Department of
Political Sciences

Political representation
- in KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa

Political Science Ba (C)
Minor Field Study
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1 Introduction

The development of democracy is an utmost important issue and the consolidation of new democracies is even more important. For countries in the process of developing democracy or consolidating democracy it is important to understand the different factors that can undermine or reinforce the viability of the new democracies. In South Africa democracy was implemented by the first free election for all in 1994. This was the result of the peace process that put an end to the political and ethnical conflict during the apartheid regime in the country. The province of KwaZulu-Natal was especially affected by this conflict that assumed the proportions of a civil war at the end of the apartheid rule. During the last decade, from 1984 until 1994, before the democratic change more than half a million people were displaced and 20 000 lives were lost in the province.¹ Today the province has been transformed from civic breakdown and violent conflict to a province with democratic rule and today South Africa is regarded as a democratic example for the African continent. The development of democracy in South Africa has walked hand in hand with the development of the Rainbow Nation, a nation building that aims at bringing all the ethnical, religious and linguistic groups together and making everyone equal. By looking at the formal structures of democracy in South Africa we may see how this aim has been fulfilled.

A vital part of democracy is the political representation of the people and the construction of the new constitution for South Africa that was fully implemented in 1996 contained changes to the election system to ensure fair representation. The election of political representatives is based on proportional representation with party lists. This design of the election system focuses the party and their policies so as to avoid representation based on individual characteristics and thereby ethnical voting. The problem with ethnical voting is that elections can become an expression of identity instead of political opinion because the sizes of the different groups determine the outcome of the elections. Voters might vote for political parties representing their own ethnical group regardless of the political program of the party. This process can have serious implications on the development of democracy since the election results can be viewed as fixed by both the voters and the political parties thus creating a situation of apathy and discontent since the political policies become less important.²

The elections in South Africa has been an example of racial census, where the size of a group determines the result, and there is a strong connection between race and election of representatives in the last elections since 1994. The

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connection is strong but the democracy doesn’t seem to have experiences the negative process of politicized ethnicity.

1.1 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of the political representative in the system of political representation. I will test the different theories of political representation based on interests or identity and use the span between the two to understand their respective strengths and weaknesses in this case.

1.2 Research Question

This study is concerned with the function of the political representatives as they are the link between the system of representation and the electorate. Since the system is designed for political representation based on interest and the voting suggests voting based on identity/race the representatives must balance these different signals.

How do political representatives explain the base of their representation – interest, identity or a mix of them?

What do the political representatives see as important factors for representation of the people in a democracy?

1.3 Delimitations

Democratization is often discussed on a national level and elections, political parties and questions of legitimacy and so forth also on a national level. With this study I wanted to focus on a local level and in that way contribute to a more full description on political representation. That is why I have chosen a province as the field where to conduct the MFS, Minor Field Study, during the time period of November 2007 and January 2008.

1.4 Disposition

The first part of the study will outline the departure point, the questions and the purpose of this study. In part two the theoretical framework is presented and the different theories concerning political representation will be discussed. After the introduction I will explain the method used to conduct the study. The fourth part will present the empirical part of the study and there I will present the material gathered in KwaZulu-Natal. Thereafter I will present the interviews with political representatives in the province. In part six I will analyze the empirical material using the theoretical framework. Finally there will be a sum up of the study.
2 Theoretical Framework

The concept of political representation is a modern concept that was born together with the concept of representative democracy. It is today a widely accepted form of democracy compared to the direct democracy that was discussed in the cradle of democracy in Athens. Throughout the history of democracy there has been a discussion of the problems with representation. There are basically two main questions concerning political representation; who should represent and what do they represent.

In political science representation of opinion or interest through political parties has been central as said by Sartori, parties are or should be an instrument for representing the people by expressing their demands. Social background or other personal characteristic as gender or ethnicity has not been regarded as important qualities for political representation. Who represents who has not been regarded as important but today it is a discussion of current interest.

2.1 Representation of ideas

The representation of ideas is synonymous with the representation of opinions and it has an important position in political theory concerning representation and democracy. In this theory the central part is that the political representatives stand for their voters as carriers of their opinions. One way to ensure this is to use a system that is based on Responsible Party model, a model discussed since the 1940’s, which has a few key points. Firstly the political parties present their package of policies, secondly the voters choose and vote for the one most resembling their own opinions, thirdly the representatives of the party must try to enact their issues into public policy and fourthly the voters can demand responsibility for conducted politics by punishing or rewarding the parties in the next election. The necessary parts in this model are responsible and reliable political parties with informative and clear political programs and citizens that partake in elections as an expression of political ideas and opinions. The elections are also very important as the only way for the voters to demand accountability through the ballot box from the political parties and their representatives after the passed mandate period.

Since the parties and their political program becomes the important part the representative is first and foremost a representative of the party and not the voters.

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Consequently the representative is tied to the program and independent acting is not encouraged and the voters can feel like they are not being represented in case the opinions of the voters and their party differ. In this model who represents who becomes unimportant because there exists a kind of contractual relationship between the representatives and their political parties and the electorate. The political representative is not free to act according to his own individual opinions in a question since he is bound by the program of the political party like to a contract.

Representation based on ideas and opinions contains a paradox according to Pitkin who studies representation in the context of political representation namely the representatives compliance and simultaneously independence from the voters. The representative is commissioned to act in the interest of their voters and to put their opinions into public policy. But in the political process there is a need for political leadership to be able to deal with current situations and to make decisions in negotiations. Pitkin argues that the representative is functioning in a representative system and sometimes he might not be representing the voter’s opinion but still follow a course to promote their interest. If a representative is elected with a fixed mandate he will not be able to negotiate and act in the political process. Then there will be no room for leadership, initiative and creative action to promote the interests of the voters in the best way he finds possible. All situations that might occur are impossible to predict in a fixed political program before the mandate period. It is therefore important for the representative to be responsive to and act in the interest of the voters. The representative needs to balance compliance and independence from the voters to act in their interest.

For Pitkin representation of ideas and opinion in a political context requires that the voters can demand responsibility from the representatives and for them to be responsive and at the same time take initiative. This creates another paradox since the representatives must have the freedom to create new ways to deal with issues and situations, and then it will become important who is representing who. Representing in a political context can’t be a mere technical task of speaking someone else’s opinion. This is the paradox that is also contained in the literal meaning of the word represent, re-presentation – a making present again, since political representation is built on a non-presence of the ones being represented. So the representation of the people and their interests is complicated and not as easy as Responsible Party model suggests.

