese metodiek te gebruik.

Hierdie studie demonstreer dat Suid Afrikaners besig is om grootliks te onttrek van politieke deelname op die konvensionele manier, wat duidelik ten toon gestel word in die dalende neigings van beide stemregistrasies en kiesersopkoms. Dade van 'n onkonvensionele aard, aan die ander kant, word meer gereeld ingespan, oor n bree spektrum van die samelewing, en vir 'n magdom van redes. Die mees gewilde vorm van onkonvensionele politiese deelname, naamlik protesaksie, het toenemend 'n oorheersende meganisme in die Suid Afrikaanse politieke landskap kom word, en sal heel waarskynlik nie binnekort van die politieke landskap verdwyn nie.

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List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CDWs	Community Development Workers
DA	Democratic Alliance
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy
FEDSAW	Federation of South African Women
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IEC	Electoral Commission of South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
NFP	National Freedom Party
NP	National Party
NWU	North West University
PAC	Pan Africanist Party
PID	Party Identification
PR	Proportional Representation
SES	Socio- economic Status
SU	Stellenbosch University
UCT	University of Cape Town
UKZN	University of KwaZulu- Natal
UWC	University of the Western Cape
VAP	Voting Age Population

A REVIEW OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter 1: Introduction and Outline

1.1 Introduction

"This new government based its legitimacy on the concept of constitutionalism, where all the people, representations of the people, and institutions would be subject to the constitution of the country."

(Lues, 2014: 792).

South Africa's transition to a democratic state, led by the African National Congress, ushered in a new era of political governance. This new government vowed to do away with the injustices and inequalities of the past, and to provide equal governance, as well as a better life for all (Lues, 2014: 792). The Founding Provisions, as well as the Bill of Rights which are encompassed in The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), safeguards these equal rights for all.

The Constitution not only guarantees that everyone is equal before the law but goes on to protect civil liberties of equality, non-sexism, non-racialism, human dignity, as well as equal rights[1] (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 3,6). This as such is also further detailed in the Bill of Rights, which is acknowledged as the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It "enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom" (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 6). To this end, the state has the responsibility to respect, protect, as well as uphold all of these rights.

Amongst the various civil liberties and freedoms upheld by the Constitution, participation by citizens is also acknowledged as an essential component in order to maintain the legitimacy of a democracy (Steenekamp, 2017: 60). Elections are thus not only a feature of a well-functioning democracy, but South Africans are encouraged to participate in the political system (Anyangwe, 2012: 39). As noted by Chilambo (2007: 173), free and fair elections are

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[1] It should be noted that while the South African Constitution enshrines a myriad of individual rights and freedoms, the socio-economic reality of many South Africans stands in stark contrast to the ideal.

also a mark of democratic system, while voter turnout in particular is acknowledged as an important indicator into the state of democracy in a country or a particular society.

Graham (2020:31) highlights further that the primary expressions of political participation in South Africa has been through the means of electoral participation (i.e., voting), yet a range of participatory acts do exist outside of the ballot box. These various mechanisms include ward committees, public hearings, community development workers (CDWs), petitions, integrated development planning, even public meetings often referred to as *Izimbizos* (Graham, 2020: 35).

Alongside the various formal mechanisms to participate in the democratic political system, strike and protest action have become increasingly popular amongst citizens. Not only is this evident in the myriad of service delivery protests across the country, but also the highly publicised student movements, such as #RhodesMustFall and OpenStellenbosch, which culminated in the #FeesMustFall campaign. While the motivations are ever changing and fluid, protest action is not a new phenomenon in South Africa.

The use of protest action can be traced back to a particular context within our country's history. The culture of protest and strike action was inherited from the anti-apartheid or pro-struggle movement and remains a relevant factor within our society today (Petrus & Issacs-Martin, 2011:52; Duncan, 2016: 1). Not only does protest action stem from a historical legacy for many South Africans; but protest action "frequently draws from apartheid-era resistance strategy" (Runciman, 2017 cited by Cornell, Malherbe, Suffla & Seedat, 2019:3) as citizens employ the same tactics which had been used against the apartheid regime, including but not limited to, the burning of tyres, barricading and blocking roads, and even setting buildings alight (Petrus & Issacs-Martin, 2011; Runciman, 2016).

This culture of protest is evident and has taken form in the various protests that we continue to experience in South Africa today. From the most well-known service delivery protests which continue to plague multiple communities around the country, to political protests, and even the subsequent rise of student movements. These various protests have included, but are not limited to election related violence largely prevalent in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (Schuld, 2013: 11), various political protests in the form of taxi violence (Savides, 2017; Nxumalo, Magubane & Rall, 2019), service delivery protests usually amounting to an uproar

in many communities over poor service delivery, or the lack of services (Shaidi, 2013: 16), as well as the recent student movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall which centred on the dissatisfaction with the lack of access to, and the cost of higher education (Luescher, 2016: 22-23; Dlamini, 2019: 47).

The reasons for these many forms of protest are countless. From grievances of housing, water, sanitation, poor public service, youth unemployment, and even the issues of inequality; South Africans resort to protest behaviour for a multitude of reasons (Nleya, 2011: 3; Nyar & Wray, 2012: 26; Alexander, Runciman & Ngwane, 2013: 8; Botes, 2018: 242). This persistent protest action is evidence that the culture of protest continues to persist in South Africa. South Africans for the most part attempt to voice their grievances through non-violent means, however when their grievances are not heard they decide to voice their discontent in protest action (Bruce, 2013: 19; Duncan, 2016: 2-3). Furthermore, as highlighted by Simelane (2013: 1), whenever South Africans are unhappy about something "they find a way to make it known".

1.2 Background to the study

Before the transition from a repressive apartheid state to a democratic regime encompassing freedom and equal human rights for all, South Africa's political climate was extremely unfavourable. The majority of South Africans not only experienced wide scale discrimination and racism but legislated segregation as well. This was largely on the part of the National Party (NP), who in 1948 consolidated its power in South Africa and instituted the system of apartheid. Apartheid was a system of institutionalised racial segregation based on the premise of complete control and dominance of those individuals who formed part of the "non-white"[2] population (Thompson, 2001: 188-189). This system of forced segregation was founded on the belief of white supremacy and formed the foundation of the political system at that time. The NP government gave "fierce expression to its determination to maintain white supremacy... much of its early legislation coordinated and extended the racial laws of the segregation era" (Thompson, 2001:189).

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[2] While I do not support the term "non-white", this term was used under the apartheid system as a means to classify all races who were of a different race other than white. The term Black South Africans used in the remainder of this chapter is a generic term which includes citizens classified as Black, Coloured, Indian, as well as Asian South Africans.

In institutionalising apartheid, the rights and freedoms of citizens who were deemed "non-white" were abolished. These individuals were unable to participate in the political system as the NP government severely constrained the political rights of Black South Africans (Thompson, 2001: 190). This racial domination was made possible through the executive actions and laws introduced by the NP government. The Population Registration Act of 1950, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, the Immorality Act of 1950, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953, as well as the Bantu Education Act of 1953 served to establish apartheid as a system of dominance and suppress the rights of the majority of South Africans (Thompson, 2001; Clark & Worger, 2011).

Stemming from these various inequalities, resistance against the NP started to grow. These many inequalities, especially the inability for Black South Africans to participate caused major frustration. This frustration led to a culmination of not just protests and protest action, but ultimately led to large scale mobilisation against the incumbent regime. Resistance against the NP government had not only been due to efforts on the part of the larger movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), but mobilised efforts by the Federation of South African Women as well as Umkhonto we Sizwe (the militant wing of the ANC), attempted to confront and combat the regime. Boycotts, general civil disobedience, strike and protest action, and toyi-toyi were all utilised as forms of disruption and self-expression (Thompson, 2001; Clark & Worger, 2011; Bruce, 2014a). Without being able to formally participate in the political system, these measures were regarded as the only way for Black South Africans to voice their unhappiness and frustration about the status quo (Managa, 2012).

After many years of political negotiation, South Africa held its first free and fair elections with universal suffrage in 1994, and as such transitioned from an authoritarian and apartheid regime to a democratic one. While on the surface the negotiations to a democratic South Africa seemed quite successful, however, the period of late 1980's into the early 1990's had been fraught with notable violence (Thompson, 2001: 241). These political negotiations were not only a tug-of-war between the NP government and the opposition led by the ANC, but reflective of the political, economic and social instability that began to define the country.

Internal as well as external factors created the conditions for these negotiations (De Klerk, 2002: 17). In particular, the economy went into recession, and a state of emergency was

declared due to large-scale civil unrest. In addition, South Africa faced many political and economic sanctions which excluded the country from the global economy. All these factors combined to pressurize the NP government to seek possible resolutions (Thompson, 2001: 242; De Klerk, 2002: 18).

These negotiations culminated in a breakthrough on the 2 February 1990 with the announcement that all political organizations would be unbanned, political prisoners would be released, and that political activity would be able to go ahead without conditions. This not only laid the foundation for discussions to be held from all sides of the conflict, but it also set the stage for formal negotiations to finally take place (De Klerk, 2002: 18).

Following the advent of democracy, all South African citizens, regardless of race, were granted the same political rights, freedoms, and civil liberties, which are enshrined within our Constitution. Included in the South African Constitution is the Bill of Rights, which enshrines not only the rights of all citizens, but also affirms the democratic values of freedom, human dignity, as well as that of equality (Constitution of South Africa, 1996: 6-10). With the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic dispensation, this system saw to ensure the establishment of free and fair elections which takes places on a regular basis. This is not only acknowledged as "one of the key defining features of a vibrant multi-party democracy" (Anyangwe, 2012: 39), but it is also a basic individual political right enshrined in Chapter 2, Section 19 of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). By taking part in elections and participating in the act of voting, citizens are exercising their democratic right (Seanego & Mogoboya, 2019: 308). Furthermore, citizens have the right to choose a political party of their own preference and have the right to hold those in power accountable for their past performance in office through elections held every five years (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a: 1; Seanego & Mogoboya, 2019: 308). Anyangwe (2012: 39) argues that elections provide a mechanism for citizens to change, review or even legitimise the chosen government, and by doing so express their free will. Since South Africa's transition to democracy, the country has successfully conducted six national elections (1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019), and five local elections (2000, 2006, 2011, 2016, and 2021) to date.

While the South African Constitution makes provision for political rights and enshrines this in the Bill of Rights as mentioned above, the right to protest has also been included in the Constitution. Duncan (2016: 3) notes that our Constitution not only protects this right to

protest but it also "recognises protest as an essential form of democratic expression rather than viewing it is a threat to democracy". Chapter 2, Section 17 of our Constitution (1996:9) states that "Everyone has the right, peacefully and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket and to present petitions". Mkhize (2015) and Lancaster (2016a) point out that this right to protest is regulated in the Regulation of Gatherings Act, 205 of 1993, which allows for protests to become a legitimate political activity, and as such citizens may utilize protest as a tool of self-expression. Graham (2020: 46) argues that protest action is most often utilised when mechanisms of formal participation fail.

However, while peaceful protest is protected, the escalation of protest into violence is not (Simelane, 2013: 1). While protest action is often used as a tool of self-expression to voice the unhappiness and discontent of citizens, the descent into violence renders this political activity unconstitutional, and the damage (especially in material and physical terms) that occurs during these protests further retards overall progress (Makhubu, 2016:1; Graham, 2020: 46).

1.3 An overview of democratisation as the prerequisite for political participation

Huntington's three waves of democratization

Between the years of 1828 and 1974, numerous countries across the globe made the transition to democratic regimes. This global expansion of democratic regimes has been referred to as the wave of democratization. Huntington (1991a: 15) refers to a wave of democratization as "... a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time". While the definition by Huntington is often widely cited, Kurzman (1998) elaborates on this point further. This author notes that the term 'waves of democratization' can also be further conceptualised in three ways; largely acknowledged as the rises in the level of democracy globally, positive net transitions to democracy during periods of time, as well "... as linked sets of transition to democracy" (Kurzman, 1998: 42).

Three waves of democratization have occurred to date, each going on to affect a small number of countries globally. While each wave saw to bring about a state of democracy, during each of these waves some transitions occurred in a non- democratic direction. This is further highlighted by Huntington (1991a). This author notes that the first two waves of

democratization were unfortunately both followed by a reverse wave, which in some countries that had previously transitioned to a democratic regime, lead to these countries reverting back to non- democratic rule. Furthermore, not all transformations to a democratic regime occurred during these waves (Huntington, 1991a: 15-16).

Huntington (1991a: 16) goes on further to discuss that while one cannot specify precisely when the transition of a regime occurs, or the specific dates of both democratization and reverse waves he does indeed put forward a tentative timeline. He notes as follows:

Table 1.1: Dates of democratization waves

First, long wave of democratization	1828- 1926
First reverse wave	1922- 1942
Second, shirt wave of democratization	1943- 1962
Second reverse wave	1958- 1975
Third wave of democratization	1974-present

Source: Huntington (1991a: 16)

The first long wave of democratization was rooted in the American and French revolutions. The emergence of national democratic institutions have been acknowledged as a nineteenth-century phenomena, whereby most countries gradually developed within this century. While one cannot pinpoint a specific date after which political systems could be deemed democratic Sunshine (1972) cited by Huntington (1991a: 16) proposed two major criteria for when these political systems achieved minimal democratic qualifications. In loosely adapting this particular criteria Huntington notes that the first wave began with the United States of America roughly about 1828. In the decades that followed other countries, and with the establishment of democratic practices also made this transition. Countries such as Switzerland, France, Great Britain, as well as numerous small European countries made this transition before the turn of the century, and shortly before World War I Italy and Argentina also followed. At the end of this wave, and in the course of 100 years about 30 countries established some sort of minimal democratic institutions (Huntington, 1991a: 17).

The first reverse wave of democratization which was marked with Mussolini coming to power, saw several countries revert back to previous regime types. As discussed by

Huntington (1991a: 17) the dominant political development during this period was the shifting away from democracy and the return to either authoritarian rule or the introduction of systems of totalitarianism. Furthermore, these reversals occurred mainly in the countries that had adopted democratic forms just before, or just after World War I (Huntington, 1991a: 17).

The second wave of democratization, which is acknowledged as a short wave, began with the start of World War II. This wave characterized by allied occupation, went on to promote the inauguration of democratic institutions in a number of countries, including that of West Germany, Japan, Austria, Italy, as well as Korea. Greece, as well as Turkey also eventually made their transition toward democracy in the late 1940s and early 1950s. A number of Latin American countries, including Argentina, Peru, Venezuela and Columbia also shifted to a democracy in the late 1940s. This was ushered in by elections and proper democratic governments, however these practices did not last long, and this eventually resorted to dictatorships being put in place by the early 1950s. Moreover, Nigeria the largest state in Africa also became a democracy in 1960 (Huntington, 1991a: 18-19).

By the early 1960s this wave of democratization had exhausted itself and brought upon the second reverse wave. Huntington (1991a: 19) discusses that by the late 1950s political development and regime changes began taking on authoritarian systems. The most dramatic of these changes occurred in Latin America, Asia, as well as Greece. While several countries were reverting back to previous regime types, Huntington (1991a: 20) mentions that in the late 1960s a number of non- African British colonies became independent and democratic regimes were instituted. This included Jamaica, Trinidad, Tobago, Malta, Barbados, as well as Mauritius. As such, the bulk of countries that became independent in the 1960s were African countries.

With the collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974, whereby democratic regimes went on to replace authoritarian ones in 30 countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America, brought on the third wave of democratization. This democratic tide first manifested itself in Southern Europe, which later moved onto Latin America in the 1970s. This democratic movement continued to spread and manifested itself in Asia as well (Huntington, 1991a: 21-22). As discussed by Huntington (1991a: 23), by the end of the decade this democratic wave engulfed the communist world, and by the early 1970s and 1980s the final phase of European decolonization had also been witnessed. Unfortunately, the movement to democracy in Africa

and the Middle East was limited in the 1980s but by 1990 countries such as Senegal, Egypt, Jordan, and Algeria did experience liberalization. This movement towards democracy was a global one, and in 15 years this democratic wave moved across Asia, Latin America, Southern Europe, and even decimated the dictatorship in the Soviet bloc (Huntington, 1991a: 24-25).

The third wave, while being described as the greatest wave by Shin (1994: 150) due to the number of states and individuals involved is also particularly important for South Africa. It is during this wave that South Africa became a democratized state. In 1978 South Africa began the slow process of reducing apartheid legislation and began expanding political participation to the non-white minorities. Furthermore, with the election of F.W. de Klerk as the newly elected president, negotiations with the ANC resumed and led to the liberation of South Africa from the apartheid regime (Huntington, 1991a: 25).

Overview of democratization

In discussing the many transitions that occurred across the globe, which saw several countries shifting into democratic regimes touches on the particular subject matter of democratization; but in what way can we define this term. Numerous scholars have defined democratization over the years, therefore there is no one universally accepted definition; democratization however has multiple meanings.

Loosely defined, Rummel (1996: 1) defines democratization as "...the process through which a political system becomes democratic". Boggards (2010: 476) on the other hand defines democratization as "...any small change in the direction of more democracy, no matter how small", while Welzel (2018: 74-75) notes three ways in which democratization could be understood: (1) as introducing democracy into a non-democratic regime, (2) as "the deepening of the democratic qualities of given democracies", and (3) as related to the survival of democracy. While each of the above-mentioned definitions are distinct from one another, they do indeed highlight that the core element of democratization is the transformation or transition from a previous regime type to a democratic one.

Moreover, this transition of countries into a democratic state does not occur as a linear process (Doorenspleet, 2000: 384). Shin (1994: 143) goes on to highlight that the process of democratization occurs in stages which further demonstrates this point. This author mentions

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that there are four stages of democratization: (1) decay of authoritarian rule, (2) transition, (3) consolidation, and (4) the maturing of democratic political order. While Shin (1994) discusses these four distinct stages, he does also highlight that these stages can overlap one another, and as demonstrated by Huntington (1991a) with his description of the waves of democratization, these waves often retract backwards to previous regimes, as well as move forwards towards democratic rule.

Whilst democratization as described above does not occur in a linear process, and that there are stages involved for a country to become democratic as per democratization literature, there are also various elements required in order for a country to be considered a democracy. Once again there is no one universally accepted description of these various elements, however many scholars have discussed several of these elements which are acknowledged as requirements for the functioning of a democratic regime.

Sunshine (1972) cited by Huntington (1991a: 16), makes reference to two particular criteria for achieving minimal democratic conditions in the nineteenth-century: (1) a majority male vote, and (2) a responsible executive either supported by the majority or who has been chosen in elections. In modern democratic systems, these criteria now include a majority of citizens who support an executive that they have chosen to represent them in government.

Schmitter and Karl (1991b: 11-12) on the other hand, while acknowledging that there is no single set of practices or values which embody democracy, present a list of 11 core components or elements of a democratic system. These include: (1) consensus, (2) participation, (3) access, (4) responsiveness, (5) majority rule, (6) parliamentary sovereignty, (7) party government, (8) pluralism, (9) federalism, (10) presidentalism, as well as (11) checks and balances. While Schmitter and Karl note that each of these are recognized as essential components of a democratic regime, they are also argued that these should be used as indicators of the type of democracy within a particular country.

Rummel (1996:1) presents a more concise list of democratic requirements, some of which are still widely accepted today. These requirements include: (1) regular elections, (2) universal adult suffrage, (3) the acceptance of democratic rights including the right to vote, and the right to run for office, and (4) the state of law whereby all authorities are required to adhere to.

Similar to Rummel (1996), Diamond and Morlino (2004) discuss four key elements: (1) universal, adult suffrage, (2) recurring, free and fair elections, (3) more than one serious political party, as well as (4) other sources of information. They also argue that for elections to be truly meaningful, there should be a degree of both civil and political freedom outside the electoral arena. In this way, citizens should have the ability to participate in other areas of political life outside the ballot box (Diamond & Morlino, 2004: 21).

Stockemer (2009) further discusses similar requirements to both Schmitter and Karl (1991b), as well as Diamond and Morlino (2004), but adds additional elaboration. This author notes that in order for a state to be democratic it must not only guarantee the rule of law, but also ensure political freedoms, individual civil liberties, as well as human rights. A system of checks and balances between both institutions, as well as the rulers and the rules, elections whereby citizens can oust the government if necessary, and lastly democratic states should also tolerate an active civil society, including that of lobbying groups and independent media (Stockemer, 2009: 242).

Major studies in democratization

As frequently mentioned, the process of democratization has gone on to affect multiple nations around the world. From Asia, through to India, Latin America, into Europe, and of course closer to home in South Africa. While all the above-mentioned nations have made their transition into some sort of democratic regime, in what way was this made possible or in some cases what sort of factors influenced democratization in a country.

Democratization literature often points to the theory of economic development which is said to have an effect on not only assisting in the democratization of a particular country, but also in ensuring that a democratic regime will survive (Przeworksi, Alvarez, Cheibub & Limongi, 1996: 40-41). The scholar Seymour Martin Lipset is well known for his particular thesis on democracy and economic development. Lipset (1959) cited by Giliomee (1995: 98) is quoted as saying "Democracy is related to the state of economic development. The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy". Various other scholars have also further agreed with Lipset's thesis. Przeworksi *et al*. (1996: 39) discusses particular conditions within a democracy, and which conditions should be present in order for a democratic regime to endure. These authors acknowledge the conditions of democracy, growth with moderate inflation, parliamentary institutions, favourable international climate,

declining level of inequality, and of particular importance the condition of affluence. Przeworksi *et al*. (1996: 40-41) mentions that once a country has democratized, the level of economic development will have a strong effect on the survival of that democracy. These authors also further add that the survival of democracy is not only reliant on economic growth, but that the faster the economy grows this will increase the likeliness that a democracy will survive (Przeworksi *et al*. 1996: 42).

Geddes (1999) also touches on this particular theory, and notes that more developed countries are more likely to transition to a democratic regime. Therefore, in this way, the relationship between democratic government and economic development is established (Geddes, 1999: 117). Moreover, Geddes (1999: 117) also discusses the work of Przeworksi and Limongi (1997), with particular focus on their argument of the survival of democracy. These authors highlight that once democratization has taken place, the regime survives in countries where the economic development is above a certain level.

Bunce (2000), as well as Collaresi and Thompson (2003: 382) make reference to the argument of economic development as discussed by Przeworksi. Bunce (2000: 706) argues that it is not so much the level of economic development impacting whether or not a democracy exists, but it is more so the issue of sustainability of that democracy over time.

As highlighted in the discussion above, the theory of economic development and its effect on democratic regimes continues to be widely considered. Gilomee (1995) as well as Bunce (2000) provide some explanation as to why positive economic development is noted as conducive to democracy. Giliomee (1995: 98) highlights that this type of development can lead to the urbanization and the unionization of workers. This author adds that levels in education then also begin to increase, the growth of the middle class where divisions between the small minority of wealthy are subsequently broken down, and eventually democratic ideas begin to permeate society. Bunce (2000: 707) on the other hand, also mentions that economic development adds to the rise in the education of the public, which then produces attentive and expectant citizens that demand inclusion, as well as accountability. In addition, Bunce (2000: 707) highlights that sustained economic growth will weaken authoritarian forces and in doing this will expand the level of civil society.

