

The meaning of the 2024 elections : biometric governance and the trust problem

Keith Breckenridge, August 2024

At the end of the very last session of the week-long 2024 ID4Africa meetings in Cape Town, when most of the salesmen and government employees had retreated to the city's bars, a young official from the South African Department of Home Affairs stood up to denounce my presentation. The department, she explained angrily, was the custodian of the single source of trust in South Africa, and that if it failed in its duties, trust in the country would collapse. The official was reacting to my – consciously even-handed – account of the implications of the earlier Pretoria High Court judgement against the department for the marking and blocking of the population register records of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of South Africans. As the documents from that case eloquently demonstrate, the marking of these records effectively disables the identity numbers, locking the holders out of the essential elements of citizenship.¹ They can no longer access any of the indispensable government credentials – from birth certificates to drivers' licenses to social grant cards; they cannot transact in the banking and insurance systems; and they may not register to vote. Given that the court submissions show that many – perhaps most – of those whose numbers have been marked are unequivocally South African citizens, often children, who are inadvertent victims of the department's own clerical errors, the young official's insistence was troubling.

A week later, on the last day of May, South Africans went to the polls for a national election that produced results that were truly startling. This essay is a close study of the politics of the election – and especially of the operations of trust and biometric identification in shaping them. The story of the South African election draws out some familiar elements of the global distress about trust in institutions, not least because, for the first time in the country's history, political parties attacked the integrity of the well-respected national election commission. But it will also highlight some unusual features of trust, and especially the interweaving of the country's tribal trusts and trust in biometric government. All of this helps to explain some of the young official's vehemence in defence of the department's grim pruning of identity numbers. Perhaps more importantly, it also suggests a theoretical explanation for the very wide commitment to coercive biometric identification technologies on the African continent.

On June 1, 2024, the African National Congress, in power for thirty unbroken years, lost political control of the country. After two days of counting, the final distribution of the 400 elected members of parliament showed that the party had lost 71 of its 230 seats. The second largest party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), grew slightly, mostly at the expense of the far right Freedom Front Plus, ending up with 81 seats. The real winners of the election were both new populist parties: former president Jacob Zuma's spinoff from the ANC, *uMkhonto weSizwe (MKP)*, secured 58 seats and Gayton Mackenzie's *Patriotic Alliance*, which had explicitly targeted Afrikaans-speaking Coloured voters, was allocated nine new seats. Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) lost five seats, falling from 44 to 39, and its place in the top three in the national parliament. The well-resourced, centrist parties focusing on the failures of ANC governance and corruption also did

1 Jonathan Klaaren, "Home Affairs and the Strange Case of ID-Blocking," August 7, 2024.

poorly, with the exception of the old vehicle of Zulu nationalism, the Inkatha Freedom Party, which grew slightly to 17 representatives. In combination the three parties of the new black liberalism—Songezo Szibi's Rise Mzansi, Herman Mashaba's ActionSA and Maimane's BuildOne South Africa—were allocated only ten seats. By the end of the weekend it was clear that the ANC had to choose between forming a national coalition government with the anti-constitutionalists in the EFF and the MKP or a similarly sized liberal faction dominated by the white voters of the DA.

The ANC also lost control of all the wealthy provinces. In the Western Cape, long the Democratic Alliance's stronghold, and home to the most lucrative property and tourism sectors, white commercial farming and the dominant institutions of finance and insurance, the ANC's share of the vote fell below twenty percent for the first time. In Gauteng — the fifteen million person metropolis encompassing the old cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria — that generates a third of the country's GDP dominated by the retailing, banking and a battered industrial sector, the ANC's support fell from a half to a third of the legislature. But it was in KwaZulu-Natal, especially in the eastern seaboard cities dominated by the ports in Durban and Richards Bay, and home to eleven million mostly isiZulu-speakers, that the ANC's share of the vote collapsed, falling from from 55% to 15%. In the five remaining provinces – all still dominated by what can usefully be described as the distinctive bantustan combination of mining, commercial agriculture and customary farming – the party's hold on power was undiminished.

