

***SOCIAL PROTESTS
AND THE SOCIAL
FABRIC: THE CASE
OF KURUMAN &
SANNIESHOF***

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AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE...

“...where institutions are strong, actors are more likely to participate in the political process through institutionalized arenas,

While

where they are weak, protests and other unconventional means of participation become more appealing”.

(Fabiana Machado, et al., 2011: 340)

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RESEARCH CONTEXT

- Part of a larger study focusing on
 - **Free State** (Kroonstad & Ficksburg)
 - **Northern Cape** (De Aar & Kuruman)
 - **North West** (Sannieshof & Ganyesa)

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TWO CRITICAL QUESTIONS...

1. How are service delivery protests socially constructed and rendered meaningful at collective level?
2. What elements of the “**social fabric**” enable communities to sustain mobilisation against their local municipalities?

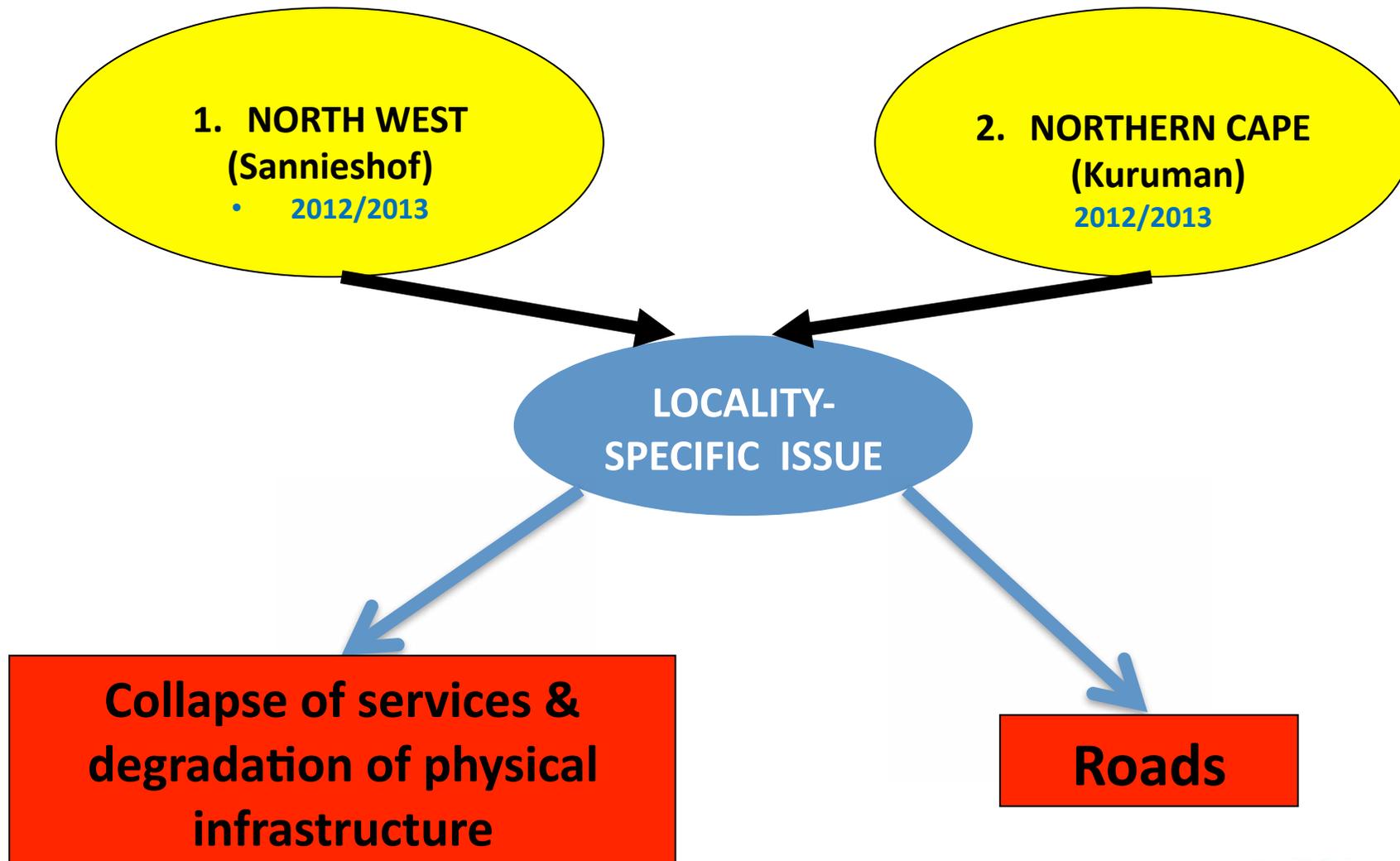
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TWO CASE STUDIES



SANNIESHOF (NORTH WEST) WITHHOLDING OF MUNICIPAL RATES AND TAXES

1. PROTESTS STARTED IN 2005

- SIBU formed after tractor broken down
- Sewage spillage for 7 weeks
- Drinking water & boreholes became contaminated

2. LEGAL DISPUTE DECLARED

- Nov 2007
- Numerous failed attempts to engage LG

3. TRUST ACCOUNT

- Nov 2007-Feb 2013 =
R9, 980, 306.04
- R6,402,156.51 paid to municipality

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WHY THIS PARTICULAR PROTEST TACTIC?

- Politics used to be a topical issue that dominated almost all conversations in the past in South Africa. These days we do not talk politics. Instead, we are asking questions. And one of the most prominently asked question is where is this country going? If the ANC does a good job in governing this country, led them rule for as long as they can. But when weak local government institutions are failing communal life, it creates the context for protest action. The culture of white South Africans is this: ***'If you have a car and it is not broken, you will not go and deliberately devise means to break it. This is where we differ with other communities. We don't break what we have built... This is our only means... In fact, we see it us our civic duty to constructively preserve our infrastructure'*** (SIBU Chairperson)

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NORTHERN CAPE CASE STUDY

- Protests started in May 2012 in **Olifantshoek**
 - Affected one high school & two primary schools with a learner population of 2,500
 - **Main demand**: Resignation of Gamagara LM mayor

- Spread to **Kuruman** villages
 - Affected 35 schools
 - **Main demand**: 100km road linking their villages with the N14 to be tarred

PRESCHOOLS



“KILLING TIME”



MARCH 2012



MARCH 2013



KURUMAN

- NC Department of Education intervened by booking Grade 12 learners in the affected areas into special camps
- Due to high levels of intimidation, some learners were forced to return home
- Sadly, for the first time in the history of SA, parents denied their own children access to education in order to gain the attention of the government

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KURUMAN VILLAGES

- “We don’t have the luxury of public facilities here... Our only weapon, as destructive as it may seem to outsiders, was to forcefully shut down schools. You may call it intimidation, but we call it community power”

Leader: Cassel Village Residents’ Forum

“We never planned any violent strategy. We have exhausted all public spaces of dialogue and they all failed us. The community and not us [leaders] decided to shut down schools. Well, in any case, violence seems to be the only language our government understands” **Leader:**

Residents’ Forum

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IN CONCLUSION...

- **SANNIESHOF**
 - SIBU – professionally structured CSO
 - Inclusive social networks
 - To what extent are ratepayers' associations such as SIBU “**white elites concerned exclusively with their own interests**”?
- **KURUMAN**
 - No clear organisational structure (formed by ANCYL members)
 - Deep-rooted poverty
 - Despite a myriad of significant roleplayers (DBE, SADTU & civil society organisations), the social fabric in this community was shattered