This theory of economic development, while being widely cited does not apply to every country or nation undergoing democratization, or that have already democratized. In the discussion below, a review of countries who have democratized and the effects, if any economic development has on this transition will follow.

As previously mentioned, the economic development theory does not hold true for all countries that have gone through the process of democratization, like India, for example. McMillan (2008: 733-734) notes India as a 'deviant democracy' as it did not fit into the mainstream theoretical and empirical descriptions of a democracy, but despite the unfavourable circumstance of widespread poverty, illiteracy, as well as ethnic and linguistic diversity, India has successfully managed to not only make the transition to democracy, but also to consolidate this new democratic regime. The transition to democracy was previously acknowledged as unlikely, but since 1947 India has conformed to the requirements of a democratic process and its transition to democracy cannot be explained in terms of economic performance (McMillan, 2008: 736).

While conditions for democratization in India were not particularly favourable and have been characterized by numerous social divisions (McMillan, 2008: 735), Przeworksi *et al*. (1996: 42) acknowledge that while affluence and economic performance continues to have a strong effect on democratic regimes, democracies do have the ability to survive in poorer countries. Furthermore, once a democracy has been established in a developed country, this democracy can endure regardless of its performance and the exogenous conditions it is exposed to (Przeworksi *et al*, 1996: 41). This in particular is true, not just for the democratic regime in India, but for the particular cases as discussed by Remmer (1992) and Giliomee (1995).

Remmer (1992) discusses the political transformation that took place in Latin America. While this region has a history of both democratization and regime reversals, Latin America went on to experience the longest and deepest wave of democratization during the 1980s (Remmer, 1992: 3-4). The process of "regime transformation in Latin America continued through the early 1990s, yielding a set of political democracies that has proved unexpectedly resilient" (Remmer, 1992: 20). This transformation to democratization is noted to have its origins in the interaction between both domestic and international forces. While this regime change may have been influenced by external developments, the role that domestic conditions play within a country is still of some importance. Huntington (1991b: 16)

elaborates on this argument, and notes that while external forces may create an environment conducive to democratization, it cannot alone produce conditions which are acknowledged as necessary for democratization within a particular country. These conditions have to exist and be present in that country already. In terms of Latin America, structural changes in the international economy, the impact of the breakdown of authoritarianism, the structure, the structure of military rule, as well as the domestic relationship that developed between government and the business community all played a role in bringing transformation to this nation (Remmer, 1992: 10-14).

South Africa is another country where both domestic and international factors assisted in the transformation to a democratic regime. In 1978 South Africa began the slow process of reducing apartheid legislation, in conjunction with the negotiations taking place between the NP government and the ANC (Huntington, 1991a: 25). While this assisted in the transition process, the loss of support for the ruling party, economic stagnation, a weakening demographic base, as well as mounting economic pressure especially with regards to foreign sanctions played a definite role. In addition, the added pressure from the external environment played a significant role in facilitating negotiations (Giliomee, 1995: 85-88). The international ostracization of South Africa, largely excluding the country from sporting, scientific, as well as academic circles, began to push the need of transformation (Giliomee, 1995: 90). The conditions were, for the most part, unfavourable and characterised economic struggles, disenfranchised majority, as well as a nation-wide State of Emergency imposed in 1986 (Giliomee, 1995: 85), yet South Africa still transitioned to a democratic regime, much similarly to that of India.

1.4 Problem Statement and Research Questions

> "For many people, however, voting is not seen as an effective way to improve government service delivery, and public protest is viewed as the only way to try and affect positive changes."
>
> (Lancaster, 2016b:2).

Given the history of segregation and disenfranchisement, one would expect that South African citizens would utilise every opportunity to participate in the political system and exercise their democratic rights. However, participation in elections (i.e., voting) is slowly declining, while participation in protest action has increased more recently and at a rapid rate (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014a: 2; Fakir & Sarakinsky, 2019: 2).

South Africans may abstain from formal participation, such as voting, due to various reasons. Social and economic marginalisation have been described as one of the key factors for lack of participation on the part of citizens (EISA, 2019: 25). Furthermore, limited or no faith in the ruling party and / or government, lack of credible opposition, and voter apathy are among the many reasons for why South Africans choose not to vote (Lekalake, 2016: 1; Runciman, 2016: 431). While more and more South Africans withdraw from formal participation, not all abstain from participation, but turn to alternative ways to engage the state (Fakir & Sarakinsky 2019:1).

Alexander (2010) and Managa (2012), identify that as of 2004, protests in South Africa have been both widespread and intense, and while recording a particular high in the years of 2009 and 2010 as noted by Managa (2012: 1-2) protest action has continued to surpass this and has continued to increase from 2012 onwards (MunicipalIQ, 2020: 1). Cilliers and Aucoin (2016) observe similar trends in relation to levels of protest action, primarily focusing on the relationship between that of government effectiveness and of political violence. These authors argue that as feelings about government effectiveness, referring to how citizens view the governance of the ruling party, become more negative political violence in the form of riots and protests begin to gradually increase (Cilliers & Aucoin 2016: 5-6). This demonstrates that when citizens experience feelings of unhappiness and discontent with government performance, they tend to voice their frustrations in more unconventional ways.

The decline in electoral behaviour and increase in (violent) protest action could pose a serious threat to the legitimacy of the democratic political system in South Africa. In order to address this research problem, this study will investigate the following research questions:
1. How do South Africans participate in our democratic political system?
2. What are the possible explanations for the way South Africans choose to participate?

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

This study will adopt a case study research design. Case study as a method can be defined as "the desire to derive a(n) (up)close or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of cases set in their real-world context" (Yin, 2012: 141-142). Case studies seek to gain further insight of an issue, situation, phenomenon, or even an event (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011: 1; Krusenvik, 2016: 4). Crowe *et al*. (2011: 1)

argue that the central tenet of a case study approach is "the need to explore an event or phenomenon in depth and in its natural context". In addition, Yin (2012: 142) argues that in attempting to produce an understanding of the particular case(s) being investigated, the researcher as such is hoping that this would result in new information in learning about real-world behaviour.

In utilising South Africa as the chosen case study, this study aims to gain an understanding of political participation in South Africa, as well as the various types of political behaviour that citizens choose to participate in. In addition, case study design allows the researcher the ability to study their chosen case study in-depth and is also able to provide the researcher with both rich data and information, not only about particular individuals but with regards to situations as well (Terre Blance, Durham & Painter, 2006: 461; Given, 2012: 2). With using a particular case study (in this instance South Africa), the researcher also has the ability to focus his/her attention on one sort of social phenomenon.

Case studies as a particular research method is acknowledged as a very good method in creating hypotheses. Not only can they help in structuring future research, but they also play a role in further advancing a field's knowledge base (Krusenvik, 2016: 5). As such they are also suited to help explain specific questions (how and why) by investigating. This method is also favoured when investigating current and/or contemporary events (Krusenvik, 2016: 5). This argument is further substantiated by Terre Blance, Durham and Painter (2006: 461). These authors argue that case studies also have the ability to not only provide a researcher with rich longitudinal data about particular individuals and/or situations, but in utilizing this method it also allows for the advantage of new ideas and hypotheses to be discovered and emerge from observations. Furthermore, case studies are also able to add to the understanding of complex social phenomena (Yin, 2009 cited by Krusenvik, 2016: 5).

While the many advantages of employing case studies as a selected methodology have been discussed above, this method is not without its limitations. In employing a case study (and in this particular instance South Africa), this method "cannot provide insights into causality" (Krusenvik, 2016: 4). Not only are causal links very difficult to both test and verify, but this method has also been criticised for lacking scientific rigour and provides a minor basis for generalisation (Crowe et al.; 2011: 7). As such one is unable to make generalisations from

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one case study to the next. In addition, findings or recommendations from employing case studies as a method cannot be confirmed or denied (Krusenvik, 2016: 6).

This study can also be further described as descriptive in nature. Descriptive studies can be defined as "studies set to describe the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question" (Zainal, 2007: 3). While this study aims to focus on the phenomenon of political participation, it also looks to describe how this phenomenon is occurring within South Africa, once more with the focus on conventional and unconventional participation. In addition, also aiming to describe how South Africans are choosing to participate in our democratic system.

In utilizing case study design, this study will also employ a qualitative desktop method. Qualitative research can be defined as "as a way to study the social interactions of humans in naturally occurring situations" (Lichtman, 2017: 10). These types of methods also tend to focus on recording the human experience using words, themes, as well as sentences (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013: 58). This type of qualitative desktop research does not utilise any primary data, yet the data being employed in this study will be in the form of academic books, journal articles, as well as government policies and reports.

1.6 Contribution of the study

The term democratization refers to the transition, or the process through which a political system moves from a non-democratic regime to a democratic one (Huntington, 1991a; Rummel, 1996). As previously discussed, there are various elements which are required for a country to be recognised as a democracy, many of which are also central to the functioning of a democratic regime. Diamond and Morlino (2004: 21), as well as Stockemer (2009: 242) reference the particular requirements of electoral participation, as well as participation by citizens as essential components to the functioning of a democracy. Diamond and Morlino (2004: 23) go on to discuss that unless a regime grants all adult citizens formal rights of political participation, it cannot be recognized as a democracy. Furthermore, a good democracy is also recognized as a regime that ensures citizens are able to make use of their formal rights; not only to influence decision-making itself, but also to vote, to assemble, protest, organize, as well as to lobby for their many interests (Diamond & Morlino, 2004: 23).

Stockemer (2009: 242) also adds to this discussion, and notes that democratic states are ones which not only tolerate an active civil society but should also embrace more lobbying groups as well as an independent media. Demonstrating in this way the link between democracy and participation.

Schmitter and Karl (1991b) demonstrates this relationship between participation and democracy further and argue that democracy "offers a variety of competitive processes and channels for the expression of interests and values" (Schmitter & Karl, 1991b: 6). Political participation by citizens does not just entail participation via voting i.e., electoral participation, but participation outside the electoral arena, and the ability for citizens to express their political will in other ways. In addition, Michels and De Graaf (2010: 477) argue that citizen participation is essential to democracy, and without such participation, democracy will be an empty and meaningless concept (Pimbert &Wakeford, 2001: 1).

This type of participation, which is noted as a form of empowerment by involving citizens in the decision-making process is also "seen as a vital part of democratic governance" (Royeppen, 2016: 341). Not only does citizen participation play a role in upholding a country's democratic regime or practices, but citizens as such are also referred to as "the most distinctive element in democracies" (Schmitter & Karl, 1991b: 5). While all regimes have both rulers and ruled, these regimes are only democratic to the extent that they have citizens. Furthermore, not only is democratization noted as improving the quality of citizens' lives (Shin, 1994: 156), but participation is an integral part of good citizenship (Piper and von Lieres, 2008: 4).

Moreover, Chilambo (2007: 171) argues that participation in a democracy is more than just consultation because citizens have the ability to share in the actions of priority setting, the making of policies, as well as the allocation to public goods and services. This once again highlights the important relationship between democracy and participation.

In order to establish and maintain a strong and healthy democracy, citizens' participation in the political system is essential (Verba, 1967). Citizen participation is not only a fundamental principle, but some argue that democracy can "only be realized through the involvement of the citizens" (Chilambo, 2007: 171). Political participation is realised by involving citizens in the decision-making process (Tsheola, Ramonyai and Segage 2014:394), which is noted by

Dalton and Klingemann (2011: 7) as one of the essential roles that citizens play in a democracy. This not only affects decisions, or the outcomes of decisions but by integrating citizen participation into the system it also affects the quality of democracy (Royeppen, 2016).

Citizen involvement in a democracy is also noted by Michels and De Graff (2010: 489) to have a positive effect on the quality of democracy. A strong democracy promotes an active citizenry, and representation of all citizens (Chilambo, 2007; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2009), while participation by these citizens can also further act as a check on elite power, largely to ensure that there is accountability in this system (Parvin, 2018: 32). This not only enhances the system of democracy, but again acts as further encouragement as to the importance of citizen participation and the role it plays in upholding this system. This study therefore aims to contribute to the discourse on political participation by reviewing the nature of and possible explanations for political participation in a newly democratised country like South Africa.

1.7 Outline of the study

This study consists of six chapters, the first of which served as an initial introduction of the research problem, as well as the background of this study. The second chapter will provide a conceptual overview of political participation as well as the various forms and determinants thereof.

Chapter three will provide an overview of prominent international and South African studies, focusing on both conventional and unconventional political behaviour and the trends that have become evident globally and locally.

Chapter four will provide a review of conventional political participation in South Africa focusing on electoral behaviour, with specific reference to voter registration and voter turnout in South Africa. While the final section of the chapter will review various explanations for electoral behaviour amongst South Africans.

Chapter five will serve as systematic review of unconventional political participation in South Africa. This chapter will provide a historical overview of protest behaviour in South Africa

and include a detailed discussion on the most popular types of protest action over the past decade or so. The chapter will conclude with a review of various reasons for unconventional political behaviour.

The final chapter will provide a summary of the main findings from the comprehensive literature review, discuss the significance of this study, as well as provide some recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Overview

2.1 Introduction

How do citizens participate in the political system? Why do citizens participate? Why do some citizens participate while others do not? All of these questions relating to political participation are located in the broader academic field of Political Behaviour. Political behaviour can be defined as "any action regarding authority in general and government in particular" (Munroe, 2002:3). This definition refers to the way an individual will perform certain acts / actions with regards to politics and or government. This definition also refers to political behaviour as any activity which may have political consequences in relation to government as well as policy. Political participation is not only an act of political behaviour itself but is noted as "a major form of political behaviour" (Munroe 2002: 4).

In partaking or participating in a particular way lends itself to one's thoughts and beliefs about the political system at hand, and the execution of such actions is the specific political behaviour of these individuals. According to Akamane (2003) cited by Falade (2014:18), political participation as an aspect of political behaviour also focuses on the way in which individuals decide to take part in politics. Zani and Barrett (2012:3) note that participation is "construed as behavioural, with the term being used to refer to participatory behaviours". In referring to political participation as the way individuals partake in certain political activities, political behaviour looks to why individuals make these particular decisions in how they would decide to participate. In this regard, one is not without the other.

This chapter will provide a comprehensive conceptual overview of political participation as the subject matter under investigation. The various forms as well as determinants of political participation will also be identified and discussed.

2.2 A conceptual overview of Political Participation

2.2.1 Development of the concept of Political Participation

"The study of political participation in the last fifty years is the study of a continuously expanding number of specific forms of political participation" (van Deth, 2001:5).

Attempting to define political participation is not an easy task. While the understanding of participation can refer to having your voice heard, as well as being involved in political decision-making (Gordon *et al*., 2019), this is not at all a detailed or full description. Many scholars have attempted to provide a full description of political participation, and with this it has led to an incredibly extensive literature on the subject, as well as the explanations and definitions thereof.

Various authors have identified definitions of political participation. Some of these include political participation as being "loosely defined as citizens activities affecting politics" (van Deth, 2016:4), to participation in politics is "understood as an individual activity, albeit carried out in a specific context, and whilst interacting with others" (Ruedin, 2007:3), and even referring to the "direct or indirect involvement of the citizens of a country in the governance of their country" (Grace & Danfulani, 2015:56).

In so far as these many definitions are quite different from one another, there are some similarities that exist. Not only do these definitions highlight that political participation strongly involves citizens performing or interacting in particular ways to affect government and or political decisions (Theocharis & van Deth, 2016), these definitions also largely refer to citizens performing an act or a particular activity. These definitions of political participation do not only refer to it as a particular act, but citizens also perform this act on a voluntary basis, and in doing so they attempt to bring about a particular change, or even affect said processes. Additionally, these definitions also make mention that political participation is very much focused on that of politics, or even governance (Ruedin, 2007; Lamprianou, 2013).

Jan van Deth (2001: 5), further discusses these particular characteristics which are specific to political participation. Namely that political participation refers to individuals as their role as citizens, political participation is referred to as an activity, the process of political participation should be voluntary, and lastly that political participation concerns both government and politics. Boerboom (2015) cited by Fayomi and Adebayo (2017: 541) also acknowledge four basic elements which are said to be at the heart of definitions of political participation: activities or actions, ordinary citizens, politics, as well as the element of influence.

Despite the various definitions in the literature, the definition of political participation by scholars Verba and Nie (1972), has been regarded as the most widely accepted definition within in this field. This particular definition describes political participation as "those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they take" (Verba & Nie, 1972 cited by Kirbiš & Krajne, 2013:178). This definition once again highlighting the elements which describe political participation as a concept.

Political participation as a concept, also allows for various forms of expression. Citizens are able to express their interests, views, preferences, as well as needs to public officials and in this way attempt to influence decisions being made (Gordon *et al*., 2019). Political participation is not only an influence, namely in citizens wanting to voice their concerns, views, and opinions, for example, but it also provides citizens with the opportunity to make decisions (Grace & Danfulani, 2015; Memoli, 2016). In so doing it strongly seeks to influence the decision-making process, or even influence particular public policy decisions (Fayomi & Adebayo, 2018). In this way participation is "an instrumental act through which citizens attempt to make the political system respond to their will" (Teorell, 2006: 789).

The concept of political participation can also no longer be described or defined as a unidimensional construct, but rather as a multidimensional one (Bean, 1989: 452). Political participation is multidimensional in the sense that it is no longer associated with just one particular mode of participation, such as electoral participation i.e., voting, but that political participation as a concept encompasses a broader range of various forms and modes, of which citizens may choose to partake in (Welch, 1975; Winkler, Judd & Kelman, 1982; Bean, 1989). Not only is political participation multidimensional in this sense, but also in the way it may intend to influence other particular factors such as social, political, as well as that of economic (Memoli, 2016).

Much of the academic literature and discourse on political participation is embedded in the act of voting, also known as electoral participation. Multiple authors, from Teorell to van Deth, discuss political participation as being restricted to electoral participation. However, as political participation as a field of study has developed, it is evident that voting is not the only participatory act that citizens can enjoy.

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Table 2.1. provides a chronology for the development of political participation as a concept and field of study. Political participation has traditionally focused on voting as a participatory action. This focus on electoral participation largely represented the space between the 1940s and 1950s (van Deth, 2001; Sabucedo & Arce, 2006; Ruedin, 2012; Quintelier & van Deth, 2014). During the 1960s, Furthermore, the concept of political participation was expanded from that of voting, to further include activities like attending political meetings, campaign activities, as well as that of contacting local officials.

Table 2.1: Political Participation Timeline

1940's and 1950's:	Political participation equated with electoral participation i.e., voting
1960's:	Political participation expanded in terms of additional / more conventional acts
Late 1960's and 1970's:	Conventional political participation expanded to include activities of community groups and contacting citizens
1980's and 1990's:	Unconventional political participation introduced including acts such as protest, mobilisation and demonstration
2000's onwards:	Shift in patterns of participation from more conventional to unconventional means. Unconventional acts expanded to include internet and social media

From the late 1960s into the early years of 1970s, political participation, namely in the form of conventional actions continued to expand and grow. The political participation acts within this time frame started to slowly move away from solely individual acts like voting, to include participatory acts within a group or community setting and included "community groups and direct contacts between citizens, public officials and politicians" (Quintelier & van Deth, 2014:154). The biggest difference with the earlier research is the addition of further involvement by the public and, or government officials. Regardless of the expansion of the concept of political participation, all the participatory activities associated were considered conventional ways to engage with the political system.

During the 1980s and 1990s, various forms of participation were labelled unconventional political participation. Unconventional modes of participation were thought to be outside of the societal norms of the time and were mainly known as direct action and political violence. The idea of protest, and the expression of one's interests, views, and opinions stem from this thought (van Deth, 2001; Ruedin, 2012). Protest and rejection are "clear expressions of

citizens' interests and opinions and therefore cannot and should not be excluded from the domain of political participation" (Kaase *et al*., 1979 cited by van Deth, 2001:6). The rise of unconventional participation also included a shift in the forms of mobilisation taking place in the 1980s and 1990s (Faucher, 2014).

The biggest shift in political participation has arguably been in the last twenty years. Not only are patterns of participation constantly changing, but the ways in which citizens are choosing to participate have also shifted. Participatory actions expanded to include both conventional and unconventional means, but these unconventional means are more widely used and accepted and thus less unconventional in a way (Faucher, 2014). The way citizens decide to express their political opinions is also constantly in flux (Cazabat, 2017: 1).

Political participation has continued to develop, namely in the different ways and modes of participation which are now available for citizens to partake in. However, the conventional ways of participating such as electoral participation, we begin to notice that there is a visible decline. This decline highlights not only an attitude of disinterest on the part of citizens, but it also largely represents a type of disengagement towards politics itself (Wike & Castillo, 2018; Grasso et al. 2019). Miller (2016) also further mentions that not only is voter turnout declining, and as such electoral participation, but citizens' trust in political institutions as well as the politicians themselves is also continuing to waver. Dalton (2013) also highlights a similar sentiment to Miller (2016), namely with regards to citizens' trust. He mentions that decreasing levels of trust in the government, as well as attachment to political parties have also contributed to the declining trends in electoral participation (Dalton 2013: 197-198).

These changes reveal three noticeable developments within political participation. There is a visible decline in electoral participation, and as such there is also a large decline in participation generally by all citizens, there is an apparent lack of youth engagement in politics as well as involvement, and lastly there is also an increasing use of the Internet, as well as social media as participatory methods (Miller 2016; Karreth, 2018).

Over the last twenty years, scholars and politicians have been "concerned about the apparent withdrawal of citizens from democratic participation across a range of established democracies" (Pontes, Henn & Griffiths. 2019:3). This decline in participatory actions by citizens, namely in terms of electoral participation, is witnessed not only by the general

population of citizens but is largely experienced by the youth or young adult group. While many scholars argue that this particular group is both disinterred and uninvolved in politics, other scholars have noted that not only is this particular age group active within the political system, but for the most part this age cohort engages in more unconventional actions (Pontes, Henn & Griffiths, 2019). In this way, as much as conventional actions are declining, actions of an unconventional nature are continuing to rise.

These declining trends in conventional political participation has given rise not only to more unconventional ways of participating but newer forms of participation. Social media are "changing the way that people participate in political and democratic debate" (Miller, 2016:11). While newer forms of participation are on the rise, more and more participation has begun to take place online. From social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, to online surveys, campaigns and even petitions, 'newer' forms of participation have started to become synonymous with online/ internet participation. Not only is social media engaging those who are seen to be disengaged from politics, but these unconventional forms of participation are also continuing to grow (Miller, 2016; Cazabat, 2017; Casteltrione & Pieczka, 2018).

