



# 'Toilet Wars' in Cape Town:

Service Delivery in Informal Settlements and the Actors  
of Popular Protest in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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# Today's agenda

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1. 'Toilet wars' in Cape Town
2. Research questions and methodologies
3. Politics in post-apartheid South Africa
4. Actor 1: ANC Youth League
5. Actor 2: Social Justice Coalition
6. Actor 3: Abahlali baseMjondolo
7. Conclusion

# 'Toilet wars' in Cape Town

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- 'Toilet wars'
  - Disputes from early 2010 over 'open toilets' found in South African townships
  - Started from Makhaza area in Khayelitsha
- Townships
  - During apartheid, black Africans were forced to live in 'townships'
  - Even after the liberation, majority of the residents are still black and poor
- Informal settlements
  - Where people reside without permission from the authorities
  - No public services, mostly found in townships







VOTE FOR US

OUR OPEN  
TOILETS ARE  
BETTER THAN  
THEIR OPEN  
TOILETS!



THE  
BUCKET  
STOPS  
HERE!

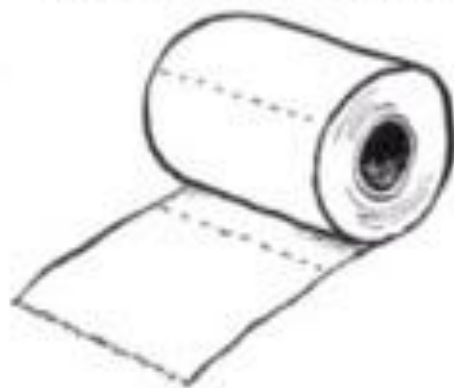


MUNICIPAL  
**ELECTION 2011**



EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

VOTERS' ROLL



'SCUSE ME, ARE  
YOU OUR LOCAL  
COUNCILLOR?





# Research questions & methodologies

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- Why did it happen?
  - Politics of public service delivery and social movements in post-apartheid South Africa
- 'Toilet wars' for what?
  - Various actors and ideologies behind (political parties, community-based organisations, NGOs)
- Qualitative analysis
  - Focus group, interviews, participant observation
  - Newspapers, websites, court records
  - Focused on Khayelitsha in Cape Town

# Politics in post-apartheid South Africa

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- Popular protest in South Africa
  - Africanist, socialist, + 'new social movements' (Beinart & Dawson eds., 2010)
  - A legitimate political means for the poor and marginalised (Ballard, Habib & Valodia eds., 2006)
- African National Congress (ANC)
  - The national ruling party after democratisation
  - From a 'liberation movement' to a political party (Seekings, 1998)
- Growth, Employment and Redistribution
  - Neo-liberalism in urban policy-making: Privatisation, cost recovery, 'top-down' mechanism, public-private partnerships (McDonald & Smith, 2004)

# Politics in post-apartheid South Africa

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- Informal settlement upgrading programme
  - A 'paradigm shift' from relocation to upgrading
  - Responsibility of local government on housing  
(Huchzermeyer & Karam eds., 2006)
- Particularity of Cape Town
  - Population: coloured + white > black Africans
  - Politics: Democratic Alliance (DA) as the ruling party in the Cape Town City Council since 2006, in the Western Cape Province since 2009
  - Economy: Overlap of class and race



# Actor 1: ANC Youth League

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- Youth wing of ANC
  - Africanist tradition
- Active area
  - Zone 14, Makhaza, Khayelitsha
  - 300 households
- Tactics
  - Specialised in the case of Zone 14
  - Appeal to the South African Human Rights Commission
  - Appeal to the Western Cape High Court
  - Violent demonstrations

# Actor 1: ANC Youth League

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## ○ Claims

### ● Racism accusation

- 'the Western Cape government institutions under the current Premier and Mayor treat Africans in a manner that is racist'

(Lili, Supporting affidavit, September 2010)

### ● Positive for violence

- 'Anything with the city emblem on it will be destroyed. The youth league will be vandalising the city' (Lili, Mail & Guardian Online, May 2010)

- 'You must get violent if you want to be taken seriously' (Sali, Interview, August 2011)

# Actor 1: ANC Youth League

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## ○ Results:

- Won the court case
  - Residents of Zone 14 are getting new toilets with concrete enclosures
- Won the local elections
  - One of the Youth League members (Lili) and his brother became councillors

→ A success story for Zone 14

→ Inactivated after the elections



# Actor 2: Social Justice Coalition

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- New social movements
  - an NGO concerning community safety
  - started by Alumni of University of Cape Town
- Active area
  - 11 branches across Khayelitsha
- Tactics
  - Long-term and broader commitment
  - Active before Makhaza case
  - Petitions, letters, meetings
  - Peaceful marches (reject violence)
  - Educational workshops, clean-ups

# Actor 2: Social Justice Coalition

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## ○ Claims

- 'Right to basic sanitation' for all South Africans
  - 'Focusing on a very small minority case is pretty symbolic and stark image to look at, but we need to consider the broader challenges'
  - 'Why aren't we talking about ten and half a million of people who are using the toilets which don't meet the national and international sanitation standards?'

(Silber, Interview, August 2011)

# Actor 2: Social Justice Coalition

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## ○ Results

### ● Cape Town Sanitation Summit

- 'We are going to pull about 60 different organisations, not just community organisation but university departments, engineers, public health experts'
- 'Let's work together to provide these essential services' (Silber, Interview, 2011)

➔ Using the Makhaza case to take the issue to broader sphere

➔ Willing to assist the government

# Actor 3: Abahlali baseMjondolo

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- 'Shack dwellers'
  - Established in Durban in 2005, in Cape Town in 2008
  - Fanonian practice? (Gibson, 2011)
- Active area
  - 15 informal settlements in Khayelitsha
- Tactics
  - Public disobedience
  - Violent campaigns: 'Week of shack settlements' 'Month of shack settlements'

# Actor 3: Abahlali baseMjondolo

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- Claims (Poni, Interview, August 2011)
  - Abahalism
    - 'People should be active participants in any form of service delivery'
    - 'Don't talk about our problems without us'
    - 'Let it remained on the ground'
  - Independent and Violent
    - 'We are not motivated by politics, academics, or donations'
    - 'Our campaign was hijacked and championed by the Youth League'
    - 'Our power is taking to the street'

# Actor 3: Abahali baseMjondolo

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## ○ Results

### ● Harshly criticised

- 'They are stupid people, just populists. We don't understand what they demand' (Lili from ANCYL, Interview, August 2011)
- 'Those people speak a lot about community, but community leaders will tell you that they don't really have a base' (Silber from SJC, Interview, August 2011)

➔ Isolated and failed to benefit their communities

# Conclusion

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- Origins of 'open toilets'
  - Neo-liberalism in urban development policy
  - DA as neo-liberal government
- Particularity of Cape Town
  - Triggered ANCYL's reaction
  - Political party in social movements
- Different ideologies and strategies
  - Prevented the actors from alliance
  - Isolation of Abahlali baseMjondolo → supporters?
- Intimidation and Violence
  - Got violent except for SJC
  - Residents intimidated

# References

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*Enkosi Kakhulu!!*

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