2.2 Representation of identity

The essence of representation of identity is that who is representing who is of importance. This view is based on the conception that social representation, for

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6 Ibid, page 222.
7 Ibid, page 90.
example of sex, ethnicity and race, cannot be separated from representation of interest. There are a few different arguments supporting the importance of social representation in the political context.

Anne Phillips argues that the social background of an individual affects their actions today and in the future and thereby their actions as a political representative.\(^\text{10}\) It is almost impossible for the political parties to present a fixed political program that foretells the voters exactly how their representatives will act in every situation as also Pitkin argues. Political representation requires that the representative can take initiative and their political program may not be so extensive to give support in the current situation.\(^\text{11}\) A shared social background and current position in society can lead to decisions and initiatives that are closer to the interests of the represented since they are formed by and live in the same social conditions. By presence of different social identities there can be a substantial difference in political policies.\(^\text{12}\) If policies are drawn by representatives for other groups rather than together with the group there is a risk that all the relevant aspects won’t be discussed. Participation in decision making can bring important aspects to light.

Democracy is often simplistically explained as everybody’s equal right to vote, one man – one vote. This fundamental equality should be extended to equal right to partake in politics which can be guaranteed by representation based on presence according to Phillips.\(^\text{13}\) The importance of this is for the people to partake rather than to hand over the power to elite that represents the people.

Partaking in politics and decision making also brings another important effect that can be described as the politics of recognition.\(^\text{14}\) Then presence as political representation becomes a symbolic recognition of historically marginalized or excluded groups. By being included in the public life and political power these groups become accepted and their equality confirmed. A proportional election system can also ensure that all groups with common interests can elect their representatives and be included. But the difference between representation based on opinion and presence is the supposition that presence can produce different policies. It is also important to include groups that are or have been excluded from power so as not to create a feeling of discrimination, exclusion and no loyalty to the political power and society as a whole.\(^\text{15}\)

One of the cornerstones of all representation is accountability and this is the point where representation based on identity is mostly criticized.\(^\text{16}\) According to critics it will be hard for the voters to demand accountability from a representative or party that is based on identity rather than a political program. Because representation based on identity doesn’t automatically translate to common

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\(^{11}\) Ibid, page 58-59.

\(^{12}\) Ibid.

\(^{13}\) Ibid, page 49-50.

\(^{14}\) Ibid, page 54-55.

\(^{15}\) Ibid, page 25.

\(^{16}\) Pitkin, page 89-90.
interests and the acting of a representative with no political program that predicts their acting in the political process can be hard and almost impossible for the voter to foretell. This brings us back to the problems of a fixed political program and a fixed mandate with no room for the representative to negotiate and act in the political process. Consequently accountability can only be demanded after the mandate period in the next election. So representatives will be rewarded or punished by the voters in the ballot box whether their representation is based on identity or not.

2.3 Representation in a diverse area

Representation in an ethnically diverse area can become problematic in the case of a society divided by ethnicity where ethnicity becomes politicized. If ethnicity is politicized the democratic elections can become merely a way of sizing up the different groups in society since the electorate will vote for representatives from their own group and the political representation will be an expression of the diversity. Even though the different political parties can have different programs these can be of second importance after the importance of belonging to the same group in the election if ethnicity is politicized. The voter can feel forced to vote according to ethnicity rather than interest in case these are opposing. It becomes even more problematic in case there is a dominating majority that can keep the power without being challenged by an opposition because it is then almost impossible for the voters to demand accountability in the elections. Because if the political representatives can’t be held accountable in the election by the threat of losing power there can be a crisis in confidence in the political power. As discussed earlier accountability through elections are an utmost important aspect of representation.

Another effect of politicized ethnicity can be an undermining of social alliances and cooperation between different groups, a balkanization of society where society becomes divided between competing and rival groups where the different groups are entrenched in their own interests. By focusing differences based on ethnicity the unity of interest can be of less importance and cooperation concerning common interest can be weakened. Alliances between different groups around interest can cut through different groups of ethnicity but ethnicity cuts in between different groups making the divisions clearer. If representation based on identity is advocated in an ethnically diverse society who represents who will become the dominant issue. A focus on representation based on interest can instead be a way to avoid a balkanization of society.

Vicky Randall writes concerning political parties and representation in an African context with ethnically divided states. According to her there aren’t many ethnic parties in Africa that present political program directed at a certain ethnic group and the few ethnic parties that do exist seem to lose support. The parties can

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19 Ibid, page 35.
rather be described as multi-ethnic and regionalist. Even though the political parties do not promote ethnical programs the electorates still vote in accordance to ethnicity and elections can express a racial census like it does in South Africa. This leads to a political representation based on presence since the electorate vote for parties that are identified by the same ethnic/racial group they belong to. If the parties are also viewed as regional with little or no national support there is a risk of connecting them stronger to their ethnic and racial support base in the region and thereby enforce the view of elections as being a census.

The formation of many political parties in Africa can be expressed as having an overt and covert ethnical character. This can be the result of an absence of clear ideological political programs due to swiftness in transition to democracy. Many parties can also have a base in a liberation movement and a history as a pre-democratic force trying to overthrow authoritarian rule. This leaves room for the parties to be representatives of ethnical groups and other social groups at the same time especially during a transition time from authoritarian rule to democratic governance. The interest that is central for forming the alliances and cooperation of different social groups is the issue of liberation and democracy. Another feeling of shared interest can be a historically based disadvantaged position in society for different ethnical groups due to authoritarian rule.

The historically shared experiences can suggest a unifying set of interests but is less likely to remain in the new democracy if there are strong social and economic inequalities within the ethnical groups in the society. When a party is a liberation movement there can be a problem for different social groups with different political interest to be represented by the party’s representatives. And if the different political parties don’t distinguish themselves from one another as representatives of different interests it will be hard for the electorate to vote according to interest. They will basically be left with ethnicity as the indicator of the difference between the political parties.

22 Randall, Vicky, page 88-89.
3 Methodology

In this study I use a qualitative case study as method, where I can focus on one single case – the political representation in KwaZulu-Natal. This gives the opportunity to contribute to establish general propositions since the case study can contribute to theory building in political science.\(^{26}\) However a case study can not be the base for generalizations since it only consists of one case and it can neither be used to disapprove of generalizations.\(^{27}\) I intend to test two different theories considering political representation and thereby use the case study as a theory-confirming or/and theory-infirming method. The different theories of political representation will not be tested against each other but rather be used to describe the case.