These results had been predicted in the weeks leading up to the election, but few people took them seriously. Many had certainly expected the ANC to be punished in the polls. South Africa has suffered from an intense crisis of governance for more than a decade, with systematic failures of almost all forms of infrastructure. Nation-wide electricity shortages have been managed with notorious planned blackouts called loadshedding that bring the large pieces of the economy to a brutal standstill. During 2023 the power utility had been forced to cut power nationally between six and twelve hours on more than 150 days. The economic and social cost of the power cuts were devastating, especially for the small firms responsible for much of the formal employment. Loadshedding triggered a cascading crisis of failure in the rail, power and water as the electricity failures left infrastructures exposed to theft and the collapse of local reservoirs. The rich and the most well capitalised firms could partly insulate themselves from some of the power problems with expensive solar generating and storage systems, but the shredding of the water and transport networks affected everyone. Popular rage in the country at the collapse of Eskom, the industrial leviathan of the Apartheid era, was harnessed by all the parties – even by Zuma's new party, which was populated by the key figures chiefly responsible for the mess.

The Zondo Commission that ran for four years from mid-2018 had produced an extraordinary, televised national spectacle, detailing the ugly politics of corruption under his presidency. The six part, seventeen volume report, examined the wrecking of the institutional capacity of the state-owned corporations, and the involvement of some of the key private firms and international consultants working in the country in attacks on the revenue authority and the treasury. The report left little doubt about the extent and severity of corruption under Zuma's government, and his personal involvement with the Gupta family and their agents, who had shredded the capacity of key state institutions. Yet Zuma's current, and ongoing, prosecution for corruption dates not from the Zondo commission, nor his rape trial, but to the earlier indictment against him from Thabo Mbeki's

government in 2005. He has been in and out of the courts for two decades as his lawyers have perfected what they call the Stalingrad strategy. For the English-reading public – many of them dealing with the effects of smashed state corporations in their daily work and living requirements for electricity, water and transportation—a persuasive Zuma candidacy was simply unthinkable.

Less obvious, especially to those outside the country, was the slow change led by the Ramaphosa government in the three months leading up to the election. Eskom kept the lights on for seventy uninterrupted days – leading politicians to warn darkly that everything would fall apart after the polling. In fact the new managers at the parastatal had performed what all outside experts had predicted was impossible, driving the Electricity Available Factor (EAF) – the measure of good order in the power stations – back to the level it had last seen more than a decade earlier. In combination with tens of thousands of new, privately-funded, solar installations the country had solved the power generation crisis by the time of the vote. The reform of Eskom formed part of a much wider, difficult and cumbersome effort to set the country’s massive bureaucracy back to work to fix the economy, called Operation Vulindlela.

The significance of the institutional reforms sponsored by Vulindlela can be nicely captured by the ferociously digital forensic investigations they triggered in the Department of Home Affairs, custodians of the biometric population register that anchors all the elements of life in South Africa. In the aftermath of the public outcry (mostly on social media) over the granting in 2016 of permanent residence to the Malawian prophet, Shepherd Bushiri, a special government commission led by one of the investigators from the Zondo commission began to dig into the department. When fourteen officials in the permitting section signed a petition addressed to the minister demanding that the internal Corruption Unit should stop “investigating their errors” it triggered an even larger disciplinary investigation.

The Special Investigating Unit employed an outside auditing firm, Nexis SAB&T, and, together, they extracted the full transactional databases used by the department for all civil, visa and movement transactions between 2004 and 2020. The auditing company examined desktop computers and access control systems across the entire department; they found key loggers, security log edits, fake login records and piles of unsecured application records – leaving the department’s reputation as custodian of the most valuable databases in the country in shreds. The auditors then imported two billion records from the movement control section (recording border crossings), fifteen million visa application records from VFS Global, 240 million refugee applications, 340 million records from the airline pre-boarding databases and, most remarkably and in the face of protests from the department, all 120 million entries from the National Population Register into an SAS data mining server. They ran entity extraction queries against this massive dataset, looking for people, places and transactions that were suspiciously linked to each other or administratively irregular (like rapidly processed visa applications!). The results produced a database of 300,000 suspect transactions and, critically, identified 70 suspect officials inside the department. South African labour law is notoriously capacious, and to date, there have been few criminal prosecutions of the named officials and no public evidence of disciplinary investigations.²

2 Ntwaagae Seleka, “Home Affairs Dept Official in Court for Allegedly Selling Passports for R3 000 Each,” News24, May 2, 2024, <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/home-affairs-dept-official-in-court-for-allegedly-selling-passports-for-r3-000-each-20240502>.