Citizens are deciding to engage in online / Internet activism as a form of participation more and more, and for a range of reasons. Engaging in online participation is not only easier and less time consuming, but this form of engagement also does not cost an individual much, one is able to voice one's opinions and concerns to a large audience and one is also able to just 'press share' and pass the message on. Participation via social media platforms is also open to a wide audience, and individuals from far and wide have the ability to partake (Miller, 2016: 17; Yang & DeHart, 2016: 2-3). Yang and DeHart (2016: 2) also note the ways that citizens are able to use social media, to not only participate, but to forward and share political messages and videos, follow one's political constituent, as well as to join particular interest groups. In many ways, "the Internet is becoming an important method of political communication and mobilization across the political spectrum" (Dalton, 2013: 60).

This newfound popularity of online / internet participation has not only changed patterns of participation as such, but it has also provided more opportunities for citizens to be involved and therefore participate (Dalton, 2013: 61). Online / internet participation has the ability to engage individuals who have been previously deemed as less engaged. Furthermore, these

newer forms of participation also represent how participatory actions are continually being transformed, and as such unconventional actions are becoming more conventional (Faucher, 2014:3).

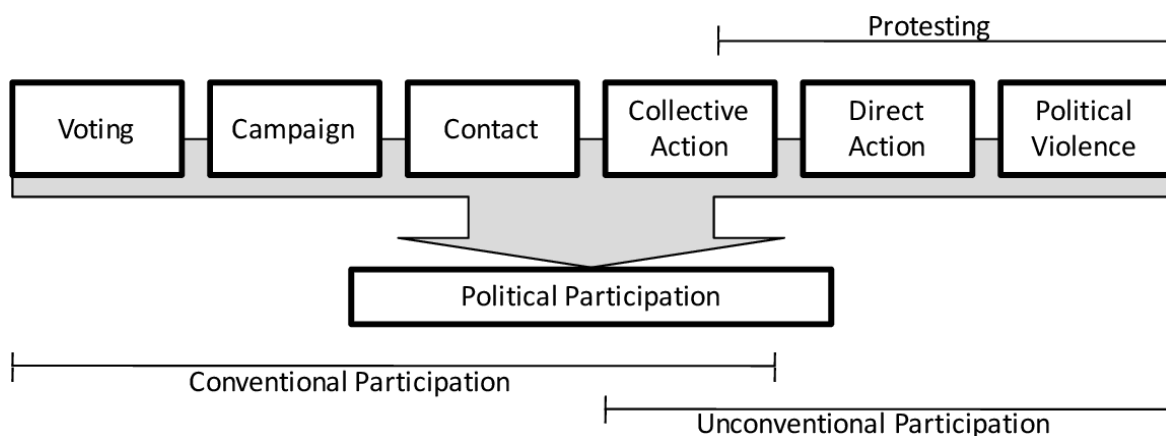*2.2.2 Types of Political Participation*

As mentioned in the above section on the historical development of political participation, political participation as a concept has continued to shift and develop to include not only the most common mode of electoral participation, but to also include those modes of participation which may not be characterized as electoral, but which are more commonly known as non-electoral participation. Where electoral participation places its focus on actions of voting at the polls, or even involvement in electoral campaigns, non-electoral participation looks at alternative modes of participation away from this (Imbrasaité, 2010; Ekman, Gherghina & Podolian, 2016).

Political participation can thus be categorised as conventional and unconventional. Not only is this the most common distinction of various types of political participation as noted by Stockemer (2014), but this distinction is also mentioned by various scholars when discussing the subject matter of political participation. Conventional participation is associated with more structured and lawful participation. It is the type of participation which tends to take place within particular norms and traditions of a country, and namely that of electoral actions. This type of participation is not only "embedded in the political system and institutions" but is also "deemed appropriate and legitimate by the broader society" (Verba & Nie, 1972, cited by Alvarez, Levin & Núñez, 2017: 1386). Unconventional participation on the other hand, has often been referred to as less traditional, or even a non-institutional form of participation. This type of participation is said to not only go against cultural and social norms, but it is also referred to be a more aggressive and assertive type of behaviour which may even break the law (Munroe, 2002: 5; Imbrasaité, 2010: 44-45; Lamprianou, 2013: 25; Pacheco & Owen, 2015: 7).

Figure 2.1 by Didier Ruedin (2011:6) illustrates the two dimensions of political participation and the various forms of political action that are considered either conventional or unconventional. Conventional political participation focuses on actions, or one's involvement in voting in elections, campaigning, lobbying, running for election, attending meetings, contacting politicians/ government officials, public hearings, recalls or even that of

referendums. Unconventional participation focuses on actions or one's involvement outside of the electoral process and "aims to influence politics through non-institutionalized means" (Stockemer, 2014:202). This type of participation includes actions of political demonstrations, protests, boycotting, civil disobedience, public debates, and even strike action (Imbrasaité, 2010; Chatora, 2012; Zani & Barrett, 2012; Grace & Danfulani, 2015; Fayomi & Adebayo, 2018).

Figure 2.1: Conventional and unconventional participation

Source: Ruedin (2011:6)

Figure 2.1 by Didier Ruedin (2011:6) illustrates the two dimensions of political participation and the various forms of political action that are considered either conventional or unconventional. Conventional political participation focuses on actions, or one's involvement in voting in elections, campaigning, lobbying, running for election, attending meetings, contacting politicians/ government officials, public hearings, recalls or even that of referendums. Unconventional participation focuses on actions or one's involvement outside of the electoral process and "aims to influence politics through non-institutionalized means" (Stockemer, 2014:202). This type of participation includes actions of political demonstrations, protests, boycotting, civil disobedience, public debates, and even strike action (Imbrasaité, 2010; Chatora, 2012; Zani & Barrett, 2012; Grace & Danfulani, 2015; Fayomi & Adebayo, 2018).

In highlighting these different modes of action with regards to conventional and unconventional participation, we also begin to look at the different types of political participation itself. Political scientists Sidney Verba and Norman Nie (1972) were of the first theorists to conceptualise some sort of distinction with regards to the various types of

participation that exist. Verba and Nie (1972) presented four distinctive types/modes which they believed to represent that of political participation: 1) voting, 2) electoral campaigns, 3) community activities, as well as 4) contact/ contacting political officials (Sabucedo & Arce, 2006: 94).

Teorell, Torcal and Montero (2007) expanded on the typology developed by Verba and Nie (1972) to encompasses five dimensions of participation. These five dimensions of participation include: 1) electoral participation, 2) consumer participation, 3) party activity, 4) protest activity, and 5) contact activity (Teorell *et al.*, 2007: 343). While there are many similarities between both typologies, the addition of both consumer participation and protest activity represents the dynamic nature of political participation and extends political participation beyond acts of an electoral nature.

Dalton (2013), as such has also further elaborated on these dimensions of participation by Verba and Nie (1972). Where Verba and Nie (1972) identified four types of political participation, Dalton added an additional two types. This classification includes: 1) voting, 2) campaign activity, 3) contacting officials directly, 4) community/communal activity, 5) protest as well as other forms of this activity, and 6) Internet activism (Dalton, 2013: 41). This is again quite similar to Verba and Nie's classification, but Dalton included two newer types of participation which have been become more popular mechanisms in recent years.

In further trying to define the subject matter of political participation, and what this concept encompasses, we can also make further reference to the hierarchy proposed by Milbrath (1965:10). This author proposed a hierarchy which conceptualises political participation on three distinct levels: namely as spectator activities, transitional activities as well as that of gladiatorial (see Figure 2.2).

These three different levels aim to classify the different types of political participation. Involvement in politics is "conceptualized in terms of different levels, allowing for a plausible more or less intensive involvement" (Ruedin, 2007:9). Spectator activities are the most popular or widely practiced forms of political participation and therefore make up the base or foundation of the hierarchy. These activities include voting, having political discussions with friends, colleagues, or family, trying to convince someone to vote a certain way, and wearing a button to show support for a particular candidate and / or political party.

Transitional activities include contacting an official, donating money to a political part, and / or attending a political rally. The final tier consists of gladiator activities, which include contributing time in an election or political campaign, being an active member of a political party, being a candidate for political office, and / or holding office. Not only does the hierarchy represent the dynamic nature of political participation, but it is also evidence that political participation as such remains an individual affair (Ruedin, 2007; Ruedin, 2012).

Figure 2.2: Milbrath's Hierarchy
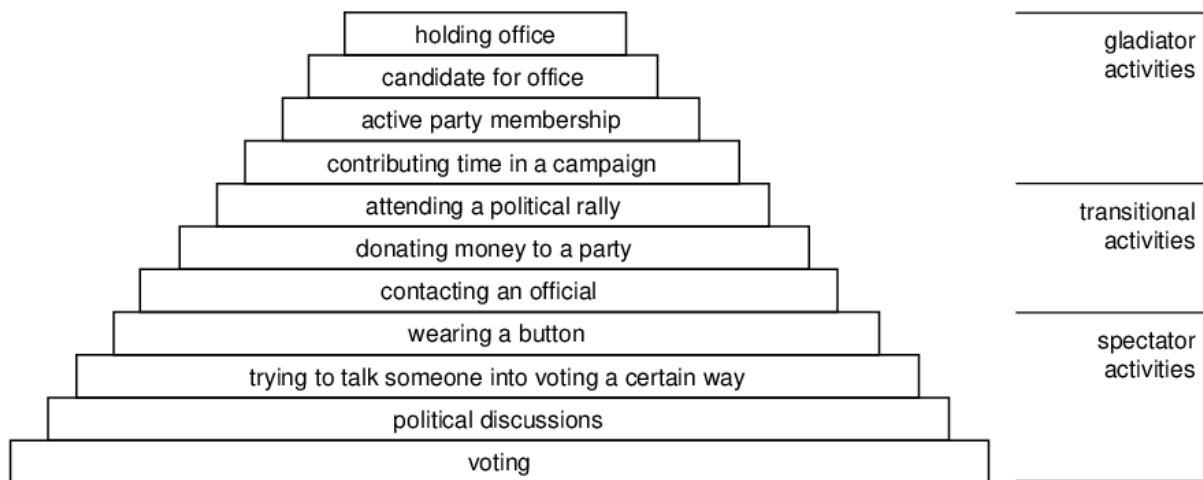
Source: Ruedin (2007:10)

A further division between that of conventional and unconventional forms of participation goes on further to describe these actions as either orthodox, or unorthodox. Orthodox participation classified as being that of conventional participation, as these practices of participation do not go against the status quo of the dominant culture, norms or traditions of said country. They are very much related to the said institutionalised actions. Unorthodox participation on the other hand, or that of unconventional participation is seen as involvements which branch out of the status quo, and norms of a specific society. These are known as non-institutionalised actions (Bourne, 2010: 1; Imbrasaité, 2010: 45; Marien, Hooghe & Quintelier, 2010: 188).

In addition to Verba and Nie's typology on political participation as well as that of Teorell, Torcal and Montero, Markus Pausch (2012) has also brought forth his own type of distinction with regards to political participation and the different types thereof. Pausch (2012: 3-5) discusses the actions of political participation as either being direct, or as indirect. Direct

political participation is not only categorized as either falling under conventional or unconventional actions, but direct participation as such is defined by the expression of either a political interest or aim. In this way, citizens who partake in direct political participation are participating in such actions for a specific purpose, or to bring about or enforce a particular action. Indirect political participation on the other hand, is not only based on the act or engagement taking place as a voluntary activity, but the main aim or intention of this action is not at all politically motivated. The motivation here lies more with self-fulfilment of the individual involved, or in solidarity with others (Pausch, 2012: 5).

2.2.3 Determinants of Political Participation

Different factors have been said to influence the way citizens participate politically, and as such influence the levels of participation thereof. "Socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, socio-economic status (SES) and age have been regarded as differentiating people in participatory behaviours" (Mannarini, Legittimo & Taló, 2008: 97). Factors such as education, sex, age, religion, place of residence, even socio-economic status have all been noted by various scholars to affect how different individuals participate, as well as the level of said participation.

The factor of age is often cited as a determinant of political participation. As numerous scholars have noted, citizens within the youth or young adult group participate far less frequently than their adult counterparts. Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier (2010), as well as Kirbiš and Krajne (2013) elaborate on this finding. For the most part, the youth seem to be less engaged in 'so called' conventional political participation, and as such participate less, but these low levels largely refer to conventional participation. Young adults are more engaged in direct or alternative or unconventional political behaviour. This would include a preference for lawful demonstrations, boycotts and protest, over party politics for example (Dalton, 2013).

Age as a particular determinant is not the only factor which may affect levels of participation, as the construct of gender has also received much attention. Gender differences in terms of participation largely stems from the participatory act. Studies show that men tend to exhibit higher levels of participation compared to women, but men are also most likely to only participate in conventional acts (Kirbiš & Krajne, 2013: 192). In addition, Pastrana-Valls

(2018: 681) notes that men who are wealthier, more educated, younger, religious, as well as married are also more likely to participate when compared to others.

Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier (2010) also make reference to this, namely in investigating participation in institutionalised forms of political participation. They argue that participation in "institutionalized forms of politics remain strongly skewed. Men and older people participate more intensely than women or younger people" (Marien *et al*. 2010: 200). In addition to this finding, in discussing the variation of participation due to age and gender, these variances also become apparent in the different forms of participation, namely institutionalized versus non-institutionalized political participation. Furthermore, these authors also mention that non-institutionalized participation attracts females, as well as younger participants, whereas those citizens who fall into the older demographic tend to participate more frequently in institutionalized forms of participation (Marien *et al*. 2010: 204-205).

Kirbiš and Krajne (2013) also found a gender disparity, largely with regards to participation by women. These authors discuss the psychological dimension when it comes to the political engagement by women, and make mention that women tend to have lower scores with regards to their interest in politics, their political and institutional trust, that they have a lower level of knowledge about politics, and that women are less attached to a particular political party, as well as that women pay less attention to politics as such (Kirbiš & Krajne 2013: 181-182).

Apart from the factors of age and gender being dubbed as determinants of citizens' political participation, the literature also speaks of factors such as education and income. More specifically, there are "two types of predispositions related to political participation. These are individual resources such as education and money" (Vráblikivá, 2010:2). The accumulation of resources such as education and income, should influence whether a citizen would participate or not. Individuals who are more educated, as well as those with a higher income are said not only to participate more (Salisbury, 1975; Vráblikivá, 2010), but these individuals also engage and participate more because they can, and have the resources to do so (Teorell, 2006; Vráblikivá, 2010; Jou & Endo, 2017).

As noted by Gallego (2007: 13), age and education have also said to "appear as the most widespread structural determinants of political participation". Not only do individuals with greater resources i.e., education, money, participate more in political and social affairs, but they also have more ways in which to have their voices heard. In this way disadvantaging, as well as marginalizing those individuals who are poorer. Culbert, Pomirchy and Sonenshein (2015) further acknowledge the factors of age, education and income as determinants of political participation. These authors mention that older and wealthier individuals were more likely than individuals who are younger and poorer to vote in a primary election. Furthermore, those individuals who are older and college educated were more likely to vote in a general election than individuals who are younger and less educated (Culbert *et al*. 2015: 7). This as such presenting how these factors intersect one another. Ushlaner (2003: 7) notes that individuals who are more educated, participate to higher levels in both social and political life, and in this way, education then shapes the way citizens approach participation. Educated individuals will also then tend to vote more, as well as to partake in activities such as attending local meetings, joining voluntary associations, even contacting those in office (Ushlaner 2003: 7)

While the determinants of both education and income were discussed in the above; and largely that those who are wealthier and more educated will participate more, Martinez (2008) brings forth an alternative discussion. This author acknowledges that higher status individuals will participate more, and more likely in conventional actions. This is due to the fact that they have more resources at their disposal i.e., education, income, occupational status, while individuals who make up the minority (largely in terms of race and ethnicity), and who lack such resources are less likely to be involved or partake in actions of a conventional nature. These individuals lack the so-called needed resources of status and income, and therefore may adopt unconventional political strategies instead, largely ensuring that they are able to participate (Martinez, 2005: 137-138).

The social environment, as a determinant of political participation is identified by Huckfeldt (1979). Huckfeldt (1979: 579) argues that because political activity seldom occurs in isolation, one's status as well as social context or environment is an important determinant in the way an individual decides to participate. An individuals' social status is a large predictor with regards to political participation, as those with a higher social status are more likely to participate or perform in political activities than those who have a lower social status.

Additionally, with having a higher social status, one's social environment is also as such affected. In this way, one's social environment can also as such affect the way an individual decides to participate. People can be "stimulated to participate both by being around others who participate and by adopting prevalent group norms which encourage participation" (Huckfeldt, 1979:581). In addition to the affect, one's social status and social context may have on how one decides to participate, the level of participation by individual is also greater if the individual himself or herself is in fact interested in politics, or political affairs. As such, those who participate more are those who are said to be more interested (Vrábliková, 2010; Pastrana-Valls, 2018).

Mannarini *et al*. (2008) also touch on the argument of one's social environment. These authors note that as the process of socialization occurs and an individual is able to gather information from their friends, family, peers and those within their own social circle, this positively increases the likeliness to become an active participant in both political and social activities.

Mannarini *et al*. (2008: 98) also refer to political efficacy as another factor. Political efficacy refers to the feeling that one's individual political action may or may not have an impact upon the political process (Prats & Meunier, 2021: 3). In addition, individuals who have a higher degree of political efficacy have also been noted to participate more. This description is further classified into two dimensions, as internal efficacy and external efficacy. Prats and Meunier (2021: 2-3) describe internal efficacy as an individual's perception of their ability or competence in understanding and being able to participate in political processes, whereas external efficacy is a perception that an individual will have a positive impact on the traditional forms of participation. While both of these dimensions have been described as having an effect on participation, the impact of each dimension is not the same. Internal efficacy is highlighted by Prats and Meunier (2021: 4) as having a positive effect on any form of participation, while external efficacy on the other hand does not only have a positive effect on traditional forms of participation, as previously mentioned, but this type of efficacy will have a negative effect on digital as well as forms of participation identified as outside the system of participation.

2.3 Conclusion

As this study relates to understanding how South Africans participate in the democratic political system and the possible explanations for the way South Africans choose to participate, the focus of this chapter was the concept of political participation. In order to investigate the research questions, it is important to define political participation, understand how the study of political participation has developed in the academic literature, identify the various types or forms of political participation as well as the various determinants thereof.

To this end, this study will adopt the definition of political participation that was advanced by Verba and Nie (1972) as "those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they take". Political participation can be categorised as conventional or unconventional. Conventional forms are the most widely practiced and accepted forms of political behaviour, such as voting, while unconventional forms are considered to take place on the periphery of the political system and includes activities such as protest action, strikes, boycotts, and more recently, internet activism. This chapter also showed that there is a myriad of factors, such as age, gender, and race to name a few, that play a role in determining how and why citizens participate in the political system.

The next chapter will entail an overview of prominent international and South African studies, focusing on both conventional and unconventional political behaviour, the trends that have become evident globally and locally, and some of the explanations for these types of political behaviour.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Political participation as a concept involves the behaviour of both conventional and unconventional actions, actions of which are both utilized by citizens. As highlighted in the previous chapter, there are many forms of conventional and unconventional political participation which are being employed, while the reasons for why these forms of behaviour are used often differ. Why citizens choose to engage in different participatory actions, and the reasons therefore look to the topic of political behaviour, and to a large extent how and why citizens also decide to participate in electoral participation. Additionally, this also touches on the concept of voter behaviour, and what in fact influences citizens to behave and vote the way they do.

This chapter will provide a review of prominent international and South African literature on political participation, with a focus on both conventional and unconventional political behaviour. This discussion will also look at the trends that have become evident locally, and globally as well as some of the explanations for the type of political behaviour being exhibited.

3.2 Overview of prominent international studies

As mentioned in the previous chapter, citizens participate in both conventional and unconventional actions, where conventional actions in the form of electoral participation and namely in the form of voting is often noted as a more lawful or structured type of participation. While this type of participation i.e., electoral participation is still widely utilized, participatory actions in the form of voting are continuing to decline (Gallego, 2008). Before we attempt to unpack and understand why this decline continues to occur, we need to look at the particular behaviour and/ or influences that affect voter turnout.

The concept of political activism ties into this discussion. Political activism looks at the various ways that citizens participate, the processes that lead them to participate the way they do, as well as the consequences involved (Norris, 2005: 1). Political activism has also been

considered as a multidimensional phenomenon. Inglehart and Norris (2003: 104) argue that there are three common dimensions related to the concept of political activism. These authors list the dimensions of (1) traditional political activism, which looks at voting participation, party membership, union membership, as well as levels of political interest, (2) civic activism, which looks to participation taking place within voluntary organizations, new social movements etc., and lastly (3) protest activism. Moreover, these dimensions demonstrate that citizens are able to participate, and participate in a number of different manners.

Two scholars, Wattenberg (1998) and Blais (2006) also discuss unique concepts in attempting to address voter behaviour. Wattenberg (1998) outlines his theory with three approaches to political behaviour (economic, psychological, and sociological), and how they may influence the behaviour of citizens. Each of these three approaches attempt to identify the factors influencing turnout behaviour, or the patterns that are being exhibited. The economic approach focuses largely on the costs and benefits of voting, the psychological approach is mainly concerned with party identification, while the sociological approach looks at factors of age, education as well as social groups.

Taking from this theory, Wattenberg (1998) identifies potential causes for the decline in voter turnout. The psychological approach acknowledges the rising costs in voting, with a decrease in benefits as part of the turnout problem, while the psychological approach identifies the lack of motivation to vote as stemming from party decline. The sociological approach, on the other hand, identifies the factors of age, education, and the social group as being related to voter turnout or the decline thereof (Wattenberg, 1998: 10-11). Gallego (2008: 38) also identifies age and education as influencing rates of voter turnout and argues that individuals who are poorly educated, and those among the youth are two groups where turnout has continued to decline.

Similar to Wattenberg, Blais (2006) identifies three groups of factors which may influence voter turnout: (1) the impact of institutions, including compulsory voting, the electoral system and unicameralism, (2) the socioeconomic environment, and (3) party systems and electoral outcomes. While not all of these factors are acknowledged as fostering a significant turnout amongst citizens, several are noted as more popular than others and therefore are also utilized more frequently. The impact of institutions, with particular reference to compulsory voting, for example, fosters a larger turnout, whereas turnout in poorer countries is lower than the

turnout experienced in smaller ones. In addition, when elections are more closely contested the voter turnout increases (Blais, 2006: 122).

While various approaches in understanding the voter behaviour of citizens, and what may increase or decrease turnout have been discussed, other scholars have also gone on to address this topic and mention further motivations for the decline in turnout. One such scholar is Martin Wattenberg (2003: 164) who argues that the gap in turnout, namely with regards to the youth is not due to reasons of apathy or lack of education, but stresses that changes in the experiences of socialization are to blame. This particular grouping is not only lacking the exposure to politics which has been associated with the rapid changing of the media environment but are also lack the knowledge to encourage these individuals to go out and vote. This lack of knowledge and exposure to politics hinders the youth from developing a habit of voting and participating in politics, and subsequently goes on to affect the turnout rate.