Another advantage of the case study is that it gives me the advantage to take different context into account since the case can be approached slowly. This opens up the opportunity for new ideas concerning the issue that is studied. The case study also makes it possible to use different techniques to approach the issue being studied. I will use a triangulation of different methods consisting of interviews, literature study and the use of statistics and surveys.\(^{28}\)

3.1 Interviews

I will use a method of qualitative research interviews to describe the interviewees understanding of the subject of political representation and their role as political representatives in particular. The qualitative research interviews looks for qualitative knowledge expressed in words concerning the interviewees’ conceptions.\(^{29}\) The interviewed are political representatives for the four main political parties in the provincial parliament in KwaZulu-Natal.

The interviews are semi-structured with a guide of different focused topics that are enlightened by different questions. This type of interview can be conducted in a flexible way but still have a strong structure. It also gives the interviewees the opportunity to describe and explain their view of the topic in their own words.\(^{30}\) The interview questions are attached and show the different focused topics and their questions. All the interviews where conducted by me in English and recorded as agreed with the interviewees. The duration of the interviews was


\(^{30}\) Ibid, page 37-38.
approximately one hour to one and a half hour. Before the interview the interviewee was informed about the study and agreed to participate, the possibility to be anonymous was also explained but declined by all participants.

I have used a few different methods for the analysis of the interviews to avoid misunderstandings of the meaning of what is said. Firstly I used a technique of concentration and analyzing of the meaning during the interview by returning a sum up or asking questions to give the interviewee an opportunity to clarify their answer.\textsuperscript{31} Secondly I transcribed all the interviews directly after the actual interview using a method of meaning concentration to be able to translate from spoken language to written language without loosing the meaning of the answers given.\textsuperscript{32} Thirdly I have concentrated the answers into different themes where patterns for comparison and contrasting can be made.\textsuperscript{33}

3.2 Material

The study is based on the material that I could gather during my field study in KwaZulu-Natal from November 2007 until January 2008. Firstly it is the interviews that were conducted and secondly the secondary material as academic articles, political party information, statistics and surveys. The interviews with political representatives from different political parties are obviously not objective empirical material but are necessary for answering the posed questions of the study. Information from the different political parties is likewise not objective empirical material.

The surveys used in the study are from Afrobarometer which is an independent, nonpartisan research project conducting surveys concerning political, social and economic matters in Africa. The statistics used are from different official sources like the independent electoral commission and governmental institutions. These sources provide empirical material that is regarded as both reliable and objective.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, page 134.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, page 152-155.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, page 205.
4 KwaZulu-Natal

The political power in South Africa is divided between three levels, national, provincial and local. The elections on national and provincial level take place at the same time every fifth year. The province of KwaZulu-Natal differs in many aspects from South Africa out of which I will look at the terms of election result, political representation and population.

4.1 Proportional representation

South Africa is a liberal democracy since 1994 when the first democratic elections were held. The new constitution came into place in 1996 and contains changes to insure the development of a new democracy. The election system in South Africa is based on proportional representation with party lists and no thresholds. This system allows for the electorate to choose their political representatives from the lists presented by the different political parties. By designing this election system ethnical voting would be prevented since the representatives are elected on the basis of the party and not their personal characteristic.34 A proportional representation system is believed to produce a multiparty system since all parties have a chance to be elected, a high number of participation in elections and also to create legitimization of the political system.35 With no thresholds all parties receiving enough votes will have the possibility to access a seat in the parliament allowing for small groups to be represented and thereby representing the diversity of the South African society. Representation then becomes a clear reflection of the election result and many different parties gives the electorate the possibility to choose the party that represents them in the best way. The multiparty system is a reality in South Africa but the dominance of one party, ANC36, on a national level creates a situation where it can be hard for the electorate to control the party by punishing or rewarding the party by voting in the elections.37

In the provincial election in KwaZulu-Natal there is a situation that looks different from the national since there has been a shift of power from one party to another and there is a strong opposition. The electorate in KwaZulu-Natal can therefore react to the decisions and actions of the political parties in a way that might affect the balance of power in the province.

36 See page 14 for national election results.
Table 1: Party support in KwaZulu-Natal: 1994, 1999 and 2004 Provincial election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACDP</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>32.23</td>
<td>39.38</td>
<td>46.98</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP/DA</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFP</td>
<td>50.32</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>36.82</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNP</td>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDM</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total seats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the first democratic election in 1994 IFP won the majority of votes in KwaZulu-Natal and the province was one of two provinces that fell out of control of the ANC. But in 1999 the election neither IFP nor ANC received majority and the result showed that while IFP lost votes ANC gained votes. A new amendment to the constitution allowed floor crossing leading to legislators passing into ANC. This gave ANC a majority together with their allies while IFP for the first time lost their political dominance in the province. In the last elections in 2004 ANC kept their position as the largest party in the province while IFP lost further seats in the parliament.

4.2 Party discipline

There are two important rules in the new constitution to make sure that representation is based on the political parties in between elections. Firstly the legislators are not allowed to keep their seats if they are expelled from or chose to leave the party they were elected from. Secondly they are not allowed to change party and cross into another. These rules assure the electorate that the elected representatives will represent the policies of the party.

Since the election of political representatives is based on party lists there is a strong discipline within the party and the party holds the power over who is posed as a candidate in the elections. Between the elections the party can expose a legislature of parliament from the party and the legislator will then have to leave parliament and be replaced by the party according to the rules of the

38 See next paragraph for further explanation on floor-crossing.


This threat of losing one’s seat in parliament can reduce the political representatives will to oppose the party line and the effect will be that it leaves little room for the representative to represent individuals or groups of voters with opposing views to the party line in certain issues.

According to the constitution it is also prohibited for the legislators to change party in between elections since they are elected as representatives for the party and not as individuals. But a controversial change to the constitution has been done and has opened up the opportunity for individuals or whole parties to pass into another party. This is called floor crossing and is open during two periods in between the elections. Floor crossing has been used by parties to merge with other parties and individuals to change parties without losing their seats and sometimes it has changed the balance of power in the parliaments affected. After the floor crossing the representation doesn’t mirror the electorate’s choice of party since the representatives have changed party even though it might mirror the electorate’s interest according to the representatives. According to the critics the floor crossing can’t be allowed if proportional representation is still to be observed. It can also damage voters confidence since the accountability through elections can be endangered if the representatives are allowed to change into another party after the election.