While many of the department's critics – and many ordinary citizens -- have suggested that the effort to apply digital governance to all elements of life in South Africa has been the source of the problems of identification, the audit report produced a ferocious recommitment to computerisation. The doubling down on the investment in a purely digital government in the aftermath of the investigation has been intense – no applications for visas may be processed outside of VFS's network, all paper records from before 2004 are to be digitised, officials may interact with the databases only through their own fingerprints, no professional intermediaries may channel applications to the department. The report also called for the development of integrated queries using DHA's records and the outside databases maintained by SAQA, SAPS and SABRIC.³

While the problems of under-investment and poor management, especially in the urban and transport infrastructures remain obvious and frightening, it is important to take the politics of Vulindlela seriously. There have been surprising and meaningful successes in reforming the bureaucracy – much of it involving cooperation between the largest businesses and the state. The very large vote for Zuma's *Umkhonto weSizwe*, far from being punishment of the failures of the ANC, signalled a large portion of the public's repudiation of these reforms and, at least, indifference to the unconstrained looting (and institutional collapses) of the previous decade. The intensity of the SIU audit of Home Affairs can help us to see some of what is at stake in these efforts.

The personalisation of the corruption problem around the personality of the former president also tends to obscure the benefits of what Vulindlela is doing (and to deflect consideration of some of the dangers of the intensification of an already paralysing audit culture.) Far from strengthening the process of reform, for Zuma's supporters the imprisonment of the former president signalled that the country's apex court had been drawn into the internal struggles of the ANC.⁴ It was a comparatively minor contempt of court finding, again imposed by the same Constitutional Court, for refusal to appear before the Zondo State Capture enquiry – a government commission established by the Zuma presidency in 2018. The mysterious six month extended leave of Mogoeng Mogoeng, Zuma's chief justice, over the period of the 2021 hearings against the former president did not help. Yet, the idea of a carefully worked out plan to use the court to target him is unlikely, not least because Ramaphosa seems to have approved Arthur Fraser's decision, two months later, to release Zuma on medical parole. More reasonably, the court seems to have been trying to show that in the face of Zuma's intensifying attacks on the judiciary and the drumbeat of the Zondo revelations that the principle of the rule of law – and the dignity of the justices -- must be upheld; it was, as Khampepe's judgement begins, "indeed the lofty and lonely work of the Judiciary, impervious to public commentary and political rhetoric, to uphold, protect and apply the Constitution and the law at any and all costs."⁵ The costs of the mass violence and looting – already

3 "Ministerial Committee Reviewing Permits and Visas : Portfolio Committee Presentation," http://static.pmg.org.za/220712Report_on_review_of_permits_-_Final.pptx; "Report of the Review by Ministerial Committee on the Issuance of Permits and Visas" (Ministry of Home Affairs, June 10, 2022), https://static.pmg.org.za/Review-Issuance_of_visas_permits.pdf.

4 Poloko Tau, "KZN Burns for Zuma," City Press, July 11, 2021, <https://www.news24.com/citypress/politics/kzn-burns-for-zuma-20210710-2>.

5 S Khampepe, Secretary of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State v Zuma and Others, No. CCT 52/21 (Constitutional Court June

threatening in KwaZulu-Natal before the judgement – on the reputation of the law did not form part of the court’s calculus.

In a similar way it was the constitutional court that clumsily damaged the public reputation of the Electoral Commission in the months leading up to the election. First by insisting on a major change in the eligibility and procedure for balloting at the end of 2023 and then, days before the poll, confirming the commission’s decision that the 82 year-old president – as a recently convicted criminal – was not eligible to stand for Parliament. In the face of the warnings about cost and practicalities from the IEC, the court agreed with Musi Maimane’s challenge to the requirement in the new electoral act that candidates must satisfy to appear on the ballot.⁶ With just three month’s notice, the new requirements lowered the threshold of signatures required by independent candidates from 15% of the previous successful ballot to 1,000. To make space for dozens of suddenly eligible individuals, the IEC required a special third ballot paper to be added to the long-established system of national and provincial lists.