Franklin (2001) touches on another factor causing a decline in voter turnout. This author mentions that the major factors determining turnout is related to a citizen's desire or motivation to affect the course of public policy. The importance of electoral contest, as well as the perception that an individual's vote will be influential will also affect turnout. If citizens feel that the political system is largely unresponsive, and that their vote will not go on to affect public policy they will not make the decision to go out and vote (Franklin, 2001: 21).

As the above discussions have attempted to demonstrate the various approaches and/or factors influencing voter turnout, Dalton (2008) touches on the way that modes of political participation are in fact shifting and changing. More specifically, he discusses the concept of citizenship norms, and the change in these norms. Citizenship is defined as "a set of norms of what people think people should do as good citizens" (Dalton, 2008: 78). These citizenship norms include the categories of participation, autonomy, social order, as well as that of solidarity. To this effect, citizenship norms are regarded as various types of participatory behaviour which go on to make a positive contribution to our democratic political culture. These norms have also been noted as shaping the political behaviour of citizens.

As citizenship norms have continued to change, some norms have weakened while others have in fact strengthened. This has affected participation, and the various ways citizens decide to participate. Duty-based norms of citizenship encourage individuals to participate as part of their civic duty which may in fact stimulate both participation and levels of election turnout (Dalton, 2008: 85-86). However, as citizenship norms are facing a decline this may also contribute to the erosion of electoral participation.

While citizenship norms have been discussed as facing changes and decline, Dalton (2008: 88) also mentions that this is not unusual and will transform patterns of participation, referring primarily to the utilization of newer forms of activity outside of the electoral arena. Rather than "an absolute decline in political action, the changing norms of citizenship are shifting the ways Americans participate in politics – decreasing electoral participation but increasing other forms of action" (Dalton, 2008: 88). Moreover, as the face of citizenship has changed this has also caused patterns of political participation to change, broadening the types of political activity citizens decide to engage in.

3.3 Overview of prominent South African studies

Conventional political participation in South Africa is largely performed in the way of electoral participation, as such referring to the action of voting. Electoral participation while being a democratic right, and a way for citizens to participate and as such enhance the system of democracy, this method of participation is steadily declining (Chilambo, 2007: 171; Graham, 2020: 29). Not only is there a continued decline in citizens turning out to vote, but there is also a steady decline in citizens who decide to register to vote as well. This picture of declining electoral support tells us that as not only are South Africans enthusiasm for this particular way of participation steadily waning, but it is also a message of discontent. Citizens no longer hold the belief that by casting their ballot in elections would they see some sort of change, but they are also slowly becoming more and more cynical of the process (Karreth, 2018; Nicolson, 2019). Moosa (2021: 15,18) makes further reference to this argument noting that not only do citizens hold increasingly negative perceptions towards political participation but are also expressing great frustration and lack of faith with those in power as these representatives are not at all responsive to their needs as citizens.

Citizens were also realising "elections were 'no magic formula' to achieve the change they wanted to see, and research had shown that people also saw the protest as a way to supplement elections to have their voices heard" (Nicolson, 2019:1). In addition to the feelings of discontent experienced by citizens, reasons of dissatisfaction as well as disillusionment according to studies by Potgieter and Lutz (2014), and Bornman, Harvey, van Vuuren, Kekana, Matuludi, Mdakane and Ramphele (2021) may also be among the reasons as to why rates of political participation are continuing to slowly decline. Bornman *et al*. (2021: 388) argue that citizens often withhold votes or withdraw from electoral politics and that this signals an alternative form of political "participation". These citizens are not only expressing their discontent, but it may also be an attempt to influence future political developments.

With the declining support of conventional participation, and as mentioned above namely electoral participation, various scholars also make mention that partisan ties or partisanship is also beginning to slowly decline. Not only are there declining levels of trust being experienced with regards to political parties as according to Schulz-Herzenberg (2019b), but this is also as such affecting partisan ties and party identification. Schulz-Herzenberg (2019b) goes on to highlight that due to negative performance evaluations by citizens themselves, this has affected how citizens feel towards political parties. Roberts, Struwig, Gordon and Davids. (2019), also further adds to this argument. These authors mention the fluctuating rate of partisanship between the years of 2008 and 2018, and namely that in 2019 the South African electorate expressed a much lower degree of partisanship than in previous years. Furthermore, Roberts et al. (2019: 489) highlights that this has also caused "an unprecedented low level of political efficacy and sense of duty to vote, coupled with a low general level of political interest".

These declining levels of partisan attachment or partisanship has also been largely associated with the youth. Schulz- Herzenberg (2019b), as well as Schulz- Herzenberg (2019d) both mention that this group is found to either have a particularly weaker level of partisanship, or to even have no attachment to a political party at all. This is not only a result of performance evaluations of political parties by this particular grouping, highlighting the poor performance of political parties in particular, but unfulfilled voter expectations as well as scandals and poor incumbency records have also led the youth to lacking in terms of partisanship (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019b: 466). Schulz- Herzenberg (2019d: 372- 373) also goes on to further

highlight that with the weaker ties to political parties, and partisanship as such the youth are also less rooted in social networks and organisations which may in fact mobilise them to go out and vote.

The steady decline of electoral participation is also not a new phenomenon, but as such voter turnout in South Africa has steadily been declining since our first national elections in 1994. Roberts et al. (2019), makes further reference to this point. These authors highlight that not only is South Africa continuing to witness a decline in participation; with the 2019 elections expressing the biggest decline to date, but South Africa's sixth General Elections noted the lowest voter turnout since the first elections in 1994.

As previously mentioned, declining voter turnout is very much becoming a noticeable trend in South Africa. Oyedemi and Mahlatji (2016), Head (2019), as well as Schulz-Herzenberg (2019a) all make mention to South Africa's figures of voter turnout, and namely the decline thereof. Where the voter turnout in South Africa in 1999 stood at 88%; between 2004 and now in 2019, it has definitely seen the biggest jump. In 2004 the voter turnout stood at 76%, while in 2019 it now stands at 66%. Not only is this an almost 11% drop within a span of 15 years, but such a decline in electoral participation is also worrisome, namely in a democratic system which relies on the participation by its citizens. This decline is also a worrisome trend as voter turnout is considered a "crucial indicator of the vitality and health of democracy" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c: 52). Furthermore, this decline in electoral participation is also said to more than likely affect the quality of civic engagement in the country, as well as the involvement by citizens in democratic politics (Karreth, 2018; Head, 2019; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a; Nicolson, 2019). This decline in conventional participation, namely that of electoral participation is not only a shift from traditional politics as such, but as highlighted by Gordon *et al*. (2019), these declining levels of voter turnout being experienced in South Africa is contrasted with the increasing use of unconventional methods of participation.

These declining levels of participation are also largely noticed when one looks to the youth of South Africa. Not only is this particular group said to be indifferent when it comes to traditional forms of participation, but young adults for the most part are also seen to shun actions of electoral participation (Karreth, 2018), and as such hold strong "disaffection towards contemporary democratic politics" (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2019d: 374). This is largely a response to unhappiness and discontentment due to the high levels of unemployment this

group faces as well as the issue of wide scale inequality in the country (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2019d).

Mattes and Richmond (2014) demonstrate these points further. They note the youth as being disengaged from conventional forms of political participation, and as such would be more likely to engage in unconventional actions. Bornman *et al*. (2021: 376) argue that low levels of "youth involvement in formal politics does not necessarily imply indifference. The youth are, instead simultaneously politically engaged and disengaged". While the youth may demonstrate a lower interest in 'formal' political activities, they participate in alternative forms of political actions (Bornman *et al*., 2021: 373).

The youth of South Africa are not only choosing not to vote, but at the same time are also turning out less and less to in fact register. Young voters are "using non-voting to protest a political climate where they feel they are not being heard" (Petersen, 2019:1). The youth of South Africa, for the most part, are also abstaining from electoral participation for various reasons. Young South Africans are choosing not to vote for reasons of unemployment, feelings of poverty and inequality, as well as low levels of trust in their political leaders. Additionally, feelings of being alienated from formal politics are also amongst the many reasons as to why the youth are choosing not to vote (Graham, 2020: 33). They have also adopted the attitude of, 'why should we vote', especially when the political leaders are doing nothing to help, and their situation at hand is not changing. Petersen (2019) makes mention of this sentiment, and further notes that young South Africans have also found that in many cases they accomplish more by protesting, then they would in traditional methods of participation. Furthermore, loss of faith in formal political platforms as mentioned by Graham (2020: 46) has also resulted in the youth utilizing other avenues to make their voices heard, including that of social media campaigns.

This break away from traditional forms of political participation has in many instances made the youth appear to be as inactive as well as absent from the formal political system, but this sentiment of the youth being inactive or even disinterested in participating is not at all the full picture. While various scholars mention low participation rates or turnout when it comes to the youth, authors such as Chatora (2012), Lerakong (2016), Oyedemi and Mahlatji (2016), Gordon et al. (2019), as well as Graham (2020) make a different argument. These authors

highlight that in so far as the youth seem to be less politically motivated than other age groups, the South African youth are in fact participating in their own way (Lerakong, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, the youth is very much more engaged in unconventional actions than those of conventional actions as can be seen in recent protest action of #FeesMustFall, and various service delivery protests around the country (Oyedemi & Mahlatji, 2016), but this is not the only way the youth are remaining politically active. Social media and the Internet have really started to become a platform to enhance participation, and the youth are very much engaging and participating in this way. "...social networking and digital information have and is changing the youth political participation landscape. Digital media is allowing young people to embrace practices that create new opportunities for voice, agency and influence" (Lerakong, 2016:2). As highlighted by Bosch (2016b: 223), the Internet has increasingly become a vehicle in fostering political participation, and social media platforms in this way have also begun to play a role in influencing political activism. A similar argument is also made by Trossbach (2019: 33), who notes that the Internet and social media platforms have become facilitators for both political participation, and political movements.

Mhlomi and Osunkunle (2017) and Gordon *et al*. (2019) go on to discuss these sentiments. The youth are not only utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter as part of their political activities, but the youth are engaging in this way to be part of the decision-making process, especially with regards to issues that affect them. Social media is not only providing the youth with various platforms with which to debate and discuss political issues (Mhlomi & Osunkunle, 2017:151), but these platforms have also gone on to facilitate "protest participation by increasing opportunities for engagement in collective action" (Bosch, 2016b:224). Bosch (2016b: 224) also adds that social media platforms such as Twitter have also been acknowledged as a means to not only facilitate communication, but these platforms are also being used as a way to both inform and mobilise during periods of social unrest. This 'newer' way of participation is also said to supplement traditional ways of participation, rather than to completely replace them, namely with regards to the youth (Mhlomi & Osunkunle, 2017).

While conventional participation in South Africa, and largely that of electoral participation has exhibited with a decline, unconventional participation on the other hand presents with an increase of citizens taking part in this participatory action.

From the Soweto uprisings in the 1970s, to the consistent service delivery protests, and of late the recent students protests of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall; participation in South Africa and namely that of political participation, the theme of protests and protest action continually seem to be a dominating factor. Not only has political participation within South Africa become synonymous with that of unconventional action but protest and strike action has definitely become the go to method of participation (Alexander, 2012; Duncan, 2014; Moosa, 2021). This behaviour of an unconventional nature is also further discussed by Graham (2020: 46) who notes that "where formal participation fails, protest action is widely utilized".

Unconventional political participation largely exhibited in protest action, is being displayed in various forms. This form of direct action as noted by Booysen (2009: 17), features quite frequently in the post-1990 period. From the countless service delivery protests being experienced in communities around the country, to political protests, and even the recent student protests of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall; South Africans have been employing protest action for a multitude of reasons. Some of these reasons include, but are not limited to grievances of water, housing, electricity, sanitation, youth unemployment, and even issues of poor public service and incumbent councillors (Booysen, 2007: 33; Nleya, 2011: 3; Nyar & Wray, 2012: 26; Alexander, Runciman & Ngwane, 2013: 8; Botes, 2018: 242). Booysen (2009: 23) touches on the reason of public service in particular, and highlights that the many failures being experienced in the public service are going on to affect citizens, resulting in citizens deciding to participate on their own terms and ultimately leading to participation in that of protest action. Protest action has been utilized not only as a way to receive certain services which citizens are said to be lacking, but it has also continued to be a method for South Africans to voice their discontent and dissatisfaction. In this way tapping into a particular protest of culture which continues to influence political behaviour in South Africa (Duncan, 2016: 1).

Ann Karreth (2018: 458) argues that not only are South African's more inclined to engage in protest than in more institutionalised methods, but that these actions may indeed be a remnant of South Africa's political past. Since a "majority of South Africans could only participate in non-sanctioned political activities under the Apartheid regime, protesting may be a kind of learned behaviour that has been culturally reproduced over time" (Karreth, 2018: 458).

This argument is also further elaborated on by both Kotzé (2001), as well as Gordon *et al.* (2019). The large part of this protest culture which is experienced in South Africa is also due to the political exclusion and oppression certain groups of South Africans had to endure during the years of apartheid. Certain individuals were not afforded the same rights and opportunities as other South African citizens, and therefore had to use alternative ways and means to make their voices heard. As such, whenever South Africans are unable to get their point of view across to those in power, methods of an unconventional nature are implemented (Simelane, 2013). In partaking in protest action, including that of violent protests, South Africans also believe that by causing commotion in this way that they will finally be noticed.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided a literature review of both international, and national studies on political participation. The international literature expanded on the concept of voter behaviour, as well as voter turnout in particular and the numerous factors influencing citizens behaviour as such. In highlighting this discussion, this chapter also briefly touches on the concept of political activism and how it ties into the discussion on political behaviour. This section also then further discussed a number of factors causing the decline in voter turnout. In addition, the concept of citizenship norms and how the shifting of this behaviour has changed the face of political participation concluded this section.

The national literature on the other hand, illustrated the typology of political participation being performed in South Africa; namely conventional and unconventional participation and the particular trends being exhibited in the country. This section also noted that while actions of a conventional nature are to a large extent continuing to decline, actions of an unconventional nature are continuing to be employed and, mainly actions involving protest behaviour. This type of behaviour is being utilized by citizens for a multitude of reasons and continue to be used today. In addition, the area of youth participation, or lack thereof is also touched on in this chapter.

The next chapter will entail a review of conventional political behaviour in South Africa. This chapter will further expand on the descriptions of conventional political participation, largely discussing the electoral system in democratic South Africa as well as electoral behaviour. This discussion will go on to follow a detailed review of voter registration, as well

as voter turnout in South Africa to measure how actively South Africans participate. Various motivations of electoral behaviour amongst South African's will conclude this chapter.

Chapter 4: Conventional Political Participation in South Africa

4.1 Introduction

Conventional political participation, or conventional political behaviour focuses on those actions, which when undertaken by citizens are deemed as appropriate as well as legitimate by society, and as such are also noted as a more structured and lawful way of participating (Verba & Nie, cited by Alvarez, Levin & Núňez, 2017). Conventional political participation as a type of behaviour is largely concerned with actions of an electoral nature. This is loosely highlighted in the definition of political participation by Verba and Nie (1972). Their definition of participation describes political participation as "those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they take" (Verba & Nie, 1972 cited by Kirbiš & Krajne, 2013:178).

The particular actions which conventional political participation includes are mostly aimed at influencing government, or its officials. Such conventional actions include voting in elections, attending meetings, campaigning, lobbying, contacting politicians or government officials, party membership, running for election, writing letters, public hearings, political rallies, recalls, or even that of referendums (Imbrasaité, 2010; Chatora, 2012; Zani & Barrett, 2012; Stockemer, 2014; Grace & Danfulani, 2015; Fayomi & Adebayo, 2018).

These conventional forms of political behaviour, as noted above are very much rooted in acts associated with the electoral system, and largely that of voting. Electoral participation, as the most popular form of conventional participation, is closely tied to the system of democracy and governance. Through the conventional participation of citizens namely in electoral actions, citizens are able to exercise their democratic rights by participating in this system. As highlighted by Seanego and Mogoboya (2019: 308), voting is not only a platform by which to exercise these democratic rights, but "voting, as a right, underscores the establishment of any democracy". This highlights the relationship between electoral participation, a form of conventional political participation, and that of democracy.

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Kour (2018), cited by Seanego and Mogoboya (2019), further substantiates this particular point and notes that electoral participation through the act of voting, goes beyond the actions of simply supporting your chosen or favourite party, but in voting one is also supporting the system of democracy.

In boasting such a strong democracy, participation in this particular system by ones citizens is also essential. Citizens have the ability to voice their concerns, and make decisions by participating. This not only affects decisions, or the outcomes of decisions but by integrating citizen participation into the system it also then affects the quality of democracy (Royeppen, 2016: 341).

This chapter will provide an overview of electoral behaviour and the electoral system in democratic South Africa. This discussion will be followed by a detailed review of voter registration, as well as voter turnout in South Africa to measure how actively South Africans participate in their political system. The final section of this chapter will review the various motivations of electoral behaviour amongst South Africans.

4.2 Voting Behaviour in Democratic South Africa

On the 27th of April 1994, South Africa held its very first democratic election. This marked the start of regular free and fair elections for all South Africans, which take place every five years. This basic individual political right is enshrined in the Bill of Rights in Section 19 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Since elections take place on a regular basis, the South African electorate has the opportunity to hold government to account for its past performance in office (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a:1). This allows South African citizens to hold those in power accountable for their decisions and enables citizens to either continue to support their chosen party, or to withdraw their support (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009a; Africa, 2010; Louw, 2014). Anyangwe (2012) argues that while periodic, free and fair elections serve as one of the defining features of our vibrant democracy, they also serve as a mechanism for the public to either change, review or even legitimise the chosen government and express their free will by doing so.

Since South Africa's transition to democracy, the country has successfully conducted six national elections to date. The process of conducting elections in South Africa is currently facilitated by the Electoral Commission of South Africa, or the IEC. The IEC forms part of

the Chapter 9 State Institutions which are responsible for strengthening constitutional democracy in South Africa. Section 181(2) of the South African Constitution (1996: 107) stipulates that these institutions are not only independent and as such subject to only the Constitution and law, but these institutions "must be impartial and must exercise their powers and perform their functions without fear, favour or prejudice". These institutions are accountable to the National Assembly and report back to the Assembly at least once a year. As previously stated, the IEC in particular is responsible for the management of free and fair elections in South Africa. Section 190(1-2) of the Constitution (1996) stipulates that the IEC manages elections at all levels, national, provincial and municipal, and is responsible for ensuring that elections are free and fair, declaring the results of elections, as well as compiling and maintaining a valid voter roll. In addition to these duties, the IEC is also in charge of promoting voter education as well as compiling and maintaining a register of political parties (elections.org.za, 2019).

The Access to Information Manual of the IEC provides a detailed account of the functions, duties and structure of the IEC. These functions include promoting conditions which are conducive to free and fair elections, promoting knowledge of democratic electoral processes, undertaking as well as promoting research into electoral matters, continuously reviewing electoral legislation as well as declaring the results of elections within seven days after elections have taken place. In terms of structure the Electoral Commission is made up of five Commissioners, including the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson. The IEC national headquarters is situated in Centurion, while the Commission also hosts one provincial office per province and local offices in municipalities (elections.org.za, 2019).

In addition to stipulating the role and functions of the IEC, Section 46 (1-2) of the Constitution (1996) outlines the electoral system in South Africa. The electoral system in South Africa is known as the proportional representation (PR) voting system. The National Assembly, consisting of no more than 400 members, are elected by means of the PR system, which allows voters to cast their vote for a political party that they want to represent them, rather than individual politicians. Louw (2014: 1) explains that in this system, "voters vote for parties, not for individuals. It is the parties' prerogative who it wants in the legislatures". The PR system allocates the number of seats, in direct proportion to the number of votes a political party receives in an election. In this way, citizens do not directly get a say in which

members from a political party will end up representing them as they are only able to select the party itself (Louw, 2014).

One of the main advantages of the PR system is that it allows for a wide representation of political parties in the National Assembly, and as such increases inclusivity. This particular system also enables smaller parties to have their voices heard in the legislature, and ensures that they have a greater chance with being represented (de Villiers, 2001: 31). Power-sharing between political parties, as well as interest groups are also more viable in the PR system as it tends to encourage coalition governments (Louw, 2014; Ferree, 2018). Coalition governments are acknowledged as an advantage associated with PR systems; it has also been recognised as one of the disadvantages of this electoral system. Most of the criticisms of PR in general are based on the tendency of PR systems to encourage unstable coalition governments (Douglas, 2020: 1). Lack of representation, as well as the issue of accountability are also criticisms of this particular system. Russon (2011) argues that a PR system not only deprives voters of being able to directly elect a candidate, but further enables a lack of accountability as citizens are unable to take these chosen candidates to task. In addition, although the PR system is praised for encouraging representation, especially amongst smaller parties, one party dominance still continues to occur, notably in South Africa (Booysen & Masterson, 2009; Ferree, 2018).

4.2.1 Voter Registration

Voter registration in South Africa is noted as the number of citizens who are of the required voting age to cast a ballot, and who have registered their personal details to vote. The compiling of a record of the registered voters was introduced in 1999, five years after the first national elections. Electoral Act, No. 73 of 1998 stipulates the provisions required for a citizen to vote (Booysen & Masterson, 2009). In order to register to vote an individual needs to be 16 years or older, be a South African citizen, and hold a green barcoded ID book, a smartcard ID, or a temporary identity certificate (elections.org.za, 2019). Registration is made through the IEC.

Table 4.1: National Voter Registration Statistics, 1999-2019

Election Year	Number of registered voters
1999	18 172 751
2004	20 674 923
2009	23 181 997
2014	25 388 082
2019	26 756 649

Sources: Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019; 2019 National and Provincial Elections Report

In looking at the number of South Africans who register to vote, the IEC also makes note of the proportion of those known as eligible voters, or that of the voting age population (VAP). While citizens may register to vote from age 16 onwards, only registered voters who are 18 years and older may cast their vote in national or local elections. This accounts for slight variances in voter registration statistics in South Africa (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2009a; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016). Overall, the number of registered voters in South Africa has steadily increased from 18 172 751 in 1999 to 26 756 649 in 2019 (see Table 3.1).

Table 4.2: National Registration Statistics by Province, 1999-2019

| Province	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Eastern Cape	2 454 543	2 849 486	3 056 559	3 240 059	3 363 161
Free State	1 225 730	1 321 195	1 388 588	1 449 488	1 462 508
Gauteng	4 154 087	4 650 594	5 555 159	6 063 739	6 381 220
KwaZulu-Natal	3 443 978	3 819 864	4 475 217	5 117 131	5 524 666
Limpopo	1 847 766	2 187 912	2 256 073	2 438 280	2 608 460
Mpumalanga	1 277 783	1 442 469	1 696 705	1 860 834	1 951 776
North West	1 527 672	1 749 529	1 564 357	1 669 349	1 702 728
Northern Cape	337 173	433 591	554 900	601 080	626 471
Western Cape	1 864 019	2 220 283	2 634 439	2 941 333	3 128 567
National	18 172 751	20 674 923	23 181 997	25 381 293	26 756 649

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019

This trend of increasing registered voters is also evident across all nine provinces in South Africa between 1999 and 2019. Table 3.2 illustrates that the highest proportion of registered voters reside in Gauteng, followed by KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, and Western Cape

provinces. The smallest proportion of registered voters are located in the Northern Cape, however, the number of registered voters in this province has almost doubled between 1999 and 2019.