4.3 Population and electorate

South Africa is a diverse society with different ethnical groups that due to the inheritance from the apartheid regime is divided into four different race groups. These groups are still used as an analytical instrument since they play a role in social construct. Black African refers to people from the different ethnical groups with African inheritance whereas Coloureds refers to people with a mixed inheritance, Indians refers to people with an Indian inheritance and White refers to people with European inheritance. During apartheid the white minority was the privileged race and all the other race groups were discriminated in different ways by the regime. The apartheid view on race was primordial; one is born into a pre-existing race group that determines ones place in society. A reformulated understanding of race and ethnicity focuses race as a fluid, malleable and contextual concept that has retained importance and significance in analysis.

The population in KwaZulu-Natal differs from South Africa in terms of the racial and ethnical groups in three main factors. Firstly there is an ethnical group of Zulus in KwaZulu-Natal that forms the majority in the Black African group. Secondly there is a very small minority of Coloureds. Thirdly the majority of all

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41 Mattes, page 24.
46 Ibid.
Indians in South Africa live in the province.\textsuperscript{47} The effect of these differences can clearly be seen in the election results from the province.

\noindent \textbf{Table 2: Racial groups in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal 2001.}
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
 & South Africa & KwaZulu-Natal \\
\hline
Black African & 79 \% & 84,9 \% \\
Coloured & 8,9 \% & 1,5 \% \\
Indian & 2,5 \% & 8,5 \% \\
White & 9,6 \% & 5,1 \% \\
\hline
Total 100 \% & Total 100 \% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}


Although race is a division between the people national surveys show that there is a clear consensus on defining oneself as a South African citizen first and secondly as a member of a specific racial or ethnic group.\textsuperscript{48} A feeling of belonging to a nation and a racial and/or ethnical group seem to coexist alongside each other.

In South Africa there is another clear division in the society namely a large economic division between the different income groups. This divide is an interracial inequality, the inequality exists in all the race groups rather than in one contra the other to a lesser or greater extent.\textsuperscript{49} In South Africa the unequal income pattern increased between 1995 and 2000 indicating growing income gaps in the population.\textsuperscript{50} The Gini coefficient for the distribution of income in South Africa and for the different race groups clearly shows the inequality. The Gini coefficient is a measure of statistical dispersion most prominently used as a measure of inequality of income distribution or inequality of wealth distribution. It is defined as a ratio with values between 0 and 1: A low Gini coefficient indicates more equal income or wealth distribution, while a high Gini coefficient indicates more unequal distribution. 0 corresponds to perfect equality (everyone having exactly the same income) and 1 corresponds to perfect inequality (where one person has all the income, while everyone else has zero income).

\noindent \textbf{Table 3: Gini coefficient for household incomes 2000.}
\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & South Africa & Black African & White & Coloured \\
\hline
0.69 & 0.61 & 0.46 & 0.54 \\
\hline
Asian & 0.49 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}


The income gaps are largest in the Black African group and smallest in the White group indicating different economical conditions for the different groups. Even though voters from all groups believe that the economical inequalities and

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, page 6-7, 11.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
especially unemployment are the most important issues that the political representatives should deal with.\textsuperscript{51}

\section*{4.4 Racial census}

The elections in post-apartheid South Africa have been described as racial census because race is a strong indicator of the election results. Voting and the results from the elections have been analyzed with a framework based on race and ethnicity since this is an inheritance from apartheid. The apartheid view on race and ethnicity was imposed from the state whereas today there is a reformulated view that race and ethnicity are social constructs and can therefore be used as analytical instruments.\textsuperscript{52}

Election results and surveys indicate that there is a divide between which parties the different race groups supports. Most clearly the White and the Black race groups vote for parties that are seen as black or white but the Indian and Coloureds race groups votes are divided between different parties on a national level.\textsuperscript{53}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
Party & Results in national election & Results in provincial election \\
\hline
ANC & 69,69 \% & 47,47 \% \\
IFP & 6,97 \% & 34,87 \% \\
DA & 12,37 \% & 10 \% \\
MF & 0,35 \% & 1,86 \% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Party support in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal, national and provincial election 2004.}
\end{table}

On a provincial level in the elections in KwaZulu-Natal the results can be analyzed as a racial census as the results corresponds to the racial and ethnical groups. The black votes are divided mainly between the ANC that is seen as a black (race), and the IFP as a Zulu (ethnic) based party. The IFP got 93\% of their national support in 2004 from KwaZulu-Natal and that can indicate the party’s ethnical and regional support in elections. The MF was clearly supported in KwaZulu-Natal where their support passed their national support with 29\% and thereby also affirming their Indian ethnical and regional support.\textsuperscript{54}


clearly indicate a voting pattern that can be explained in terms of racial and ethnical voting.

4.5 Political parties

The proportional PR system requires clear party policies for the electorate to be able to vote for the ones best representing them. By presenting the four main political parties in the province of KwaZulu-Natal I intend to give an overview of the choices the electorate has in the elections. The presentation will be based on the different parties own presentation of their political position and policies.

4.5.1 African National Congress – ANC

The African National Congress – ANC was formed in 1912 with the aim to bring all South Africans together in a nonracial nation. It is not only the largest political party in South Africa but also the main freedom movement during apartheid. The party was prohibited during apartheid and their former leader Nelson Mandela spent 18 years in prison before negotiating with the apartheid regime to introduce democracy. Since the first democratic election in 1994 ANC has become the dominant party in South Africa. The ANC's key objective is the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society meaning:

The liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor.

ANC tries to incorporate different sections of the South African society and an important part of that is the Tripartie Alliance with South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The will to incorporate different views and interests goes back to ANC not only being a political party but also the leading liberation movement. It is therefore difficult to place ANC in an ideological position. ANC believes in creating jobs and fighting poverty and has introduced affirmative action in the job market, an economical program BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) to increase black businesses and state investments to further the economy.

4.5.2 Inkatha Freedom Party – IFP

The Inkatha Freedom Party – IFP was founded as a political party in 1990 but was since 1975 a political force in South Africa and it has its historical roots in the Zulu cultural movement that was established in the 1920’s. During the apartheid regime IFP in contrast to ANC opted for a non armed struggle to bring about democratic change. The IFP was never banned and their leader Dr. M.G.