Inevitably this confusing third ballot paper gummed up the process of voting across the country, leaving tens of thousands of people queuing long after the polls had closed. (To be fair to the justices, this was not one of the risks described by the commission). To add to this problem, the Commission had, months before the unplanned work of the Court’s new ballot paper, lobbied for a change in the Electoral Act that required voters to cast their ballots only at the voting station to which they were originally registered. This change in the practice of voting, which had previously allowed voters some flexibility about their choice of voting station, meant thousands of people being turned away from their initial voting stations. The general disorder and inconvenience was made ridiculous by the fact that not a single one of the independent candidates attracted enough votes to earn a seat in the provincial or national parliaments.

The combination of changes and delays produced general public irritation, and left the Commission unusually vulnerable to the carefully prepared attack on its legitimacy from the Zuma camp. That project started before the election when the Independent Newspaper group aligned with the MKP began to publish stories under the heading “How much do we trust the IEC?” about members being turned away from polling stations, and about ballot boxes being left unattended. During the counting the party claimed that the Minister of Police, Bheki Cele – a much feared ANC leader from KZN and notorious opponent of Jacob Zuma – had caused the computers displaying the results tally to crash. As the final outcome became obvious on Saturday, June 1, with the MKP at 46% in KwaZulu-Natal and still well short of the majority it requires to govern, Zuma began to demand a recount and to warn darkly of being “provoked.” For the first time in the thirty years of the democratic order, these accusations of vote-rigging from the MKP were joined by many of the smaller parties. What defused these protests, interestingly, was the ANC’s unambiguous acceptance of the devastating results, the DA’s rapid announcement that it would support the ANC (and

29, 2021).

6 CJ Zondo, *One Movement South Africa NPC v President of the Republic of South Africa and Others* (CCT 158/23) [2023] ZACC 42; 2024 (3) BCLR 364 (CC); 2024 (2) SA 148 (CC) (4 December 2023), No. CCT 158/23, accessed August 15, 2024.

Vulindlela) against the MKP and the EFF, and Ramaphosa's deeply cunning announcement that all parties were welcome to join a government of national unity.

It is also important to be careful about what these election results actually show. It is easy to be drawn into an argument about the consequences of declining legitimacy, and the virtues of democratic assessment, that, unfortunately, have no basis in the facts of what happened. The ANC did remarkably well (given their record and the length of their term in office) in the provinces that have no significant isiZulu-speaking population. They received over 70% of the vote in the northern Limpopo province, over 60% in the eastern Cape, nearly 60% in the North West and close to 50% of all votes cast in Mpumalanga, the Free State and the Northern Cape. What was surprising was the consistency of the turnout for Zuma in Gauteng and Mpumalanga, the provinces with large isiZulu-speaking minorities. In KwaZulu-Natal the consistency of the turn out for the Zuma party was truly shocking. In the Durban townships of Umlazi and KwaMashu the ANC fell from 80% of the vote to the low twenties. *Umkhonto weSizwe* rose from nothing to take that 80% share. The *Inkatha Freedom Party*, erstwhile political representative of Zulu tradition, also saw a modest 10% increase (especially in the districts dominated by the Ingonyama Trust). Like the ANC, in KwaZulu-Natal the vote for Julius Malema's fiercely race-conscious and modernising *Economic Freedom Fighters* fell by 80%.

Zuma's *uMkhonto weSizwe*, had only been active as an independent party for six months, and it had very few assets as a political movement. In that short period of its existence it had experienced continuous, bad tempered internal conflicts and crises. Its founder, Jabulani Khumalo, and four other prominent members, were expelled from the party one month before the election. The contests over these expulsions, and the resulting seats in parliament, continued in the courts long after the results of the election. All of which made it difficult to work out what exactly – aside from defending the personality of the former president – the party was actually trying to achieve politically.