While the number of registered South Africans has continued to rise, voter registration as a proportion of the VAP has not kept up the same pace (see Figure 4.1). According to the data presented in Figure 4.1, the number of eligible voters rose from 23 million in the first two elections to 35.9 million in 2019 (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c: 49). The number of unregistered voters in South Africa currently sits at just over 9 million (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c: 49). Kersting (2009: 127) notes that even with the increase of registered voters, particularly from 2004 onward, roughly a quarter of the VAP are not registered. Furthermore, as demonstrated below, the gap between those registered and the unregistered South African voters continues to steadily increase over time (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c: 49).

Figure 4.1: VAP and Voter Registration (in millions), 1994-2019
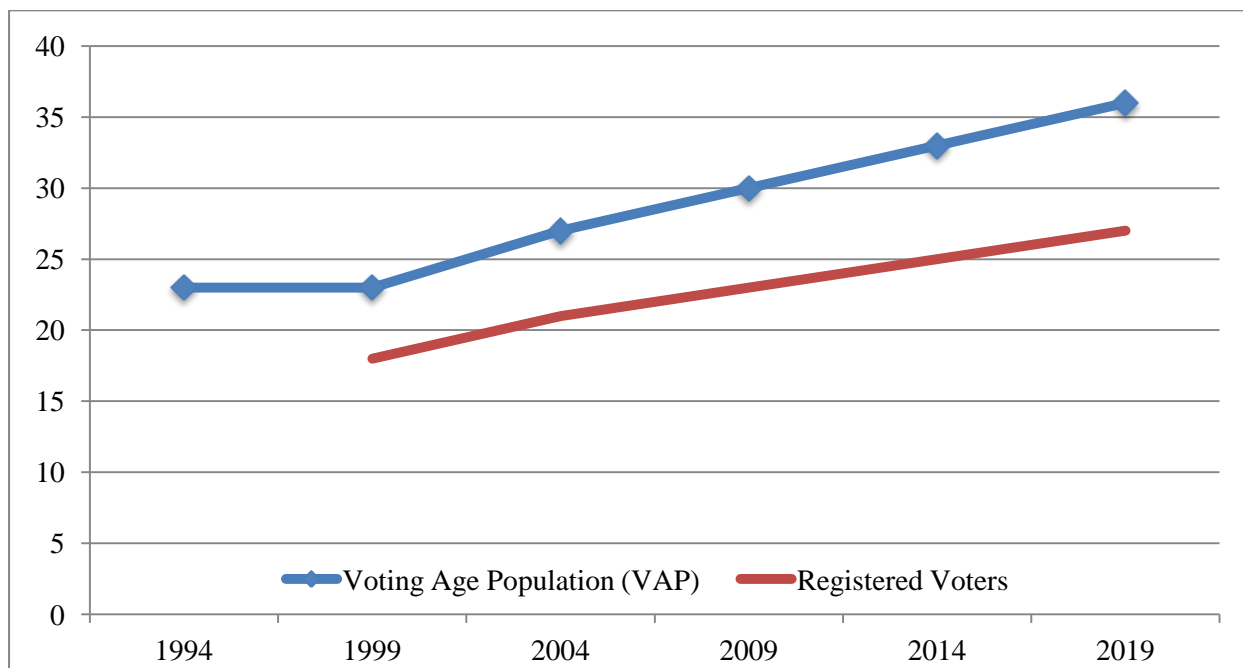
 Source: Schulz- Herzenberg (2019c:50)

The rising level of voter registration can possibly be attributed to the many registration drives by the IEC mainly ahead of national elections. The number of new registrations that the IEC adds to the voters roll during the immediate pre-election period is also significant. However, as noted by the IEC the youth age cohort continues to exhibit with low levels of voter

registration (Booysen & Masterson, 2009; Engel, 2014; Schulz- Herzenberg, 2016; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c).

The IEC notes the particularly low numbers of registration for the youth or the young adult group, namely those under 30 years old (elections.org.za, 2019). Of the 9.8 million citizens who are eligible to vote and are still not registered, a total of 6 million are individuals under 30 years old (elections.org.za, 2019). Thus, not only are young individuals registering less, and as such voting less, but they are also doing so at a far higher rate than older age groups. Table 4.3 shows that a quarter (25,2%) of registered voters are between the ages of 30 and 39. This is followed by 20,8% of voters aged between 40 and 49, 19,1% aged between 20 and 29, and 16% aged between 50 and 59. Registered voters aged 18 or 19 only account for 1% of all registered voters. The result is that the youth are under-represented in elections because they do not vote, and this significantly diminishes their ability to have any sort of influence in election outcomes (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2016; Schulz- Herzenberg, 2019c).

Table 4.3: National Registration Statistics Per Age Group, 2019

Age Group	Registered Voters	Age as Percentage of Registered Voters
18-19	254 050	1%
20-29	5 076 712	19.1%
30-39	6 688 577	25.2%
40-49	5 526 750	20.8%
50-59	4 255 921	16%
60-69	2 767 347	10.4%
70-79	1 353 237	5.1%
80+	648 884	2.4%
Total	26 571 478	

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019

In terms of gender, the majority of females and males in South Africa are registered to vote. Table 4.4 illustrates the percentage of females and males that were registered to vote in the last two national elections. The data being presented of years 2014 and 2019 is as such the latest available data. At both time points, slightly more females were registered than males. Gender Links (2019) reports similar findings and conclude that not only do women continue

to marginally outweigh men in terms of registration, but a larger proportion of women are engaged and interested in politics.

Table 4.4: National Registration Statistics by Gender

Year	Female	Male
2014	68.4%	64.6%
2019	65.5%	61.9%

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2019

Table 4.5 illustrates the percentage of registered voters by population group in 2014 and 2019. This data once again is the latest available data, and therefore data from previous election years may be excluded. The data shows that around three quarters of minority populations groups, such as Indian/Asians and Whites, are registered to vote while the percentage of registered Coloured voters declined by almost ten percent between 2014 and 2019. More than 60% of the majority population group, Black Africans, are registered to vote.

Table 4.5: National Registration Statistics by Population Group

Year	Black African	Coloured	Indian/ Asian	White
2014	64.7%	67.2%	75.9%	78.6%
2019	62.8%	58.2%	73.8%	73.8%

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2019

As with national voter registration statistics, local or municipal voter registration exhibits the same increase over time. Table 4.6 illustrates the number of registered voters for local elections by province between 2000 and 2016. The number of voters registered for local elections increased from 18.5 million in 2000 to 26.3 million in 2016. Much the same as the national voter registration figures, there has been an increase in registration across all nine provinces. Once again, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces all have the highest registration figures, which can be attributed to the larger populations in those provinces. These provinces as such may also receive inflows of migrants (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2016: 490).

Table 4.6: Local Elections Voter Registration Statistics by Province, 2000-2016

Province	2000	2006	2011	2016
Eastern Cape	2 552 287	2 908 106	3 111 535	3 337 532
Free State	1 227 578	1 318 408	1 386 521	1 470 999
Gauteng	4 375 372	4 785 955	5 592 676	6 234 822
KwaZulu-Natal	3 508 154	3 964 817	4 648 733	5 411 237
Limpopo	1 758 593	2 146 048	2 341 498	2 556 128
Mpumalanga	1 419 315	1 546 728	1 718 309	1 919 216
North West	1 263 004	1 554 864	1 576 898	1 715 460
Northern Cape	452 218	528 657	572 140	621 310
Western Cape	1 955 454	2 301 371	2 706 736	3 066 649
National	18 511 975	21 054 954	23 655 046	26 333 353

Source: Schulz- Herzenberg (2016:491)

4.2.2 Voter Turnout

Voter turnout (as a percentage) is defined as the total number of registered voters who turn up to the polls and cast their vote (Kersting, 2009: 128). For many scholars, voter turnout can also be used as a measure to gauge the strength of democracy in a given country. Dalton (2013: 155) argues that elections and voting showcase the public's political preferences, which as a whole is embedded in the system of democracy. The political participation of citizens is not only deemed as essential but also makes for a strong democracy (Royeppen, 2016). As such, voting behaviour and "voter turnout is regarded as a crucial indicator of the vitality and health of a democracy" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c:52).

Table 4.7: National Voter Turnout Statistics, 1999 - 2019

Year	Number of registered voters	Number of votes casts	Voter Turnout
1999	18 172 751	16 228 462	89.3%
2004	20 674 923	15 863 558	76.73%
2009	23 181 997	17 919 966	77.3%
2014	25 388 082	18 654 771	73.48%
2019	26 756 649	17 672 851	66.05%

Sources: Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019; 2019 National and Provincial Elections Report

Table 4.7 shows the number of registered voters, total number of votes cast and the voter turnout (as a percentage) of registered voters who cast their vote in the last five national elections. Voter turnout was at its highest in 1999 (89.3%). This was followed by a 12.6% decline in 2004, and relatively stable levels in 2009 and 2014. Voter turnout was at its lowest point in 2019 since democratisation at 66.05%. Although more than 26.7 million South Africans were registered for the last election, only 17.6 million South Africans turned up on 8 May 2019 to cast their vote.

Schulz-Herzenberg (2009b:24) argues that "percentages for voter registration and voter turnout reveal that South Africa has witnessed a general decline in electoral participation in terms of both these criteria". She goes on to mention that even though there has been an ongoing increase in the number of registered voters since 1999, the overall number of votes cast since 1999 has not kept up the same pace. Similarly, Morais (2019: 1) notes that compared to the 2014 elections, there was an increase in voter registrations in 2019; however, this increase in registration did not translate into an increase in voter turnout.

Table 4.8: National Voter Turnout by Province, 1999-2019

Province	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Eastern Cape	89,94	79,31	74,87	68,3	59,51
Free State	90,38	77,76	75,55	71,01	61,35
Gauteng	89,16	74,23	75,6	72,97	68,28
KwaZulu-Natal	87,38	72,84	78,81	75,98	66,15
Limpopo	91,13	74,8	67,09	60,72	56,36
Mpumalanga	90,08	78,3	77,61	72,85	63,2
North West	86,87	75,55	70,08	66,32	57,01
Northern Cape	88,2	74,7	74	71,29	64,12
Western Cape	85,92	71,27	75,45	72,76	66,28

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019

Table 4.8 shows the percentage of voter turnout by province from 1999 to 2019. While all nine provinces show evidence of voter decline, the trend is most prevalent in Limpopo (by 34.7%), North West province (by 29.8%), the Free State (by 29%), and Mpumalanga (by 26.8%). In 2019, Limpopo province had the lowest turnout (56.3%) followed by the North West province (57%), while Gauteng had the highest voter turnout (68.2%). Schulz-

Herzenberg (2019c) posits that the decline exhibited by provinces is not only unevenly spread across the country but can largely be attributed to the urban versus rural geography within a particular province.

Much the same as voter registration, voter turnout as a proportion of the VAP is much lower than one would expect (see Figure 4.2). In 2019, less than half of eligible voters cast a vote (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2019c). Turnout in terms of VAP was at its highest at 72% in 1999. This was followed by a rapid decline in 2004 to 58% before stabilising over the next ten years. Voter turnout as a proportion of the VAP was at its lowest (49%) in 2019.

Figure 4.2: National Voter Registration Statistics and VAP, 1999 - 2019
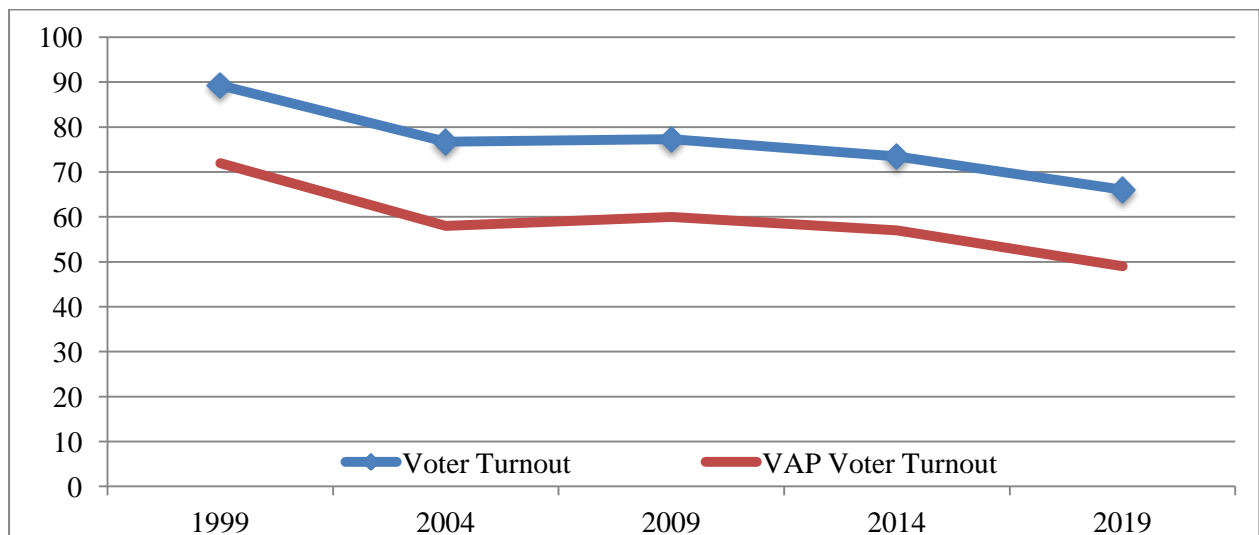
Source: Schulz-Herzenberg (2019c:53)

These worrisome, declining trends are also evident in the age distribution of voter turnout in the 2019 elections. Table 4.9 shows the number of voters who cast their vote as well as the percentage of voter turnout by age cohort. Similar to voter registration figures, those aged between 30 and 39 represent the highest percentage of voters (22%). This is followed by those aged between 40 and 49 (20.6%), and those aged between 50 and 59 (18.8%). Thus, 61.4% of voters in 2019 were aged between 30 and 59, while only 18% were under the age of 30, including 1.5% aged 18 or 19 years old. Schulz-Herzenberg (2019c: 58-59) notes that not only is youth turnout declining over time, but the two youngest age groups in particular have declined over consecutive elections.

Table 4.9: National Voter Turnout Statistics Per Age Group, 2019

Age Group	Voter Turnout	Age as Percentage of Voter Turnout
18-19	273 010	1.5%
20-29	2 952 459	16.7%
30-39	3 894 927	22%
40-49	3 641 763	20.6%
50-59	3 319 719	18.8%
60-69	2 269 768	12.9%
70-79	997 661	5.6%
80+	323 544	1.8%
Total	17 672 851	

Source: 2019 National and Provincial Elections Report

As with disparity experienced in terms of age and voter turnout, disparities in how the different genders turned up to cast their vote are also further presented. Figure 4.3 demonstrates that in the 2019 National Elections 57% of women turned out to vote, while only a marginal 43% of men did the same.

Figure 4.3: Voter Turnout by Gender, 2019

Women- 57%   Men- 43%
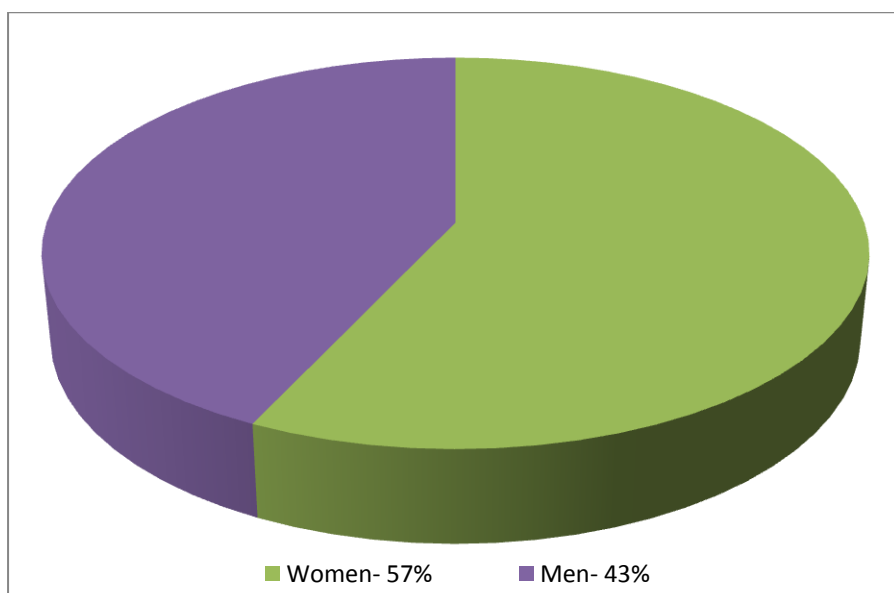
Source: 2019 National and Provincial Elections Report

At the local or municipal level, voter turnout statistics exhibit more positive trends. Where voter turnout at a national level has been experiencing a steady decline, voter turnout in local elections has been experienced a steady incline. Table 4.10 illustrates the number of registered voters, as well as the number of votes cases and then voter turnout as a percentage of votes cast in local elections.

The data shows that voter turnout for local elections was relatively low (less than 50%) but stable between 1995 and 2006. This was followed by an increase of 9.4% in 2011 and another 0.3% increase in 2016. Voter turnout in local elections was thus at its highest in 2016 (58.1%), which is particularly positive for the measure of the strength of democracy.

Table 4.10: Voter Turnout Statistics in Local Elections, 1995-2016

Year	Number of registered voters	Number of votes casts	Voter Turnout
1995	12 720 000	6 200 000	48.7%
2000	18 476 516	8 882 734	48.1%
2006	21 054 957	10 186 795	48.4%
2011	23 655 046	13 664 914	57.8%
2016	26 333 353	15 296 711	58.1%

Source: Institute of Race Relations, 2019

As demonstrated in the section above, voter registration as well as voter turnout present with dissimilar trends. While voter registration in South Africa is largely on the rise, registration in terms of the VAP has not kept up the same pace and the gap between voters who are eligible to register, and those who do in fact turn up to register continues to steadily grow.

Voter turnout on the other hand, has continued to present with a distinctive decline. Sitting with a turnout of only 66.05% of South Africans who cast their vote, this presents the lowest turnout since democratisation. Moreover, of the 26.7 million citizens who had registered to for the previous election, only 17.6 million South Africans had turned up on the 8 May 2019 to place their vote.

In addition to the above findings, the youth and in particular those under the age of 30 have presented with the lowest percentage of participation across both registration and turnout.

4.3 Explaining Conventional Participation in South Africa

While formal participation in the political system, especially by means of voting, can be used to measure the health or strength of a democracy, voter registration and turnout figures only point to part of the story. In order to understand the longitudinal trends in voting behaviour, one needs to understand citizens' motivations to participate. This section provides a brief overview of the main approaches to voting behaviour, followed by an explanation of voting behaviour in South Africa.

4.3.1 Approaches to Voting Behaviour

Participating in elections by casting a ballot for your political party of choice is an essential democratic mechanism whereby the public is able to express their will. In this way, citizens choose representatives to govern their country. Voter behaviour, as a field of study, is concerned with the factors which inform as well as influence voters in making this choice during elections (Anyangwe, 2012). There is a plethora of factors that may influence the voting behaviour of citizens such as social groups, class, religion, age, gender, party identification and so on. In reality, some voters may rely on one dominant factor, while others may rely on a combination of factors to render their decision.

Dalton (2013) summarises the major approaches to understanding how citizens decide which political party to support. Social group attachments as well as social characteristics such as class and religion are the first approach to understanding a voter's electoral choice. In conjunction with these social characteristics, Antunes (2010:147) argues that socio-economic status, as well as area of residence are also able to explain electoral choices. Furthermore, while social class and religion are widely recognised as strong influencers in guiding a voter's electoral choice, other social factors such as rural and urban locality, age and gender in particular are also of increasing importance (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2009b: 32; Dalton, 2013: 167,174).

Dalton (2013: 156) goes on to argues that these social group attachments and social characteristics "indirectly reflect attitudinal differences between groups of voters and their perceptions of which party best represents their policy position". Dalton (2013: 156) also further mentions that a voter's social position offers certain political cues which affects their values and beliefs and reflects the political cues which a voter is exposed to. In this way the

political attitudes which an individual gives off, is as such a reflection of the particular interests of the group they belong to (Miller, 1992: 435).

Miller (1992:435), Visser (1996: 25), as well as Schulz-Herzenberg (2014b: 840) argue that a person's social group also orientates them in political issues, and how they receive and interpret political information. A person's social group or network can also guide one's political attitudes and voting choice (Miller, 1992: 432; Visser, 1996: 33; Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007: 159; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009b: 38-39). As ones voting behaviour is guided or as such influenced by the social network that you form part of, Visser (1996:25) discusses that if a voter attempts to casts a vote for particular party outside of what is reinforced within this network, he or she will receive 'punishment' and as such will go on to change their voting choice to what is being reinforced. Schulz- Herzenberg (2009b: 38-39) goes on further to mention that not only does one's social network influence your party choice, but it also has the ability to alter a voter's perception with regards to party images.

Social groups, or one's social context does not always include or feature individuals who are like minded, and therefore we might socialize with individuals who may hold different views and attitudes than we do. These types of homogeneous and heterogeneous social contexts are further discussed by Schulz- Herzenberg (2014b: 840-841). Homogeneous contexts will encourage stronger partisan loyalties, and as such individuals will not tend to defer from the vote choice, while heterogeneous contexts on the other hand are more politically diverse and also tend to be less predictable.

In addition to the sociological approach, psychological factors such as attitudes and values also have an influence on voting. This model, known as the socio-psychological model, is particularly useful in organizing factors which can influence one's voting choice (Dalton, 2013: 183-184). This model demonstrates how broad social forces become focused and specific, ultimately leading to a particular voting choice. These social and psychological factors are best demonstrated in the funnel of causality (see Figure 4.4).

The funnel of causality demonstrates how particular factors, such as our social environment, family, friends and acquaintances influence our thinking with regards to elections and voting, ultimately becoming socialised in the process (Antunes, 2010: 155; Dalton, 2013: 183). This type of socialisation often results in partisan attachments. Antunes (2010:155) also discusses

this particular model, but further notes that as social factors play a role in this approach, the attention in this funnel is ultimately placed on the relationship of partisanship.