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56 Ibid.
Buthelezi became the Chieftaincy of the former KwaZulu Government, a position put in by the apartheid regime, reinforcing their positive view of traditional leadership. A difference in tactics to fight the apartheid regime and the competition for support in KwaZulu-Natal was historically a violent fight between IFP and ANC.\(^{58}\)

Ideologically the party is conservative and traditionalistic as stated in their support for federalism, patriotism, market economy and traditional values as moral. Two of their main tasks are:

- To establish an open, free, non-racial, equal opportunity, reconciled society with democratic safeguards for all people.
- To harness the great resources of the country to fight the real enemies of the people, namely; poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease, ignorance, insecurity, homelessness and moral decay.\(^{59}\)

IFP especially focus on their moral and ethical standards as they work for a corruption free and transparent society.

IFP has tried to distance itself from the view as being a traditionalist Zulu party to a more inclusive part in the 2004 election manifestos.\(^{60}\) It is since 2004 in opposition of the ANC and has tried to form an alliance with the DA.

### 4.5.3 Democratic Alliance – DA

The roots of the Democratic Alliance- DA go back to the white opposition of the apartheid regime but the name of the party was taken in 2000. DA is still in opposition and today the biggest national opposition of the ANC.\(^{61}\) The political base of the party is liberalism and the rights and freedom of the individual. Their key goal is:

- The Democratic Alliance, together with the people of South Africa, can create an open, opportunity society in which every South African enjoys freedom and security and prosperity. No one must be left behind: every man, woman and child must be given a chance to fulfil his potential and to reach her destination.\(^{62}\)

DA also focuses the importance of a less regulated economy and labor market for economical growth and job creation. The importance is to create opportunities for the individual South African and not on the basis of which group one belongs to.\(^{63}\)

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\(^{60}\) Ibid.


\(^{63}\) Ibid.
4.5.4 Minority Front – MF

The Minority Front – MF is based in KwaZulu-Natal and formed by their leader Mr. A Rajbansi who fought against apartheid with the ANC during the apartheid regime. It is not in opposition but rather wants to work together with the other parties.

MF calls itself a socio-political party and their main aim is to protect the rights of all different minorities in the South African society and work for co-existence.

The MF does not promote any group along ethnic or other lines, but if anyone is prejudiced or disadvantaged because he or she belongs to a particular group, it is the policy of the MF to oppose such unfair action.

The MF’s focus to protect minorities is part of building a strong democratic society that improves life for all South Africans. Their main issues to deal with concerns the socio-economic improvement for the people.

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5 Interviews

The political representatives that were interviewed are legislators in the provincial parliament of KwaZulu-Natal. The selection of the interviewees was done in cooperation with the party administration. Here follows a presentation of them and the results from the interviews.

Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, African National Congress ANC, has been a member of the provincial parliament as a political representative since the first democratic elections in 1994.

Mr. Les Govender, Inkatha Freedom Party IFP, was elected in the first democratic elections in 1994 and has since been a political representative in the provincial parliament.

Mr. Roger Burrows, Democratic Alliance DA, has worked with politics in other political parties before the 1994 elections when he was elected into the provincial parliament.

Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, Minority Front MF, was elected for the first time in 1994 and has been a member of parliament since then.

5.1.1 The constituency and the voters

The political representatives are elected from the list of their respective parties in the constituency that consists of the whole of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The province of KwaZulu-Natal is like the rest of South Africa a very diverse society in many aspects. There are both rural and urban areas with many different economic income groups and different racial groups. Consequently the communities within the constituency can be very different from one another.

Most of the political parties organize the representatives to work in different areas and so to say be responsible for that area and their communities. Since this is done by the party the different areas or communities differ between the respective parties. The areas can be decided depending on electoral support, number of representatives in the province and residency of the representatives. As a result of this all the representatives feel they have a constituency that is smaller than the province and consists of specific areas or communities.

The representatives from the two major parties with the most representatives in the province express their constituency to be a comparatively small area and/or a specific community.
My constituency is the Durban area and consists of a low income group from the townships and the informal settlements. She expresses her voters to belong to a community of economically disadvantaged residences in the city of Durban. Where another representatives constituency is a residential area where he lives in Durban.

The constituency is Chatsworth, a predominantly Indian area of 350 000 people with a small group of black inhabitants.

The one constituency is based on electoral support and the other on both support and residence.

The small parties have lesser representatives in the province. One representative explains the area of her constituency to be a large area of the province but her work is mainly in an area where their support is concentrated. In this case the constituencies are determined by the number of representatives from the party and support.

My area is all of northern Natal but mainly Phoenix where our voters are predominantly Indian since we interact in that area.

Another of the representatives from a smaller party explained his constituency as being a large area of the whole province.

It is a mixed constituency, mixed races, mixed economical groups and both urban and rural areas with cities, farms and townships.

These representatives have different constituencies corresponding to electoral support.

Three out of four representatives see themselves as representatives of people from the lower economical income group since they see them as the dominant group in their support base. One representative explained his voters as belonging to whatever economical group since he represents the individual and not a specific group, neither racial nor economic. Where support from a specific race group is expressed it is explained by the representative as a consequence of their residence and work for the people in the area. The representatives connect their understanding and knowledge of the needs of their community as a base for speaking and acting for their voters. Areas dominated by one race group are an inheritance from the apartheid regime when the residential areas were segregated.

After the 1994 general elections all people are free to live where they want to and there is an influx of other races into the areas where we live and that creates a new challenge.

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68 Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30).
69 Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
70 Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
71 Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
72 Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30), Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06), Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
73 Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
74 Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06), Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
to understand the needs of the other race groups coming into the former Indian predominant areas.\textsuperscript{75}

According to the representatives support from a specific racial group cannot be explained by the parties’ political policies since they are all inclusive of all races and groups in society.

5.1.2 Imminent interests

All the representatives proclaim the importance of contact with their voters so as to know their imminent interests. They also proclaim to protect, help and speak for the people. This is however done in different ways. Some representatives consider the political party and their programs firstly to identify the important issues to deal with and secondly the individual representative can bring other issues on the agenda as long as these do not go against the policies of the party.

The party will determine what issues to deal with as we are first and foremost party representatives.\textsuperscript{76}

But all political representative deals with different areas connected to different issues so there is room for the individual representative to take initiatives.

All of us represent collectively the voters of the ANC but every individual have specific and particular questions. The basis of these questions might go back to our communities.\textsuperscript{77}

The policies of the parties are formed by discussions within the party and the base for these discussions is feedback from voters and party members in the branches. Then all the representatives from the party must follow the policies.

It is a disciplined party but it allows a platform to discuss and there are different opportunities to discuss policies within the party.\textsuperscript{78}

Another important aspect of how to focus imminent issues is for the party to inform the communities of their work and challenges and the issues on the agenda.

We have gatherings were we can inform the people of where we are in our work and the people gets a platform to take up and discuss problems of the people by addressing the politicians themselves.\textsuperscript{79}

By keeping engaged with the supporters the party and their representative can be responsive to the electorate.

The other way of identifying important issues is to focus on listening to the input from the voters and supporters. The programs and the policies of the party have a

\textsuperscript{75} Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
\textsuperscript{76} Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
\textsuperscript{77} Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30).
\textsuperscript{78} Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
\textsuperscript{79} Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30).
focus on the questions and issues that are raised by the people in contact with the representatives.

We are people’s representatives; we assure them we are going to be their voice in the corridors of power, the parliament. Then we inform them on changed policies so they can see that we deliver.\textsuperscript{80}

The individual representative plays an important role as they are the important link between the people and the political agenda.

I will know the important questions to address quickly because I get contacted all the time by voters, party grassroots and whistleblowers since I have been a public person as a political representative for a long time.\textsuperscript{81}

The role of the party is then to present the interests of the individual rather than the individual to present the interests of the party. Political policies of the party are important but when addressing the political agenda individuals shouldn’t be bypassed by ideology and minority groups shouldn’t be bypassed by the majority.

We believe in the protection of rights of the minorities and see minorities as a number, for example a black person in a predominant Indian area, and we will bring their issues to light.\textsuperscript{82}

As a collective force the political party is still an important factor to incorporate the different needs and requests of people.

The party is a vehicle to travel which is far more than the individual.\textsuperscript{83}

Imminent issues are derived from the people and the representatives are first and foremost responsive to the people.

5.1.3 Importance of presence

There are very different opinions concerning the importance of presence in political representation and the form of presence. There are basically two different views and experiences of the importance, first the opinion that it is important to share the same social living conditions with the ones you represent and secondly that the political program are more important.

When the representative feel as they are part of the same community it is easier to address the issues and find practical solutions to the problems. This is because you live with the people and they know you as their political representative whom makes it easier for them to approach and raise important issues.

You need to know the community and to be accessible to the people to know what questions are important.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80} Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
\textsuperscript{81} Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
\textsuperscript{82} Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
\textsuperscript{83} Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
\textsuperscript{84} Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
But most important is for the representative to know the people he/she represents to understand their needs and the conditions they live in. By sharing the same social conditions it is easier for the representative to take initiatives and to make decisions that are closer to the needs of the ones they represent since they live in the same area.

If you don’t know where you come from you won’t be able to speak passionately for the people and work for their issues. We as representatives need to feel and live with the people.\(^85\)

Identity as in a shared social living condition affects the work of a representative as their participation in political decision making can ensure that relevant aspects are discussed. This view also holds a more practical reasoning for the importance of presence. That is the need for practical skills rather than just political ideas in dealing with political issues. The point is that a representative dealing with health issues should have knowledge and/or practical experience of the health sector to better understand the challenges and problems in the health sector.

Appointments to deal with different issues must be based on skills and not only political appointments, for example people who deal with health issues should have skills in health issues.\(^86\)

The other view is that presence in political representation is not important. This view focuses the political program of the party as binding the representatives to the ideas of the party. The representative is regarded as a carrier of the interests and the voice of the people and there is no need to belong to the same group as you represent since the political program is the important factor.

We represent the poor but we do not need to belong to that group since our policy speaks for them.\(^87\)

Focusing the identity of the political representatives can also be counteractive since we want to move away from a discriminating society.

A nonracial and nonsexist society is our main objectives and we mustn’t reverse by focusing the need of presence.\(^88\)

There is no need for a shared identity since the political program clearly states a society where identity mustn’t make a difference.

When it comes to the form of presence as racial or ethnic identity there is almost a consensus that racial presence is not an important issue anymore. All the parties believe in a nonracial society and express a view of a society moving away from the racially divided society.

With democracy in place we need to see ourselves not as little groups but as South Africans.\(^89\)

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\(^85\) Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
\(^86\) Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
\(^87\) Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30).
\(^88\) Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30).
\(^89\) Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
Weather there is a positive or negative view of the importance of presence the racial identity is secondary.

Another view was expressed meaning that racial presence is important, especially in South Africa, because of the stress and tensions after apartheid. The importance is to have a mix of racial groups within the parties so as to move away from apartheid and race.

It is important with a crosspollination within the parties and their voters.90

The other goal of the political representation should be a more demographic representation for the voters to not be dissatisfied. A demographic representation would create a stronger link between the voters and the representatives and that presence in political representation should include both racial and social economic identity since they are linked.

5.1.4 Function of proportional representation with party lists

The electoral system with proportional representation was seen by all representatives as something very positive. Especially in South Africa with a lot of different groups and the history of apartheid with different legal, political and social treatment of the racial groups. The proportional representation allows for all groups to have the possibility to elect representatives.

Small segments of the population can be represented since there is proportional representation and minorities will be represented. 91

The political representatives expressed this system to be essential for avoiding conflicts because of groups feeling unrepresented in the new democracy.

There was also consensus on the issue of party lists in the first democratic elections but a few opposing views on the function of party lists today. As a new democracy the party list could ensure an adequate representation since the voters and the parties were new to the democratic elections and a lot of people didn’t know who were who. The political parties could take a role of electing and educating new political representatives.

I didn’t mind that the party agrees on a list of representatives as a guidance for learning and developing. 92

An important consequence of the party list system is a help for disadvantaged groups in the society to come to power. The parties can promote representatives by putting them on the party list to be elected.

The party can ensure adequate representation of gender and ethnicity.93

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90 Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
91 Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
92 Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
93 Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
The opportunity for the party to promote women on their list was seen as necessary since the voters are conservative and would otherwise vote for men.

It’s an advantage to all women, we have patriarchal views where women are still not seen as equal and capable.94

By putting women on the party lists they can be seen as a guidance towards equal representation which can help to break norms in the society as a whole. It is also positive in the way that the party can promote people with necessary skills and knowledge.

The advantage is that the party can chose people with certain expertise and decide who is most suitable for the position.95

The most negative aspects of the party list system was seen as the problem of accountability towards the voters that depends on two functions in the elections system. First it’s a question of the representatives being accountable to the party but not necessarily to the people since the party decided upon the list of representatives, this requires disciplined parties.

It can work well depending on the party, if it has structures to make sure their representatives work well.96

If the representative disagrees with the party because the voters have an opposing view there can be problems with responsiveness. One representative then argued that,

This is why floor crossing should be there for an important reason.97

But floor crossing is also seen as a problem for voters confidence since their vote for one party through floor crossing gets transferred to another party.