Figure 4.4: Funnel of causality
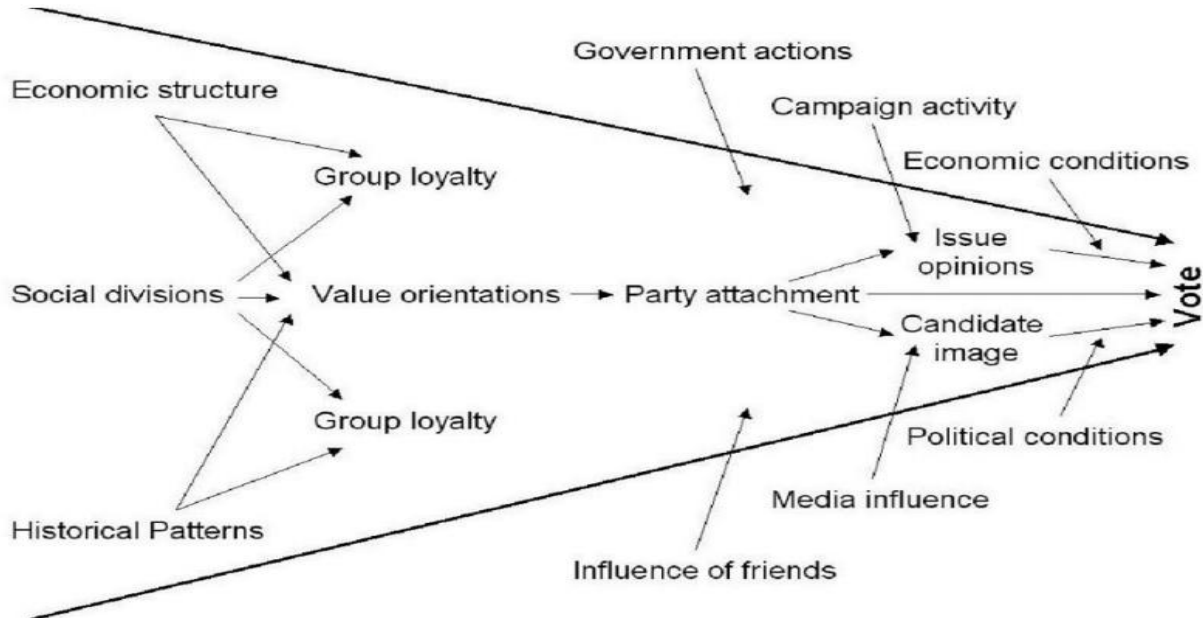
Source: Dalton (2013: 182)

While the sociopsychological model focuses on specific factors that can determine a citizen's voting choice, partisan loyalty is an additional approach to voting behaviour. Partisan loyalties can also influence the political beliefs and behaviours of a citizen. Schoeman and Puttergill (2007:155) highlight this concept of party loyalty with regards to the ANC in South Africa. These authors note that party identification continues to remain as a strong factor for voter behaviour, as is evidenced with the continued strong support for the liberation movements in South Africa. Party loyalty and the way one identifies with a particular party can also influence how voters make the decision to vote. This in particular could also to some extent explain the continued support for the ANC (Schoeman & Puttergill, 2007: 158).

Dalton (2013: 184) notes that at the start of each electoral season many voters have their partisan predispositions already decided upon. Partisanship may stimulate one's participation in electoral campaigns in support of their political party, as well as casting a vote for the political party one identifies with (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019c: 63); however, party identification does not automatically translate into assured votes (Antunes, 2010: 155).

In South Africa however, partisanship continues to guide electoral decisions, and may also be affected by party images (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2009b: 32,36).

Partisanship and party attachments are predominantly the result of socialisation (Antunes, 2010:154-155). Party identification is primarily transmitted from parents to their children and thus party loyalty is formed from a young age (Miller, 1992: 436; Visser, 1996: 26; Dalton, 2013: 185). Sharlamanov and Jovanoski (2014:17) go on further to mention that "families usually show similarities in voting". This process occurs either through explicit reinforcement, or by subconscious internationalisation of these values and, as a result, many children adopt the same partisan preferences as their parents (Miller, 1992: 436; Visser, 1996: 26; Dalton, 2013: 185; Sharlamanov & Jovanoski, 2014: 17).

Visser (1996: 26) goes on further to highlight the strictness of this socialisation that is reinforced, largely by one's parents. This author goes on to mention that if a particular party preference is presented which equals that of one's parents this as such will be reinforced, but if a preference is presented that contradicts the choice of one's parents, this choice will be discouraged from further reinforcement.

Dalton (2013: 188) also argues that partisanship is "a central element in an individual's belief system and a basis of political identity…These orientations are formed early in life and may condition later life learning". Sites of education, such as schools and universities, places of religious worship, as well as the workplace are thus also agents of political socialisation.

Once an individual establishes a tie to a particular political party, their electoral experience often follows these predispositions (Miller, 1992: 436). Dalton (2013: 187-188) notes that not only do these party ties become stronger with age, but once they have been formed, they are not easily altered. Miller (1992: 436) and Schulz-Herzenberg (2019c: 64) disagree with this statement though. They note that while partisanship can be stable, it may eventually erode and thus change over time largely due to negativity towards the preferred party.

While party identification can affect an individual's voting choices, partisanship on the other hand means that as a voter one has a particular predisposition to support their preferred party (Miller, 1992: 436; Dalton, 2013: 191; Sharlamanov & Jovanoski, 2014: 19). Partisanship, as an approach to voting behaviour, has carried much weight amongst voters over the year,

however, an increasing number of nations are now beginning to present with a pattern of partisan dealignment.

Although party identification (PID) is recognised as a way to understand a voter's decision at election time, partisan loyalties have begun to show evidence of decline. Dalton (2013: 194) argues that a significant proportion of citizens are no longer developing party attachments and are increasingly more critical of political parties. Dalton (2013: 194-196) provides several explanations for why partisan dealignment is occurring. First, poor performance on the part of political parties. Citizens have not only become more sceptical of political parties but their expectations with regards to political parties and electoral politics have changed. When political parties are unable to meet the needs and expectations of the electorate, a process of disenchantment with these political parties ensues. Second, the role that parties are playing as political institutions is contributing to the decline. This is also known as the functionalist explanation for dealignment. The third cause of dealignment is the cognitive mobilization thesis. This explanation cites the growing sophistication of citizens, who no longer need to rely on party identification or social cues in order to make political decisions. The last cause of partisan dealignment is changes in mass media. Citizens no longer need to rely on campaign rallies or even party canvassers to learn about elections. Potential voters need only switch on the radio or television or read the newspaper for alternative sources of campaign information. The rise in the use of the internet and social media are further factors contributing to the mass of information readily available to voters.

Schulz- Herzenberg (2019c: 63-64) also discusses this concept of dealignment and notes in particular that as fewer citizens are identifying with a political party this as such will eventually begin to cause a decline in voter turnout. Dalton (2013: 196-197) further suggests that partisanship dealignment will also change how citizens reach their voting choices. As party ties weaken, and in particular partisan- centred voting (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2019c: 63), party attachments will also decline; this ushers in the idea of issue voting. This approach allows voters to "evaluate the government and the opposition and then thoughtfully cast a ballot for their preferred parties" (Dalton, 2013:208). Citizens are not simply voting for a political party based on a sense of attachment or social characteristics but are basing their decision on factors such as policy issues, past performance, as well as an evaluation of the candidates themselves; in other words, rational choice theory (Dalton, 2013: 210-211).

Figure 4.5: Types of Issues

Timeframe	Type of issue		
	Position	*Performance*	*Attribute*
Retrospective	Policy appraisal	Performance evaluation	Attribute voting
Prospective	Policy mandate	Anticipatory judgement	

 Source: Dalton (2013: 210)

Dalton (2013:210) developed a typology of issues that may affect voting choices (see Figure 4.5). According to the typology, issue voting varies in terms of a time frame and the type of issue. In terms of time frame, voters evaluate political actors either *retrospectively* based on their past performance, or *prospectively*, basing their expectations on future performance (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2009: 34; Dalton, 2013: 211-212). In terms of type of issue, issue voting involves assessing a party's position on particular policies, either by policy appraisal or by policy mandate. In addition, a party's performance is also evaluated to determine whether or not the political actor/s have been doing a good job. Anticipatory judgement, on the other hand, involves an assessment of what the future performance of government will be. The final type of issue is attribute voting. This type of issue voting sees voters judge political candidates largely on their personal characteristics. Although this type of voting does not occur within a specific time frame, it remains as a legitimate factor in choosing a particular candidate.

Many different individual factors are taken into consideration or voters can rely on a mixture of social characteristics, partisanship, voting issues, candidate images, as well as performance evaluations to make their voting choice and as such go out and cast their ballot.

4.3.2 Explanations for Voting Behaviour in South Africa

As demonstrated in the earlier sections on voter registration and voter turnout, South Africa has been experiencing a continuing decline in electoral participation. While at first glance voter registration appears to be increasing, and as such more South Africans are going out to register, when this is considered looking at the VAP and those eligible to vote, this number is in fact decreasing. Not only are fewer eligible South Africans registered to vote, but South Africans for the most part are also choosing not to formally participate or vote.

There are several reasons for the abstention or withdrawal of South Africans from electoral politics. These arrange from discontent towards and lack of trust in government and its officials, to lack of service delivery, as well as plaguing socio-economic issues relating unemployment and poverty (EISA, 2019; Lowman, 2019; Patel & Graham, 2019; Seanego & Mogoboya, 2019; Southall, 2019). Furthermore, the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) goes on to highlight that the decline in voter turnout in South Africa also demonstrates that many citizens no longer feel that they are represented by the current electoral system (IRR, 2019).

First, Ryabchuk (2016: 44) argues that citizens are dissatisfied with elections themselves and have made a "conscious decision not to participate". South Africans are not only dissatisfied with elections in particular but are also largely unhappy with the state of democracy itself (Lekalake, 2016:1; Tamir & Budiman, 2019:1). Lekalake (2016:1) further discusses that citizens are also dissatisfied with the implementation of our democratic system, largely due to a lack of provision of services. Moreover, this has also led to the decline of confidence in the country's civic institutions (Tamir & Budiman, 2019:1). Citizen dissatisfaction, and not wanting to vote can also be attributed to dissatisfaction with the current leadership and their performance (Lekalake, 2015:1), and has subsequently led to the support for democracy to decline (Lekalake, 2016:2-3).

Additionally, non-voters also indicate distrust in the government and disinterest in political parties as reasons not to vote (Ryabchuk, 2016: 40). In addition, these non-voters do not believe that their vote would make a difference. According to Ryabchuk (2016: 40), these explanations are evidence of the discontent toward and distrust in government. These findings are supported by the work of Lowman (2019), Patel and Graham (2019), Seanego and Mogoboya (2019), as well as Southall (2019) who conclude that government performance, corruption and corrupt officials, as well as a political system which is believed to be unresponsive to its citizens as the catalysts for rising discontent and distrust in the government and political leaders. Seanego and Mogoboya (2019: 309-310) add that citizens tend to stay away from the polls as many political representatives do not fulfil their promises to citizens. These same representatives will show up to canvass voters to vote for their political party during election time but do not follow through with taking care of these communities' post-election (Seanego & Mogoboya, 2019: 310). In addition, Patel and Graham (2019:2) note that young adults in South Africa identified a deep cynicism about formal political processes, distrust of leaders, and a belief that voting in elections would not

bring about any change to their lives. The sense of disillusionment is very much evident in the voter registration and turnout of this particular age cohort.

Second, poor service delivery is another reason for the lack of electoral participation. EISA (2019:25) notes that the increased service delivery protests, in particular leading up to elections have been linked to the sharp decrease in electoral participation, largely of voter turnout. This is further mentioned by Seanego and Mogoboya (2019:310). These authors highlight that the lack of service delivery, as well as poor infrastructure contributes to the low voter turnout in South Africa. This frustration with regards to limited or non-existent infrastructure and poor services may bear a considerable effect on electoral outcomes, and as such "some people may choose not to vote as a means to express their dissatisfaction" (Ryabchuk, 2016:51). Citizens not voting is also an attempt to hold government accountable for their failure, as well as their inability to deliver basic services to those who need it. This feeds further into the lack of faith that citizens describe with those in power, as basic rights and necessities are not being provided.

Third, the dire socio-economic challenges faced by many South Africans negatively affects electoral participation. In particular, the lack of jobs and high levels of unemployment are amongst the most commonly cited reasons for why South Africans choose not to vote, especially amongst the youth (Lowman, 2019; Schulz- Herzenberg, 2019d; Patel & Graham, 2019). As highlighted by Schulz- Herzenberg (2019d: 374), tnot voting has also been regarded as a particular response to the failures on the part of the ANC government.

Furthermore, the youth are particularly discouraged from participating as they do not only feel that they are receiving empty promises from government, especially in terms of employment, but as a particular group they also feel that they are alienated from the democratic system itself. In addition, they also feel as if they are not being catered for. The youth largely hold the feeling that their needs as young South African's are not being met, and the political system as such is unresponsive to their needs (Lowman, 2019; Patel & Graham, 2019; Seanego & Mogoboya, 2019).

4.3.3 Explanations for Voter Turnout in South Africa

As evidenced in section 4.2.2, voter turnout for the most part is continuing to steadily decline. It is therefore important to not only track this occurrence but identify the possible reasons as to why voter turnout continues to present with a decline. This section will provide a brief overview of the approaches to voter turnout, focusing largely on voter turnout in South Africa and the possible explanations for the various trends being exhibited in the country.

Voter turnout can be regarded as the total number of registered voters who turn up on an election day, and cast their vote (Kersting, 2009: 128). In South Africa, it has become quite noticeable that the number of citizens who decide to cast their vote in subsequent elections are continuing to decline; from 89.3% in 1999, to 66.05% in 2019 (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019). Voter turnout in the most recent national election reached its lowest point since democratisation. While various explanations have been put forward to account for this continued decline in participation, what exactly are the issues that are causing some citizens to vote, while others decide to abstain?

Harder and Krosnick (2008) developed a framework to understand turnout behaviour, as well as the reasons thereof. The framework includes five distinct factors which may either encourage both voter turnout, as well as voter registration or discourage it altogether. These factors include (1) registration, (2) demographic factors, such as education, income, occupation, age, gender, residency, and race, (3) social and psychological factors, (4) characteristics of a particular election, and (5) the effects of canvassing, polling and election outcome projects.

Harder & Krosnick (2008: 541) argue that a citizen's decision to place a vote remains a function of their motivation to go out and vote, as well as the difficultly involved in completing this particular task. Furthermore, the decision to place a vote is also looked at through the lens of whether the costs of voting will in the end outweigh the benefits involved. Other factors which are noted as influencing citizens are also mentioned, especially demographic factors such as age and race, an individual's social setting, as well as a voters psychological disposition, all of which have been acknowledged as influencing voter turnout (Harder & Krosnick, 2008: 526).

Schulz-Herzenberg (2019a: 141) considers the factors of age as well as the influence of one's social networks and argues that the "age of an individual is cited as a key determinant for voter turnout", which is continuously being demonstrated in South Africa. The younger population in particular is not as embedded in established social networks which mobilise people to go out and vote as older groups do (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a: 141). In this way, voter turnout can be acknowledged as more predictable amongst older age groups than the younger population (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019d: 383). In addition, an individual's social setting or social network that they are embedded in also affects turnout behaviour, mainly because we are not only affected but influenced by the behaviours and cues of those around us. The youth have not yet established strong networks which could affect their motivation to participate and vote (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019a; Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019d). This not only demonstrates the strong relationship that age has on the effects of voting behaviour, but the correlation between age with an individual's social network as well.

Recognising that age continues to be a strong determinant in the voting behaviour of citizens, and largely with that of turnout, Schulz-Herzenberg (2019d) discusses both global and local perspectives in attempting to understand this continued decline in voter turnout. Younger age groups or the youth are turning out to vote in lower numbers than older age groups. Wattenberg (2016) cited by Schulz-Herzenberg (2019d: 371), argues that changes in both communication technology and media consumption may be an explanation for why this is taking place. This is largely due to the fact that younger adults seem to be disinterested and distanced from political affairs, as their exposure to political news and affairs compared to previous generations have changed.

Schulz-Herzenberg (2019d: 372) also acknowledges the role of social networks, and notes that younger people are less embedded in established social networks, a factor which is mentioned by both Harder and Krosnick (2008), as well as by Schulz- Herzenberg (2019a). These types of networks tend to "encourage conformity in partisan behaviour and induces individuals to participate at elections" (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019d: 372), and while younger voters have not fully established these types of networks this may affect voting behaviour. Social networks are also associated with the concept of partisanship, which again is found to be weaker amongst younger age groups. Where some older voters are noted as having an attachment to a political party, or party tie guiding their electoral behaviour, younger voters

have been classified as a group with weaker party ties and attachments resulting in this group not turning out to vote (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2019d: 372- 373).

Schulz-Herzenberg (2014b:840) argues that one's social context has "an especially strong influence on electoral decisions", but also goes on to discuss the concepts of homogeneity and heterogeneity within an individual's social network. Citizens who find themselves within homogenous contexts are more consistent in their political behaviour, deviating less from their previous vote choice as well as the party they choose to identify with. Those within these environments are continuously shaped by the ideas and views being reinforced with this group, and in this way, it goes as far as to reinforce existing partisan attachments as well. Voters who find themselves in heterogeneous social contexts on the other hand, are more likely to defect from a particular party identification or previous vote choice and are also noted as having weaker partisan ties than those in homogenous environments (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2014b: 856- 857). This homogenous and heterogeneous typology with regards to one's social network also influences voter behaviour, and the number of voters who decide to turn up on an election day and place their vote.

The cognitive mobilisation theory is another perspective mentioned by Schulz-Herzenberg (2019d: 373-374) in attempting to account for the variations in voter turnout, and largely amongst the younger age group. This theory recognises that as information and education becomes widely spread amongst individuals, political information in particular becomes more available, and citizens are able to reach their own political decisions without relying on other external factors. Moreover, the more well informed or more educated a citizen is the better that individual is equipped to make a particular decision on whether or not to participate, or to withdraw altogether.

Taking the local perspectives into account, Schulz-Herzenberg (2019d: 374) goes on to discuss the heightened levels of political apathy and disaffection towards politics in South Africa as a possible reason as to why voter turnout is continuing to decline. These trends are being largely exhibited by young voters as a response to not only feelings that the ANC government has continued to fail them as a particular group, but this continued decline is also due to the multiple challenges they continue to endure including that of high unemployment, poverty, as well as poor public service. Oyedemi and Mahlatji (2016), as well as Graham (2020) also highlight the various concerns noted by this particular group as to why they are

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staying away from the polls. While reasons including issues of a socio-economic nature are vast, concerns with those in power, including the low level of trust in leaders are also amongst the many reasons why youth voter turnout continues to decline.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of conventional political behaviour in South Africa, with a particular focus on voting behaviour in democratic South Africa. This chapter illustrated how South Africans are participating in actions of conventional behaviour, largely of an electoral nature. And while the majority of South Africans do participate in both voter registration and voter turnout, how actively or consistently they participate is worrisome. Although voter registration trends at first glance present with an increase, the VAP and the proportion of those eligible to vote are in decline. The percentage of citizens who are in fact eligible to register, and as such cast their vote are not turning out to participate. These declining trends are also evident when looking at the numbers of voter turnout. Voter turnout in South Africa has continued to present with a decline and recorded its lowest level since democratisation in 2019.

This chapter also explored some of the possible motivations for voting behaviour in South Africa. An increasing number of South Africans are abstaining or have withdrawn from electoral politics for a range of reasons, including but not limited to, the lack of service delivery, the lack of trust in government and its officials, as well as plaguing socio-economic issues such as unemployment and poverty. As a result, some citizens could be more likely to engage in alternative methods of political participation, which fall outside of electoral politics.

The following chapter will focus on some of these alternative methods or unconventional political behaviour in South Africa. The chapter will expand an historical overview of protest behaviour and provide a detailed explanation of the different types of protests being employed by South Africans, and in so doing attempt to explain the rise of protest behaviour in South Africa.

Chapter 5: Unconventional Political Participation in South Africa

5.1 Introduction

Unconventional political participation, unlike that of conventional participation, includes political actions which fall outside of the more traditional ways of participating in the political process. This type of participation is not only less traditional but "aims to influence politics through non-institutionalized means" (Stockemer, 2014:202). Where conventional participation in the political process may influence government and those in power, unconventional political participation largely aims to voice the discontent and grievances outside of these set means. Unconventional political behaviour is often at odds with established cultural and social norms, and in thus regarded as more aggressive and assertive than conventional participation and may even result in breaking the law (Munroe, 2012; Imbrasaité, 2010; Lamprianou 2013; Pacheo & Owen, 2015). Methods of unconventional participation include, but are not limited to, political demonstrations, boycotting, civil disobedience, public debates, strike action, political violence, and for the most part that of protesting (Imbrasaité, 2010; Ruedin, 2011; Chatora, 2012; Zani & Barrett, 2012; Grace & Danfulani, 2015; Fayomi & Adebayo, 2018).

In terms of unconventional political behaviour, protests, demonstrations, and strike action are the most commonly utilised methods, especially in South Africa. Protests are not a new phenomenon in South Africa as they "fit into a historical pattern of popular mobilisation to express discontent with the performance of government" (The European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2016:2). Unconventional political behaviour in South Africa stems largely from the inequalities borne under the apartheid system, the legacy of which continues to permeate throughout society today (Arnould, Tor & Vervaeke, 2016).

South Africa has a long history with protest politics, which were used as a vehicle for the fight against the apartheid regime (Nleya *et al*, 2011: 14). These protests were used as a form of resistance against the apartheid regime, and a means to make the country ungovernable (Longman, 2018). Countless mass strikes and demonstrations were undertaken, not only by the political movements of the ANC and the PAC, but by working class South Africans opposed to the NP government. For example, women from all different walks of life came

together to protest against the repressive pass laws in 1956, students with no history of disobedience protested against Bantu education in 1976, while many black South Africans continually protested against discriminatory laws (Clark & Worger, 2011; Zukas, 2012; Longman, 2018). Fast forward to the democratic dispensation and it is clear that protests almost "uninterruptedly transcended the political transition, and while protests before 1994 were usually directed against the apartheid regime, they now challenge the ANC government's performance" (Mottiar & Bond, 2009 cited by Schuld, 2013a: 67). Not only are unconventional methods being utilised more frequently, but these actions are increasing used as a bargaining tool and to incite a response from government and authorities (Mchunu & Theron, 2013: 109).

This chapter will present a historical overview of protest behaviour in South Africa to illustrate how the anti-apartheid movement shaped unconventional political behaviour which is both evident and on the rise in South Africa today. A detailed review of various forms of protest in South Africa, namely political protests, service delivery protests, and youth protests will follow. The chapter will conclude with an investigation into the possible explanations for protest behaviour in South Africa.