Voters vote for a particular party and then the representative goes to another party, this damages voters confidence and the credibility of the person.98

Secondly the party list in combination with large constituencies leaves the voters with no direct link to the representatives. The representatives do not feel responsible for a certain group of voters and the voters do not know their representatives if they are not local.

It would be better to go constituency based as it will force representatives to represent their voters and remain in their constituency and force the representative to know what goes on there.99

This could force representative to perform and improve accountability.

94 Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30).
95 Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
96 Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
97 Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
98 Mr. Les Govender, IFP. (2007-12-06).
99 Mrs. Shameen Thakur Rajbansi, MF. (2007-12-03).
Another representative also believed in a transformation of the system to improve accountability but not necessarily individual vote in single mandate constituencies.

> Individual vote might be a problem in South Africa because of equal representation of gender and ethnicity since the voters are still conservative. ¹⁰⁰

A total confidence in the system was also based on historical arguments and the view of the electorate as conservative.

> Party representation is good as it is, otherwise representation would look very different because of our history. The government has a strong influence of it’s people and needs to point a direction. ¹⁰¹

According to them the party list still need to fill the function as an insurer of adequate representation.

¹⁰⁰ Mr. Roger Burrows, DA. (2007-03-12).
¹⁰¹ Mrs. Lizzy Shabalala, ANC. (2008-01-30).
6 Conclusions

Following the fall of the apartheid regime in South Africa a new constitution was implemented that contained changes to the election system. The new system is based on proportional representation with party list nominations for the seats in parliament. The choice of this system was a way to ensure representation of all groups in society which was especially important in South Africa after the discrimination of racial groups during apartheid. This system would be focusing on the political programs of the parties and thereby the representation of opinions rather than individual identities as race or ethnicity.

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal, where this study was conducted, there are differences in the sizes of the racial and ethnical groups in comparison to the rest of the country. These differences correspond to the election results in the province where election results can be linked to the sizes of the racial and ethnical groups. The sizes of the groups expressed in the election results are phrased as a racial census in South Africa as nation and KwaZulu-Natal as a province. So the election results can be seen as depending on racial voting but since none of the political parties promote racial party policies there is no evident link between racial voting and racial politics.

My purpose of this study was to understand the role of the political representative since the election system is based on representation of interests but the election results suggests voting based on racial identity. This leaves the political representative to balance these different signals. Therefore the question I intend to answer is how the political representatives see their own role and their own basis for political representation and also what they see as important factors for an adequate representation of the people.

According to the political representatives that I interviewed in KwaZulu-Natal their representation is based on the interests of their voters. Interests as expressed either through the political program of their party or their contact with their voters. These two different ideas of deriving the interests from the people can be explained by the ideology or policies of the different parties The one is based on the party as a collective and the other on the individual representatives for understanding and formulating the interests of the people. But the interesting part is that they all see themselves as representatives of interest of their voters just as Pitkin’s argues for in her theory of representation. They all see themselves as having a contractual relationship with either the party or the voters in first or second hand. The contractual relationship is based on the proclaimed political intentions by the party and/or the individual representative.

Representation of interest raises an important issue of responsiveness towards the voters according to Pitkin and this can also be regarded from different positions. This issue has been dealt with in different ways in KwaZulu-Natal but one
common feature is for the political parties to divide the large provincial constituency into smaller areas or communities of responsibility for the political representatives. By having an area of responsibility it is easier to get contact with the people to know their take on imminent interests and to be seen by voters and maybe future supporters as expressing policies on important issues. These divisions of the constituency are different for all the parties and depend on electoral support, number of representatives from the party and residence of the representative. Whatever the reason for the different division of the constituency into personal constituencies is, the reason for doing it is the same – closer contact with voters to increase responsiveness – according to the political representatives.

The representatives that describe their constituency, their area of responsibility as divided by their party, as a specific area or community also see themselves as representatives of the economic income group that is dominant in that area. By knowing who they represent and their needs as a social group and by acting in their interests their support in that area can be explained. Due to the inheritance of racially segregated areas this is expressed in electoral support corresponding to race suggested by the racial census in the elections. The representatives rather see their support as corresponding to social identity than racial identity even if these two are still related. In my mind the racial census might just as well be an expression of social economic groups translated or related to a feeling of belonging to a racial group since the division of racial groups is an inheritance from apartheid that has remained as a social division. An ongoing demographic change of the society where economical division is becoming interracial was also expressed by some of the political representatives. The interracial economic inequalities also suggest new social groups that are more and more irrelevant of corresponding to the racial groups. The black racial group has the biggest inequities within when it comes to income distribution. It is also the biggest population group and most of the political representatives see themselves as representing the lowest income group.

Some of the representatives express what Phillips would regard as the most positive effects of representation of identity by pointing out the importance of belonging to the group you represent to make a difference in political policies. Just as she argues they feel they can take initiatives and make decisions that bring relevant aspects to light and are closer to the interests of the represented. They also believe that social identity is crucial for a feeling of equal representation as presence gets extended to partaking. The partaking can then be experienced as recognition of the group in society which is another important aspect of representation based on presence.

Focusing identity rather than interest could be counteractive to the political goal of a non discriminating society according to one representative. But they were all agreeing on the need of party lists to ensure adequate representation of gender and ethnicity in the beginning of the democratic life of South Africa. It was a way of ensuring representation of the different identities in society as a recognition and acceptance of all the groups weather they had been discriminated or not in the past. The party list system could enable racial and gender representation and worked as guidance in the new democratic society after the first free elections in 1994. Presence of different racial identities is not a current issue anymore but the
presence of gender is according to some representatives. The need for the political parties to nominate women on their lists rather than letting the voters chose representatives is argued as necessary for the representation of gender due to a conservative society. By ensuring partaking by women as political representatives they are recognized and this could lead the way to a more equal society.

Politics of recognition can be described as politics of presence and has been an important part in the political representation in South Africa as a whole and in KwaZulu-Natal particularly. The importance or existence of representation based on identity in KwaZulu-Natal can be argued since we see political parties with very strong regional support linked to a different existence of racial and ethnic groups compared to on a national level. This enforces the view of the elections as racial censuses. But it also enforces the view of racial identity related to social identity because of the inheritance of the apartheid system. Just as Randall argues there might be a feeling of common interests based in a historically shared experience which in this case is the segregation of the racial groups and different treatment of the different racial and ethnical groups during the apartheid regime. The political representatives in this study all proclaim to represent all South Africans today but the racial and ethnical identification of the different parties they represent might be hard to shake off. Maybe their political programs as based on the interest of all South Africans leaves the voters with little to differentiate their programs and more to identify them by their racial past. A reason for this problem can be as mentioned earlier that the political programs of the parties are not clearly pinpointing the parties ideologically but is focusing on the past and their role in the liberation. The will to expand their programs to incorporate all groups is also a will to shake off the racial and ethnical identification in the past expressed by the political representatives I interviewed.

One could say that the political representation of the different political parties has a covert but not an overt racial identity. This can be the reason for an avoidance of politicized ethnicity and a balkanization of society where the different groups are entrenched in their own interest with no will to cooperate and form alliances in society. Politicized ethnicity is also connected to static group support of the own ethnical representatives with no claim of accountability in the elections. But since the parties and their representatives tries to avoid racial and ethnical identity they are also trying to avoid this scenario. Even so accountability is seen as a problem by most the political representatives. Accountability is also a vital part of representation according to all different theories on political representation. Accountability can only be demanded by voters through the elections when the elected can be rewarded or punished by the number of votes in the ballot boxes.

In South Africa as a nation there is one dominating party which makes it hard for the voters to demand accountability since their position is not challenged by an opposition with the prospect of winning the position of power. In KwaZulu-Natal on the other hand there is and has been a rather close competition for political power. There has also been a change of political power from one party to another in the province in contrast to the nation. This situation in turn gives the voters more power in the elections to hold the political parties and their representatives accountable.
The problem with accountability in the province as expressed by some of the political representatives is the absence of a clear link between the elected and the voters. Elections based on party lists and one constituency consisting of the whole province are the main functions that endanger the accountability. If the political representatives only see themselves as representatives of the party and not the voters in combination with no local constituency to be responsible in there can be a weak link between the representatives and their voters. A function in the system connected to the strict party representation that can endanger voters confidence is floor crossing since the voters vote will be transferred to another party when a representative crosses the floor. It is defended though as a way for the individual representative to express the voters’ opinion. If their opinion opposes the party they are elected from and the party expellees them they can’t stay in parliament without moving into another party. These problems are connected to what Pitkin calls a paradox for the representative, to be compliant and simultaneously independent from the voters and in this case the party.

According to the political representatives in this study that demanded better accountability the main function that should be altered in the election system was connected to the sizes of the constituencies. Smaller constituencies could force representatives to perform and thereby improve accountability. Perform in the sense of working in the interests of the people in that constituency in a more efficient way since they will know the area by being more connected to it.

The political representatives that defended the party list system in this study as still valid and necessary today also saw the necessity of disciplined parties with a will to point the direction of the new democratic society. Disciplined parties are a vital part in the theory of Responsible Party model since it argues the need for clear political programs and representatives that enact them. Non discriminating programs should then be translated into non discriminating policies enacted by the representatives. According to some of the representatives this is necessary since the voters are still conservative and discriminated groups need the party lists to gain access to equal representation. This argument is however an argument for representation of identity as in gender and ethnicity in combination with representation of interest.

In my opinion the political representation in this case is based on interests that are strongly connected to social identity as ethnicity, race, gender and income group. And these social identities are strongly connected to the past and the historical experiences of these different social identities. So one could say that there is a mix of interest and identity as basis for the political representation. Some of the representatives focus interest and other focus identity but they all give both importances for the representation of the people.
7 Concluding remarks

Since this is a case study that has limited ability to make generalizations or disapprove generalizations the result is not directly valid in another case but can indicate a shortage or strength of a theory. I think this case study can enlighten both the theories of representation by supporting their ideas of representation of interest or identity. At the same time it indicates that these two theories are not opposing but actually supporting each other. The uniting view is that representation of interest must be central in all political representation in combination with responsiveness and accountability.

The study also indicates that even if an election can be interpreted in an ethnical and racial view this can be an incomplete view of the results. The political representation seem to be moving away from the historical inheritance of racial and ethnical identity to a more complex social identity consisting of gender, income group and race/ethnicity. This must be a consequence of the new democratic society where there exist a will to move away from racial and ethnical politics. It might be time to also move away from a simple racial and ethnic interpretation of politics in the South African context and replace it by a more complex interpretation.

During this study I have been more and more attentive to another paradox that could be a further study concerning political representation on the level of the political parties. A political party according to Giovanni Sartori is an instrument for representing the people and expressing their demands and at the same time a political party according to Joseph Schumpeter is a group of members acting in the competitive struggle for power. This leads to an interesting analysis of the political party as a represent of certain interests balancing the need to maximize votes for power as a future study.
8 References


Afrobarometer homepage: 
http://www.afrobarometer.org

ANC homepage: 
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Democratic Alliance homepage: 
http://www.da.org.za

Inkatha Freedom Party homepage: 
http://ifp.org.za

Minority Fronts homepage: 
http://www-mf.org.za

South Africa’s constitution: 
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South African elections 
http://www.elections.org.za

Statistics of South Africa 
http://www.statssa.gov.za
Interview with political representatives in Provincial Legislature of KwaZulu-Natal

- Personal information.
  Name, political party and political mandate.
  Political mission and history.

- Democratic election of political representatives.
  After three democratic elections what role do you think the freedom to stand in election and the free election of political representatives played in the democratisation of South Africa in general and in Kwa Zulu-Natal in particular?

- Foundation for the representative’s political representation.
  How would you describe the fundamentals of your political representation. Politics? Class? Economic group? Race? Personal characteristics?
  What is characteristic for your politics?

- The representative’s constituency.
  Can you describe your voters?
  What does your constituency look like?
  Who does it consist of?
  Where is it? Physical address and economical state? Urban or rural?

- The role of the representative in politics.
  What can you do as a political representative?
  Important political questions and tasks?
  What can you do and for whom?
  Which groups or individuals?
  What differs you from other political representatives – questions and tasks?

- Legitimacy of the representative towards the electorate.
  What contact do you have with your voters?
  How do you know what they think of your work as a representative?
  How do you know which political questions are important and how to respond to different dilemmas – is it party policy or/and voters?
• The role of presence, ethnicity / race, gender, class.

What do you think of representation of a certain ethnical group?
Do you think the representative need to belong to the same group as the represented?
Do you think a shared identity/group will indicate shared interests?
Do you think a representative need to be a member of a certain group to understand their interests?
Do you think a representative need to share the same experiences to understand the interests of the group?

• The function of the strict party based representation.

What do you think are the strength and weaknesses of a strict partylist election system as opposed to an individual stand in election?
Is it working sufficiently or as intended?
Should it and can it be modified?