5.2 Protest Behaviour in South Africa

Protest behaviour in South Africa is not a new phenomenon. South Africans engage in various forms of protest action with increasing frequency. Over the past decade and a half, persistent community and service delivery protests have plagued many areas of South Africa, while the more recent country-wide youth protests continued to make news headlines. It is thus evident that South Africa resort to such measures when formal avenues have failed (Nleya *et al.*, 2011: 14; Arnould, Tor & Vervaeke, 2016: 1-2).

Karreth (2018: 458) argues that protest action "may be a kind of learned behaviour that has been culturally reproduced over time". When citizens engage in unconventional political actions such as protest, they are actually tapping into this rich protest culture, which dates back to the struggles of exploitation and oppression under the apartheid regime (Duncan, 2016: 1). Stemming from the inequalities produced during apartheid rule, and the inability for many citizens to voice their discontent, a protest culture in South Africa was created.

During the apartheid era, South Africans who were classified as "non-white" were not afforded the same political freedoms, individual rights, and economic opportunities as those who were classified as white (Clark & Worger, 2011: 48-49). The NP, who institutionalised the apartheid regime, put into place a system of segregation through various laws which promoted this system of dominance and inequality (Thompson, 2001: 190). The well-being of white citizens was prioritised by the NP governments, at the expense of "non-white" South Africans, and this resulted in large scale frustration, which slowly mobilized "non-white" South Africans against the NP government (Thompson, 2001; Managa, 2012).

Resistance against the NP government and apartheid regime manifested in many nation-wide protests. This resistance included various forms of civil disobedience, such as boycotting, strikes, protest action, and toyi-toyi (Thompson, 2001: 228-229; Bruce, 2014a: 2). Some of the most prominent examples is the Defiance Campaign of 1952, the Women's March in 1956, the Sharpeville riots in 1960, and the Soweto Uprising in 1976.

The Defiance Campaign of 1952 was one of the largest civil disobedience campaigns in South Africa at that point (Longman, 2018: para. 28). This movement intended to challenge, repeal and defy the many unjust apartheid laws. The aim of this campaign was to flood the prison system and in doing so render law enforcement by the NP government impossible (Longman, 2018: para. 29). The actions which were employed to do so included demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, and various other forms of civil disobedience (Clark & Worger, 2011; Zukas, 2012; Longman, 2018).

Where the Defiance Campaign was mainly a male-dominated resistance movement, the Women's March of 1956 brought women of all different races together. The protest was largely led and organised by the newly formed FEDSAW and the ANC Women's League. On the 9th of August 1956, 20 000 women peacefully demonstrated against the repressive pass laws which would soon be imposed on them, restricting their movement (Clark & Worger, 2011: 61). The aim of the Women's March was to hand over petitions regarding the pass laws to then Prime Minister Johannes Strijdom; however, after standing in silence for about half an hour outside the Union Buildings in Pretoria, they began to sing and chant before leaving the petition at his door (Clark & Worger, 2011; Longman, 2018).

As with the Women's March, the Sharpeville riots of 1960 centred on the issue of passes, and the repressive pass laws enacted by the NP government. This peaceful protest led by the PAC was an attempt to incite the government to arrest those protestors found without a pass. About 5 000 protestors gathered peacefully in the township of Sharpeville in Vereeniging outside the police station when police officials suddenly opened fire (Clark & Worger, 2011: 62). A total of 69 people were killed, and another 186 were wounded in the crossfire (Clark & Worger, 2011: 62). The Sharpeville riots have since become known as the Sharpeville Massacre, owing to the brutally of the way individuals were murdered during these protests. Most protestors ended up being shot in the back as they attempted to flee from police (Clark & Worger, 2011: 62; Zukas, 2012: 2; Longman, 2018: para. 41).

The Soweto Uprising of 1976 is probably the most notorious protest action during the apartheid era due to the widespread international media coverage that ensued; in particular the infamous image of the death of Hector Pieterson which has since then come to immortalise the Soweto Uprising (The Guardian, 2016).

The Bantu Education Policy imposed on black South African students forced learners to attend classes that were taught in Afrikaans (Longman, 2018: para. 18). Drawing from the work by activist Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement, these students rebelled against this policy. On the 16th of June 1976 students staged a peaceful march through the neighbourhoods of Soweto (Thompson, 2001: 212). The demonstrators were met by retaliation from police, which disrupted into full blown violence and police firing on these students. The students fought back by throwing stones and bottles at police, and later set fire to a number of government buildings. By June 17th almost 30 protestors had been killed, and hundreds of others were injured (Kurtz, 2009; Longman, 2018).

In addition to these examples of civil disobedience and protest action, the NP government was met with more aggressive military type violence and tactics from the military wings of the formal resistance political movements, Umkhonto we Sizwe (attached to the ANC) and Poqo (attached to the PAC) (Thompson, 2001: 211). The aim of these organisations was to overthrow the NP government by any means necessary. To a less extent, resistance against apartheid policies also came from some white South African churches, academics and professionals, who opposed the system of apartheid (Thompson, 2001: 205-206).

The sustained protest action and increased violence placed tremendous pressure on the NP government and eventually became the catalyst for the transition from an apartheid led regime into a democratic state (Thompson, 2001; Schuld, 2013a; Rankoana, 2016). This large-scale resistance against the system of apartheid also laid the foundation for a political culture that embraces protests that we continue to experience in democratic South Africa.

Since democratisation, community-based protests, service delivery protests, political protests, and even student protests have been prevalent. These protests stem from grievances regarding housing, water, sanitation and electricity, poor public service delivery, youth unemployment, inequality, as well as dissatisfaction with government performance (Nleya, 2011; Nyar &Wray, 2012; Alexander, Runciman & Ngwane, 2013; Botes, 2018; Manyaka, 2018). One of the most prominent reasons why South African citizens end up resorting to protest behaviour is that of frustration (Managa, 2012; Newham, 2012; Arnould, Tor & Vervaeke, 2016; Aucoin & Cilliers, 2016b; Botes, 2018). Managa (2012) highlights that South Africans experience frustration towards the undelivered promises of those in positions of power. When government does not deliver on these promises, this as such breeds panic in these communities and further leads to protest action (Managa, 2012: 2). Most citizens attempt to voice their grievances through non-violent means; however, if these grievances are not addressed then they resort to violence (Bruce, 2013: 19). As such, citizens use protest as a tool to voice their grievances, much the same as during the apartheid era (Carrim, 2010; Dassah, 2012; Karreth, 2018).

The next section will review unconventional political behaviour in democratic South Africa and focus on three types of protest action, namely political, service delivery, and youth and internet activism.

5.2.1 Political Protests

While the transition into a democracy was not without violence, South Africans have enjoyed free and fair elections since 1994 that have widely been regarded as peaceful (Aucoin & Cilliers, 2016b). According to the Electoral Commission of South Africa and independent international observers, elections in South Africa take place without any major issues; however, the pre- and post-election period are not without incidents of political violence, which is most prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal.

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, "election violence has been synonymous with almost every election" in KwaZulu-Natal (Yusuf & Mutereko, 2019:179). Electoral violence in KwaZulu- Natal takes on many forms as noted by Schuld (2013b:111-112). These include attacks on party supporters, disruption of rallies, even the prevention of electioneering and the intimidation of party supporters. Piper (2004:22) further mentions that much of this violence has also consisted of public confrontations between ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporters, largely over election related events, and in particular an ANC rally near the town of Tongaat.

This type of violence and conflict erupting at political rallies in the province are also further discussed by Mottiar (2004a:24). An incident once again between ANC and IFP supporters culminated in the throwing of stones and shooting of bystanders in a Wembezi township. In addition to these incidents of electoral violence Yusuf and Mutereko (2019: 183), also mention an occurrence of violence that took place in the town of Richmond, which evolved into a number of political killings, all of which were members of the ANC.

This ongoing political and electoral violence is largely a result of the political tensions that exist between the ANC and the IFP. The political tensions can be attributed to the ideological and philosophical differences between the political parties, the lack of the lack of tolerance between the parties, as well as the ongoing inter-party violence (Bruce, 2009; Davids & Hurrell, 2019; Yusuf & Mutereko, 2019). The political rivalry between the ANC and the IFP is thought to date back to the apartheid era, however it is not only a political rivalry that exists between these parties but an ethnic one as well, largely Xhosa versus isiZulu. The province of KwaZulu- Natal, and formally governed by the IFP (until 2009) had been a traditional Zulu homeland (Mottiar, 2004b: 48; Schuld, 2013b: 107,109). While the ANC on the other hand had traditionally been associated with isiXhosa. Schuld (2013b:109) further mentions that the differences in ideologies between the ANC and the IFP which may have also added to the already brewing tension between these parties.

One of the reasons why KwaZulu- Natal may be rife with violence is a result of the militarisation of the province by the former apartheid government (Bruce, 2013: 13). The IFP was also said to be affiliated with the homeland politics which at the time played a part in the apartheid structure, further adding to the idea of segregation brought upon by the NP government. The IFP's affiliation also further resulted in a power struggle with the ANC and

led to increasing mobilization of violence in the province (Höglund & Jarstad, 2011: 36). The tension between the ANC and the IFP worsened during the period of negotiation in the 1990s as the NP government negotiated with the ANC and not IFP, which sparked a political rivalry that has, on many occasions, led to violent conflict between the two parties and their supporters (Höglund & Jarstad, 2011: 36; Schuld, 2013b: 109). In the first decade of democracy, violent political conflict between the two parties subsided as the IFP went on to govern the province. However, the political rivalry between the two parties was once again ignited in the wake of the Polokwane Conference in December of 2008 when Jacob Zuma (a Zulu) was elected leader of the ANC and the subsequent victory of the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal in the 2009 election (Bruce, 2009; Höglund & Jarstad, 2011; Evans, 2020).

In addition to electoral violence, another worrying trend taking place in KwaZulu-Natal is politically motivated killings (Bruce, 2009; Bruce, 2014b; de Haas, 2016; Yusuf & Mutereko, 2019). More than 90% of these political killings that have occurred in South Africa, have taken place in KwaZulu- Natal, while around 450 political killings have been committed in KwaZulu Natal since 1994 (Bruce, 2014b: 3). Bruce (2014b) and Yusuf and Mutereko (2019) attribute many of these killings to the launch of a new political party, the National Freedom Party (NFP) which had been a breakaway party of the IFP and further fuelled longstanding political rivalries especially with the ANC. These political attacks and killings have also been motivated by greed, factionalism, competition over tenders, and competition for political office (Bruce, 2009; Yusuf & Mutereko, 2019, Bruce, 2014b). While more recent political killings emanate from local government conflicts and rivalries, the value of political office and the competition for these positions seem to be a strong driver of political violence (Bruce, 2013). The values and status that are attached to many of these local government positions are often the reason why these political killings take place and why local officials, such as municipal councillors, ward councillors, political party officials are the primary targets. (Bruce, 2013; Phakathi, 2019; Evans, 2020). While these have become a political feature in the province, and can be described as unconventional actions, these cannot be classified as a form of political behaviour.

Apart from the range of political protests, as discussed above and the political killings which have become synonymous with the province of KwaZulu-Natal, other political protests are also frequent and take place in various communities around the country. From taxi (Savides, 2017; Nxumalo, Magubane & Rall, 2019) and mining related protests (James, 2018), to

protests over land disputes (Zwane, 2017), and even strike action ensuing due to wage disagreements (Dlamini, 2018; Manyane, 2019); the range of political protests that take place in South Africa is incredibly vast.

Savides (2017) and Nxumalo, Magubane and Rall (2019) make further mention of these taxi related protests. Protesting with regards to community safety in Richards Bay, as well as wider issues of grievances with law enforcement in Tshwane. These wider issues are also represented in the protests over wage disputes. Dlamini (2018) also mentions strike action with regards to disagreements over minimum wage, while Manyane (2019) highlights protest action occurring over non-payment of wages by local municipalities in Pretoria.
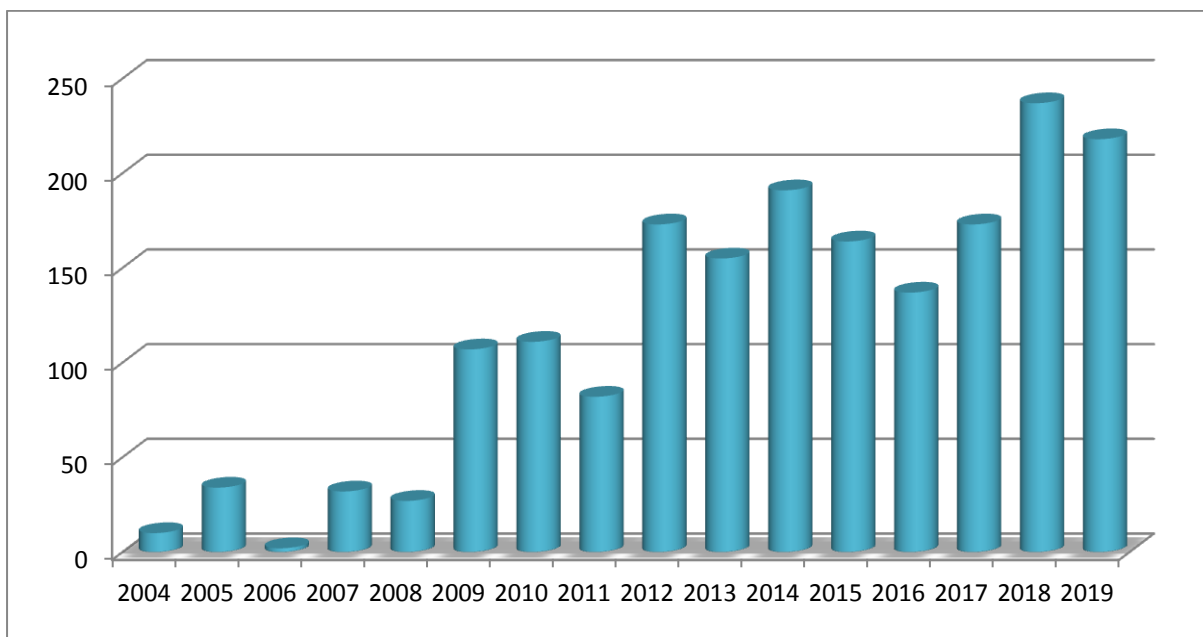
5.2.2 Service Delivery Protests

Service delivery protests are defined as protests that are "galvanised by inadequate local services or tardy service delivery, the responsibility for which lies with a municipality" (Allan & Heese, 2011:2). These service delivery protests refer to community action where residents "decide to voice their dissatisfaction or grievances with the manner and scale of which public services are rendered to them (Shaidi, 2013:16). In South Africa, these grievances often manifest themselves in the form of burning tyres, barricading and blocking roads, looting of shops, stoning of police officers and their vehicles, even the destruction of public buildings such as libraries (Duncan, 2016; Govender, 2016; Hartley, 2016; Mamokhere, 2019).

Not only are service delivery protests common in South Africa, but they are often misinterpreted and oversimplified. Manyaka (2018: 53) argues that service delivery can indeed be one of the motivators of community protests but notes that it is often not the only contributing factor for why these protests occur. Nyar and Wray (2012: 23) argue that service delivery protests in South Africa are diverse and multi-faceted. The protests include different types of people, who are motivated by a range of different issues. The most common types of service delivery protests relate to a range of municipal issues such as the lack of delivery of adequate housing, water and sanitation, electricity, health services, infrastructure, and security, as well as nepotism, corruption, fraud, maladministration, as well as the non-responsiveness of councillors and administrators (Nyar & Wray, 2012: 26; Mamokhere, 2019: 374). Given the breadth of service delivery protests, it is easy to understand why the vast majority of protests are classified as such; however, Botes (2018: 243-244) argues that in

ascribing the root causes of each protest that occurs to the issue of service delivery, one risks undermining the importance of the multiple other grievances being experienced by these protestors. While the classification of protests in South Africa may not all necessarily being correct, lack of services and the subsequent dissatisfaction and discontent with government to deliver basic services to its constituents is a defining feature of the wave of protest action in South Africa (Nyar & Wray, 2012; Khambule, Nomdo & Siswana, 2019).

Figure 5.1: Number of Service Delivery Protests, 2004-2019

Source: MunicpalIQ, 2020

Figure 5.1 illustrates the number of service delivery protests in South Africa from 2004 to 2019. The annual number of service delivery protests was low (peaking at 34 in 2005) and stable between 2004 and 2008. Since 2009, there have been at least 100 service delivery protests per annum, with the exception of 2011. The number of protest incidents more than tripled from 27 in 2008 to 107 in 2009, while the annual average number of protests between 2012 and 2017 was 165.5. Since 2018, there have been more than 200 service delivery protests annually across the country.

The spike in protest action in 2018 may be due to the fact that it was a pre-election year, which often prompts these protests as political parties attempt to canvass citizens to vote for them (MunicipalIQ, 2020: 1). Moody (2018: 1) also attributes the high number of protests in

2018 to the change of party leadership in the ANC, from Jacob Zuma to Cyril Ramaphosa, in February that year.

South Africa has not only continued to show a significant rise in protest action, but Figure 5.2 demonstrates how service delivery protest is more prevalent in some provinces than others. According to the MunicipalIQ data, more than half of all service delivery protests take place in three of the nine provinces. Almost a quarter (24%) take place in Gauteng, followed by 21% in KwaZulu-Natal, and 19% in the Western Cape. This is unsurprising given that these provinces boast the highest numbers in terms of population and host a significant influx of migrants. In addition, Gauteng and Western Cape are economic epicentres in the north and south of the country and account for higher level of urbanisation.

Figure 5.2: Service Delivery Protests by Province, 2019
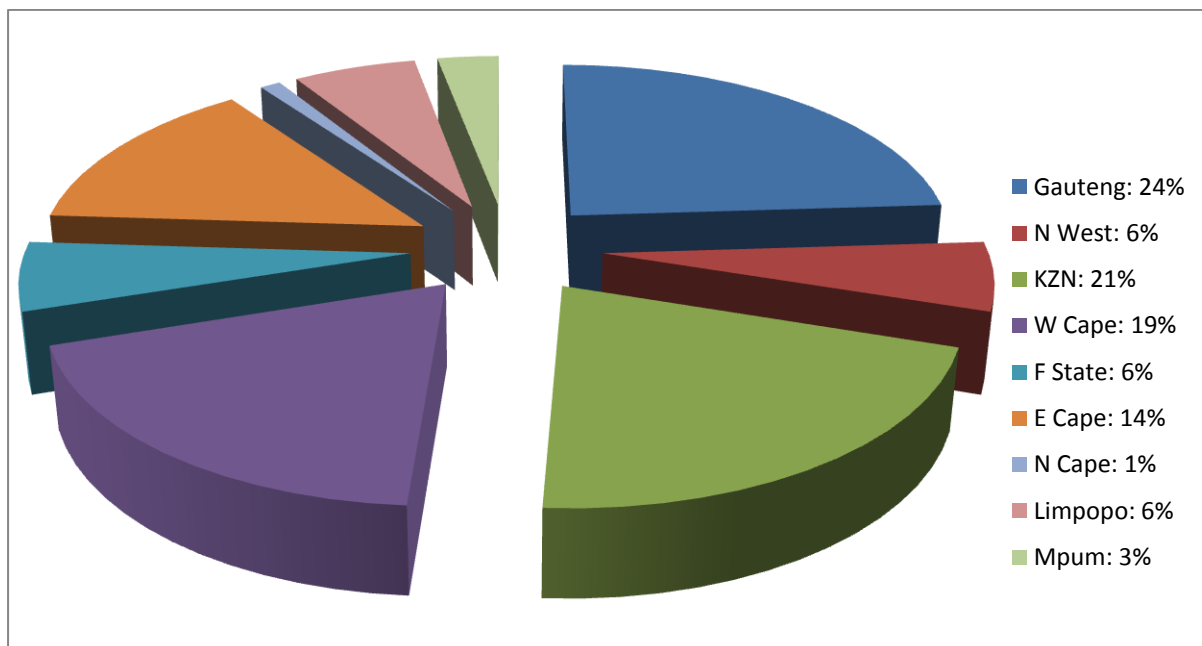
Source: Municipal IQ, 2020

While it is clear that service delivery protests have increased over time, Zuern (2013: 180) notes that by 2012, more than 75% of these protests were marked by violence. In the same period, Newham (2012: 1) also notes that the number of violent protests and protests towards municipalities increased by 289%.

From the data presented in this section it is clear that service delivery protests, as a form of unconventional political behaviour, are prevalent and increasing in popularity across South

Africa. This form of protest behaviour and collective violence should send a clear message to the ruling government that South African communities have reached a boiling point; no longer entrusting their elected officials to represent their needs but resorting to unconventional measures in order to engage with the state and have their grievances heard.

5.2.3 Youth Protests and Internet Activism

Protests led by the youth are not a new phenomenon to South Africa. Youth activism played a significant role in the dismantling to the apartheid regime. As previously discussed in this chapter, the student led uprising in Soweto in 1976, sparked nationwide protests and demonstrations. Fast forward forty years and student led protest movements captivated the country once more (Bosch, 2016a; Bosch, 2016b; Luescher, 2016). The protests, which took place at all South African universities in 2015 and 2016, were in response to students' dissatisfaction with the lack of access to and cost of higher education (Dlamini, 2019: 47).

This discontent was not, however, the initial catalyst for the protests. In March 2015, the #RhodesMustFall campaign, which was centred on the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes, started at the University of Cape Town (Dlamini, 2019: 48). The #RhodesMustFall movement evolved quickly, and students soon demanded the transformation of the university, with specific reference to its staff quota and decolonisation of the curriculum (Bosch, 2016b: 1-2). Students also called for the barriers which hindered poor students from accessing university to be re-evaluated (Naidoo, 2016: 182). While this particular youth movement began as a call to remove a statue it evolved into "a general movement against institutionalized racism and demands for the Africanization of the university curriculum, amongst others" (Bosch, 2016b: 2).

Within a few weeks of the #RhodesMustFall movement, the Open Stellenbosch campaign was launched at Stellenbosch University. Students staged protests at several Stellenbosch University campuses calling for transformation, inclusivity, and radical change (Mortlock, 2016: 1). This student movement centred on the issue of language at the University. At the time, Stellenbosch University was recognised as a bilingual university offering tuition in English and Afrikaans; however, having lectures in Afrikaans was identified as a major barrier for students who are not fluent in Afrikaans (Open Stellenbosch Collective, 2015; Raborife, 2015). The concern was that (predominantly black) students were considerably disadvantaged if they were not able to understand the language, and they faced more

limitations given their inability to engage and fully participate in campus activities (Raborife, 2015:1). While the Open Stellenbosch was a direct response to the University's language policy, it too evolved into a movement about transformation more broadly at the institution.

Within six months, #RhodesMustFall movement at UCT and the Open Stellenbosch movement at SU evolved from campus campaigns to a national #FeesMustFall movement in October 2015 (Dlamini, 2019). The #FeesMustFall movement was focused on issues of higher education more broadly, and the dissatisfaction about a proposed tuition fee hike at South African public universities more specifically (Hall, 2016; Luescher, 2016). The #FeesMustFall movement entailed large-scale protests on university campuses across the country; however, these protests led to confrontations between students and police, often descended into violence and the extensive damage to these universities by protestors which led to the closure of many major tertiary institutions across the country (Arnould, Tor & Vervaeke, 2016; Naidoo, 2016). Apart from disruptions caused as a result of the closure of universities and the suspension of the academic year, violent protests took on a life of their own as examination halls were destroyed at University of KwaZulu- Natal, vehicles were set alight at UCT, beds and furniture were burnt and destroyed at University of the Western Cape, while administrative buildings were set alight at North West University (Govender, 2016; Business Tech, 2016). The extent of this destruction not only amounted to hundreds of millions of Rands in damage, but pivotal structures such as residences, lecture halls, and even libraries were destroyed, which meant that many students were unable to complete the academic year (Sesant, 2017; Kahn, 2018).

In addition to protest action across university campuses in South Africa, student leaders led a march to Parliament in October 2015. This march was regarded as the culmination of frustration and the ignored pleas on the part of the students. The march to Parliament was marred in destruction as angry students smashed windows, stoned vehicles and buses, damaged property, burnt rubbish bins and more (Hartley, 2016). The widespread nature of these student protests and demonstrations ultimately forced former President Jacob Zuma into action when he announced that there would be no increase in university tuition fees in 2016. While students were satisfied with the announcement, they were angered that the President chose to address these issues on national television, rather than coming out and addressing students who had marched to the Union Buildings (Bateman, 2015; BBC News, 2015).

The student uprisings of 2015 are reminiscent of the student uprisings in 1976 in the way that students were able to mobilise around shared grievances. The more recent uprisings were, however, largely assisted by modern technology and modes of communication through the Internet and social media. The Internet and various forms of social media are used extensively to create connections, not only for social purposes but for political purposes as well. Miller (2016: 11, 17) argues that the more people are turning away from conventional methods of participating, they are finding new and alternative ways to have their voices heard. Not only has internet-based communication such as social media increased, especially amongst students, but the use of platforms such as blogs, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram signal "the advent of a new way of mobilising and organising student political power" (Luescher *et al.*, 2017: 231). As such, the Internet, and social media platforms act as facilitators for political participation, and political movements (Trossbach, 2019: 33).

The #RhodesMustFall, Open Stellenbosch and #FeesMustFall movements are good examples of how South African students used social media platforms to organise and mobilise. Twitter in particular was the main social networking site used during the #FeesMustFall movement. This social media platform allowed students to broadcast to a large number of people, keep followers informed of the latest protest activities, coordinate meetings, sit-ins, gatherings and marches as well as promote awareness about and for their cause (Bosch 2016a and Bosch 2016b).

While South African youth are often criticised for their lack of participating in conventional or mainstream politics, these student protests are evidence that the participation of the youth can yield powerful outcomes (Bosch, 2016a; Osunkunle, 2017; Gordon *et al.*, 2019). Although the use of social media and internet activism are increasingly being recognised as more conventional than unconventional political behaviour, governments and political parties are likely to have great success in directly engaging with this age cohort on topics and issues that are of most importance to them, which may lead to an increase in the more formal conventional methods of political participation, such as voting (Lerakong, 2016).

5.3 Explaining Protest Behaviour in South Africa

Protest action, as a form of unconventional political behaviour, is a part of the political landscape in South Africa. Although the regime change from the repressive apartheid system under the NP government to a democracy led by the ruling ANC ushered in universal political rights and individual freedoms for all South Africans, socio-economic inequality and poor governance in the form of inadequate service delivery continue to plague the country (Zuern 2013: 176-11). Bosch (2016b: 223) notes that the increase in social inequality is directly correlated with the increase in community protests, which have become the preferred way for citizens to express their disillusionment with the government. While Chapter 2, Section 17 of the Constitution protects the right of citizens to participate in protests, the level of violence and conflict that often result from this form of unconventional political behaviour is not democratic. It is therefore important to identify some of the prominent motivations for South Africans to engage in protest behaviour.

Despite political rights and civil liberties for all, many South Africans continue to feel excluded from the decision-making process. The transition to democracy brought with it the establishment of numerous participatory channels and spaces for just this purpose; however, these spaces have not led to an increase in participation by citizens (Mchunu & Theron, 2013: 107; Zuern, 2013: 176). Structures such as ward committees, community development workers (CDW's), and even Izimbizo's have been established with the goal of improving communication between local municipalities and communities, yet they do not function as they should (Silima & Auriacombe, 2013: 43; Baloyi & Lubinga, 2017: 1; cogta.gov.za, 2017; Graham, 2020: 35). These participatory channels, with the aim to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the political process, are also often regarded as ineffective, inefficient, and corrupt (Zuern, 2013: 176). Furthermore, Silima and Auriacombe (2013:44) also note that while plenty of discussion has surrounded how to increase participation, that very little has actually been done to promote public participation in practice.

As such, citizens withdraw from these mechanisms and with no alternative avenues for participation, apart from elections every five years, they engage in unconventional means such as protests. Mchunu and Theron (2013:106-107) conclude that the "invited spaces of participation do not instil a sense of trust among the general public" and that this lack of trust

means that citizens must resort to creating their own space of participation to ensure that their voices are heard. Apart from this lack of trust that citizens experience when engaging in these invited spaces as mentioned earlier, Baloyi and Lubinga (2017: 1-2) also mention the issue of the lack of feedback from government, and those in charge as a main concern when participating in these channels, namely an Imbizo.

Frustration, discontent and unhappiness undoubtedly fuel citizens to participate in the political system by unconventional means, but protest action can also be utilised as a mechanism to grab the attention of politicians and decision-makers (Chutel, 2016: 1). Regardless of the grievance, whether it be housing and electricity or issues of labour, university fees, jobs, government corruption and unresponsive local governance, protestors know that the media will be more likely to broadcast their message the more destructive their protest action (Zuern, 2013: 180). Protestors understand that peaceful forms of protest do not work because the "state simply ignores them" (Duncan, 2016: 2). If protestors grievances remain unaddressed, their actions become more radical. Once these protests are televised and make national headlines, the perception is that the government will be forced to hear the demands of its citizens and engage with these communities.

In many ways, South Africans engage in protest behaviour in an attempt to hold government accountable for their broken promises (Newham, 2012: 2; Zuern, 2013: 179). Khambule, Nomdo and Siswana (2019:54) note the failure of government to deliver on their promises has "led to rising anger from those citizens who remain trapped in poverty, unemployment and landlessness". Protests are a way to incite accountability and demand attention from government. The recent student led protests discussed previously in this chapter, as well as the toilet war saga of 2012/ 2013 are examples of this. When the demands and grievances of these groups of protestors were not being heard and their needs not being met, they resorted to unconventional means to put pressure on government and its officials (Maregele, 2013; Raubenreimer, 2013; Roodt, 2013). In the case of the student protests, millions of Rands of damage was inflicted at 18 universities across the country (Govender, 2016). In the case of the toilet war saga, demonstrators protested over the lack of proper sanitation in multiple townships and informal settlements in Cape Town (BBC News, 2013:1), this led to protestors barricading national roads, as well as the throwing of tyres, stones, and even human waste (Maregele, 2013: 1). This throwing of human waste largely targeted local government officials around Cape Town, including an incident that saw the Democratic Alliance's (DA),

former leader Helen Zille's motorcade targeted as well (BBC News, 2013; Roodt, 2013). These incidents in particular also form part of the bigger picture, namely with regards to the issue of service delivery, or the lack thereof.

These continuous demonstrations represent failure, largely with our democratic system as well as with the ruling government. Not only has the many policies incited by the ANC failed citizens, but many citizens continue to be marginalized and live in a state of inequality. Rankoana *et al.* (2016: 5) argues that the escalation in these actions occur as these problems are not being addressed, and citizens therefore feel very much ignored.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of unconventional political behaviour, with specific reference to three popular types of protest action in democratic South Africa. This chapter demonstrated that while conventional participation channels are available for South Africans to participate in, partaking in unconventional political behaviour has become more and more popular over time. The number of protests has steadily increased over the past decade or so and further evidence that protest action is embedded in the political culture of South Africans. This chapter also provided an overview of protest action as a particular form of unconventional political behaviour and explored the proliferation of service delivery protests (as the most prevalent form of protest), political protests, as well as youth protests. While each of these protests have different motivations, they are all driven by the discontent and dissatisfaction of various groups of people. To conclude, the possible motivations for protest behaviour were explored. This chapter demonstrated that South Africans continue to employ methods of an unconventional nature, as this is largely viewed as the most immediate way for citizens to voice their grievances and force a response from government. This type of behaviour is also an attempt to hold government accountable to its citizens, mainly with regards to delivery of services or lack thereof.

The final chapter of this study will provide a summary of the main findings and discuss the implications for democracy in South Africa.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate how citizens in South Africa are choosing to participate politically, focusing particularly on conventional and unconventional behaviour. Conventional political participation focused largely on electoral behaviour participation, which is regarded as an essential characteristic of a healthy and stable democracy. Unconventional political behaviour, on the other hand, focused largely on various forms of protest action in South Africa. While actions of both types of participatory methods are utilized by citizens, the fact that South Africans are increasingly turning to unconventional actions over conventional ones is of particular concern.

The decline in electoral behaviour and increase in (violent) protest action could pose a serious threat to the legitimacy of the democratic political system in South Africa. In order to address this research problem, this study investigated the following research questions:

1.   How do South Africans participate in our democratic political system?

2.   What are the possible explanations for the way South Africans choose to participate?

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant concepts to address the research problem, as well as a summary of the main findings from the study. In addition, this chapter will explore the significance of the study, and suggest recommendations for future studies.

6.2 Summary of Main Findings

6.2.1 Conventional Political Behaviour

Political participation, for the purposes of this study, was defined as "activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they take" (Verba & Nie, 1972 cited by Kirbiš & Krajne, 2013:178). Participatory actions of a conventional nature are various, and largely looks at ways to influence government. These actions include the act of voting in elections, lobbying, campaigning, attending meetings, or even contacting politicians or government officials

(Imbrasaité, 2010; Chatora, 2012; Zani & Barrett, 2012 Stockemer, 2014; Grace & Danfulani, 2015; Fayomi & Adebayo, 2018).

Voter Registration

While free and fair elections continue to be observed in South Africa, and as such electoral participation in the form of voting; conventional political participation in South Africa for the most part is struggling. The most prominent trends that emerge when discussing conventional participation is the decrease of both voter registration and voter turnout in South Africa. Taking from our first ever democratic election in 1994, levels of participation have continued to steadily decrease, while a general decline in electoral participation is in fact being witnessed in South Africa. Schulz-Herzenberg (2009b) in particular highlights that while the numbers of registration are in fact increasing, these numbers are not at all amounting to votes being cast in elections. This also further touches on the concept of VAP, and in particular the number of voters who are in fact eligible to cast a vote. While this number is once again increasing, the number of South African's who are making the decision to go out and register to vote is not. As such, national registration in South Africa is in a tremendous decline (Piombo, 2004; Kersting, 2009; Schulz- Herzenberg, 2009b; Schulz- Herzenberg, 2016; Schulz- Herzenberg, 2019c; Southall, 2019).

These patterns of decline have also presented itself in examining how different age groups have performed in terms of registration. Where the age groups of 20-29, 30-39, as well as 40-49 all hold very similar percentages of registered voters, the youngest age group; 18-19 holds the lowest number of registered voters in the country. These registration statistics go on to highlight that individuals under the age of 30 are turning out to register far less than other age groups (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019).

When we look to the nine provinces in South Africa, voter registration numbers also differ. We are not only witnessing a gradual increase in South African's registering to vote in elections, but there are also noticeable trends that have emerged, mainly with regards to provinces which hold the greatest numbers of registered voters. These provinces include the Eastern Cape, the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, as well as Gauteng who in fact holds the largest number of registered voters across all nine provinces. This in fact can be attributed to large population growth in these particular provinces, while the Western Cape as well as Gauteng are known as economic hubs in South Africa (Schulz- Herzenberg, 2016).

Voter Turnout

Voter turnout in South Africa as what is currently being experienced with voter registration is also presenting with a decline in participation. While national turnout in South Africa has continued to remain relatively high, following South Africa's 6th national election in May of 2019 voter turnout now sits at an all-time low. Voter turnout has not only continued to decline from 1999 onwards, but this decline as such has also gone on to present itself in all nine provinces across South Africa as well. Whilst all provinces have presented with a steady decline over the past 10 years, Limpopo on the other hand has continued to drastically fall in numbers and is currently the province with the lowest voter turnout, with the North West following closely behind.

When voter turnout statistics are considered in conjunction with eligible voters in South Africa, namely the VAP, the proportion of South African's who are making a decision to cast a vote is even lower.

As with voter registration, age once again plays a considerable role in the participation that takes place, mainly looking at that of turnout. Once again age groups of 30-39 and 40-49 are amongst those who are more likely to participate, while those individuals under 30, and particularly the 18-19 age group are participating at a dismal amount. This age group in particular also participates at a rate similar to the oldest age group of 80 years plus. While the level of national turnout is continuing to present with a decline, voter turnout at the local level is in fact on the rise. Following the year 1995, voter turnout in local elections has slowly increased. Not only has this been attributed to voter turnout at the municipal level, but South Africans for the most part are choosing to participate more in local elections (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016).

Furthermore, conventional political participation in South Africa and largely looking at electoral behaviour in the forms of voter registration and voter registration; further trends with regards to this political behaviour are present. As the findings for both registration and turnout at both a national and local level have been discussed in the above it is evident that a particular relationship exists. Both voter registration and turnout at a national level is continuing to decline, while voter registration and turnout at a local level continues to slowly increase.

Participation by age also presents with particular trends. As highlighted previously the 18–19-year-old age group continues to present with the lowest rate of participation. This age group demonstrates the lowest rate of participation in both voter registration, as well as voter turnout and for the most part the youth of South Africa are continuing to shy away from conventional forms of participation.

6.2.2 Unconventional Political Behaviour

Unconventional political participation in South Africa for the most part presents itself in the form of protests. While protests and strike action continue to be the most commonly used types of this particular participatory method, actions of an unconventional nature are various. Unconventional political behaviour also includes actions of political demonstrations, civil disobedience, boycotting, as well as public debates and political violence (Imbrasaité, 2010; Ruedin, 2011; Chatora, 2012; Zani & Barrett, 2012; Grace & Danfulani, 2015; Fayomi & Adebayo, 2018). These types of actions seek largely to voice discontent and grievances outside the prescribed form of participating, namely conventional political participation.

As highlighted above, unconventional political participation in South Africa takes its form in protest action which continues to plague multiple communities across the country. This type of behaviour is not a new occurrence to South Africa, as our political behaviour continues to be influenced by our long political history, and largely that of a protest culture. Not only does this continue to play a significant role in why citizens resort to protesting; and as such unconventional behaviour, but South African's still hold on to the belief that this is the only way to get their voices heard. This type of political behaviour also continues to be used more and more, and for various reasons. As such unconventional political participation, and especially in the form of protests continues to rapidly increase.

While protest action continues to increase in South Africa, this as such is exhibited in different types of protests which are being experienced in the country. Although protests in South Africa are largely characterized as service delivery, this is often very incorrect as there are various reasons as to why protests take place other than the lack of service delivery. As discussed in this study, many of these protests that do take place can be labelled as political, service delivery protests, as well as youth and student activism.

Even though service delivery protests are not the only protests that occur in South Africa, they do remain as the most popular and most prevalent. These protests are caused by multiple grievances that South African citizens experience on a day-to-day basis, and as such have continued to increase especially in the last 10 years. This also touches on how protest behaviour has unfolded in South Africa. As the number of protests that occur continues to increase; as mentioned above, this also reflects that South African's are choosing to participate in actions of unconventional behaviour more than that of conventional behaviour. The previously mentioned youth protests also continue to increase in South Africa. While the youth has largely been noted as group which chooses not to participate; when it comes to unconventional political behaviour this group does as such participate. This in particular has been exhibited in the recent student protests at tertiary institutions, as well as their involvement in internet activism. The youth for the most part is making the decision to participate but are choosing different ways to do so.

6.3 Significance of the study

South Africa made the transition from a repressive apartheid legislation, institutionalised by the NP government, to a well-functioning democratic regime upheld by numerous democratic values and practices. Democratic regimes are not only premised on the values of free and fair elections, human rights, as well as the rule of law but one of the most important, or core elements of this particular regime being participation by citizens.

The system of democracy does not only encourage participation by its citizens, but participation as such is also acknowledged as essential to maintain the legitimacy of this system (Steenekamp, 2017: 60). Chilambo (2007: 171) adds that democracy can only be realized by involving citizens in the process of making decisions. Without active participation within this system, there will be no democracy. Lues (2014: 789) argues that democracy "cannot be effective on its own, but is reliant on the government and citizens to sustain it". In this way, if citizens do not participate this will go on to affect the state of democracy. Verba (1967: 57) also makes reference to this argument and notes that not only is a good democracy related with good citizen participation, but if citizens choose not to participate this will affect the quality of democracy within that particular country. Graham (2020: 29) adds to this discussion and highlights that in addition to citizen participation which betters the system of

democracy, it also adds to the lives of citizens themselves, namely in making them more aware of their rights and duties in the process.

While participation, and especially citizen participation, is fundamental for the system of democracy as noted by Chilambo (2007: 171), this argument also touches on the topic of good governance. Generally, the term 'governance' refers to "the management of society by the people, or as the exercise of authority to manage a country's affairs and resources" (Simonis, 2004: 2), or as highlighted by Amoako (2003) cited by Gilbert and Allen (2014: 526), governance can also refer to the particular way that power is exercised. Governance is in this way related to both the management and functioning of a particular regime; yet how do we then conceptualise the subject of good governance?

Good governance has been defined by numerous scholars over the years and therefore there is no one universally accepted definition that exists, good governance however has multiple meanings. This term can be referred to as good government or good leadership as noted by Okoroafor (2010: 175), but it has also been defined as "the realization of the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and social justice" (de la Harpe, Rijken & Roos, 2008: 7). In this way, good governance largely concerns itself with how government and its officials discharge their duties and obligations by maintaining democratic values, and is therefore also concerned with democracy itself (Okoroafor, 2010: 175). The core principles of good governance also further demonstrate the promotion of democracy. These include accountability, legitimacy, participation, transparency, respect for human rights, as well as rule of law (Abdellatif, 2003: 3; de la Harpe, Rijken & Roos, 2008: 6; Gilbert & Allen, 2014: 526); all of which are acknowledged as democratic values and principles. These principles also serve as a way to measure the effectiveness of a particular democratic regime in implementing good governance (Okoroafor, 2010: 176).

This point is further discussed by Okoroafor (2010: 176) who mentions that an assessment of good governance in any democracy has to also observe the extent to which it not only delivers human rights, but also the "availability of infrastructures, social amenities and other factors necessary for better life for the people". Good governance is also tasked with the responsibility in ensuring that social, political, as well as economic priorities are based on a system which sees that all citizens, especially the poor and most vulnerable are taken into account when decisions are being made (Abdellatif, 2003: 3).

Furthermore, a citizen's quality of life in a democracy also depends on the nature of governance, largely in terms of political and administrative arrangements and how this is able to accommodate participation in public decision making (Gilbert & Allen, 2014: 526).

The task of South Africa as a democratic country is to uphold these core principles as mentioned above, especially that of participation. Pimbert and Wakeford (2001: 1) highlight that democracy as a system of governance is premised on citizen participation, and without it, it is acknowledged as empty and meaningless. Participation as a concept of good governance is also further discussed by Diamond and Morlino (2004: 23), as well as de la Harpe, Rijken and Roos (2008: 7). These authors note that in order for good governance to be upheld, participation by one's citizens is a must. Additionally, if democratic quality is to be to high extensive citizen participation should be observed; not only through electoral participation but by participation in the life of political parties as well as civil society organizations (Diamond & Morlino, 2004: 23).

In the case of South Africa, where citizens are afforded the democratic right to participate, not only in electoral participation but in various other means of participation as well, there is not only a decline in conventional behaviour, but a steady increase in unconventional behaviour. South Africans are making the conscious decision to shy away from conventional methods of participation, and are rather employing unconventional methods of participation, largely in the form of protests instead. This is exhibited in the many service delivery protests, as well as the political and even student movement protests. This decline in conventional behaviour, and the subsequent rise in unconventional in particular can be seen as a response to bad governance.

As highlighted in the previous sections, South Africans resort to unconventional behaviour for a multitude of reasons. From grievances with regards to the lack of provision of basic services, to unhappiness over poor public service, to even issues of unemployment; South Africans resort to unconventional behaviour for a range of reasons (Nleya, 2011: 3; Nyar & Wray, 2012: 26; Alexander, Runciman & Ngwane, 2013: 8; Botes, 2018: 242). The persistence of this type of behaviour demonstrates the discontent of South African citizens, which goes against the principles of good governance. As noted by Gilbert and Allen (2014: 526), in practicing democracy which in itself is understood as good governance, this concept carries with it the capacity to not only improve society in its entirety, but also the welfare of

its citizens. If this does not happen, which can be noted in the prevalence of protest action in South Africa and the vast unhappiness of society, this as mentioned above is a response to bad governance. Moreover, with the continued decline in conventional behaviour while unconventional behaviour increases, this not only calls into question the legitimacy of this system but it will also eventually erode the system of democracy. This as such, is also problematic for the persistence of democracy.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

This study found mixed results in terms of the types of political behaviour i.e., conventional and unconventional, and largely how South Africans are choosing to participate in our democratic system. While conventional participation, and mainly in the form of electoral behaviour is declining, methods of a unconventional nature are continuing to increase.

While this study is in essence a literature review of political behaviour, with a particular focus on conventional and unconventional political participation as highlighted above, future studies could adopt a more empirical approach to this particular subject matter. Utilizing a quantitative data set instead of a qualitative one and using this to measure participation in conventional and unconventional means. In addition, these studies could employ the use of empirical data to identify the determinants of both conventional and unconventional behaviour in South Africa.

Future studies could also build upon the findings of the particular research study, in particular looking at the implications that occur when citizens withdraw from electoral participation, especially in South Africa, as well as the resultant effects on democracy. With the continued use of protest action in South Africa, and this participatory action becoming more conventional than unconventional, future studies could also investigate how the use of protest action, is affecting or will affect democracy in the long run.

6.5 Conclusion

This research study sought to not only investigate the different participatory actions being utilized in South Africa, but also looked into the various ways South African's are as such choosing to participate, with the particular focus on unconventional political behaviour.

The findings from this study largely demonstrated the decline of electoral participation. It also went on to highlight the relationship between political participation and the system of democracy, and also largely revealed that South Africans for the most part are choosing to participate more in unconventional forms than that of conventional actions. Furthermore, this study has also revealed how political participation is continuing to change and develop, contributing to new ways citizens are now able to participate.

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