The commentators who did read the party's manifesto, *The people's mandate*, can be forgiven for wondering how it is meant to be taken seriously, with twenty pages of contradictory policy recommendations. Aside from its repeated, bitter denunciation of the political constraints of the constitutional order and its insistence on parliamentary supremacy, the manifesto is composed of plans that can only undermine each other. All land, for example, is to be expropriated without compensation "under state and traditional leadership custodianship." Yet the manifesto denounces "unsecured lending" and calls for "a housing guarantee scheme modelled on US agencies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac [entirely dependent on privately owned mortgages] to encourage home construction and ownership" and "the development of a fixed rate mortgage market." The framework consists of madly optimistic, paired policies that can only negate each other. It argues repeatedly, on the one hand, for a return to "African spiritual and moral values" and, on the other, for a "special venture capital fund of funds" to "unleash unleash entrepreneurship in innovative, knowledge intensive firms." It calls for a massive expansion in the scope and value of the social grants that millions of South Africans currently receive and for a well paid government guaranteed job in every home. All of this to be achieved whilst also prohibiting additional investment in the country's mines. It is easy to see why analysts decided that, aside perhaps from the rejection of the existing constitutional order, that the party's voters had something else in mind.

Across the political spectrum, politicians (and commentators) quickly attributed the shocking consistency of the MKP turnout to a return to primordial tribalised politics that dominates the countries north of our border. Within hours of the first results, both the ANC's national chair, Gwede Mantashe, and Helen Zille, federal chair of the Democratic Alliance – who rarely otherwise agree – had described the vote as tribalism, a “backward form of politics”, and as an “ethnic identity vote.” The leaders of MKP professed outrage at these dismissals, but they also like to indulge the popular enthusiasm for the Zulu monarch, for the historical and linguistic distinctiveness of the province, and the long blurred lines between Zulu nationalism and black people in general. These sentiments of regional distinctiveness are actually defined by the province's history of political violence, which sets the members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (mostly on Ingonyama Trust land) against the supporters of the UDF and ANC, who live in the townships adjacent to Durban and Pietermaritzburg.

Yet ethnicity is a poor explanation for the party's appeal. As we will see, many of the isiZulu speaking supporters of the MKP, like the people of the party's core in KwaXimba, are not ethnically Zulu at all. What distinguishes Zuma as a politician is his ability to mobilize people from both of these camps by appealing to both the importance of tradition and the benefits of the modern welfare state. For Zuma supporters, his public battles demonstrate, not the devastating institutional collapses of his presidency, but the unfairness of prosecuting him alone. The reasonableness of this accusation of injustice has not been weakened by the behaviour of the other non-isiZulu speaking leaders of the ANC, especially President Ramaphosa's ridiculous storing of hundreds of thousands of US dollars in the furniture of his game lodge in the Waterberg. (South African law makes it a crime for citizens to hold foreign currency.)

The old man's most prominent daughter and his chief political spokesperson, Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, was reviled in the English-language media as the social media instigator of the devastating 2021 looting in KwaZulu-Natal and as an enthusiastic supporter of Vladimir Putin after the invasion of Ukraine. Speaking in the month before the election in her father's absence at a campaign rally in the western suburbs of Durban, her need for an isiZulu translator seemed to mock the arguments about the party's ability to mobilise people on the basis of tribal loyalties. Yet Zuma-Sambudla's many critics might have found something of an explanation in the party's manifesto which speaks bitterly about South Africa as a society “dominated culturally, artistically, spiritually, and economically by a minority group with an alien culture.” One of the results of which is that “our children grow up disconnected from their heritage, losing the ability to speak African languages, and moving away from ancestral traditions and values.”⁷

There is, unquestionably, an element here of Peter Ekeh's famous 1975 essay on the bifurcated moral publics that were generated by the instruments of colonial government. On the one hand, what he calls the primordial realm of groupings and sentiments and, on the other, the civic public which he suggests is amoral and separated from the private realm. Ekeh had used Peter Banfield's very famous work on the Sicilian mafia to map the gap between public virtue and amoral familism. In sweet contrast with the world we now live in, he noted that the Sicilian “exception that proves the rule” about the shared moral foundation of the private and public realms in Western society :

7 MK Party, “The People's Mandate : Reclaiming Our Birth Right,” March 26, 2024, <https://mkparty.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/MK-Manifesto-The-Peoples-Mandate-Paths-Final-2.pdf>.

moral publics have been changed dramatically in the last half century, and Ekeh and Banford would surely argue now that the tribally divided moral domain no longer afflicts only those who live in the colonial world.

What is distinctive about KwaZulu-Natal is that ethnicised, indeed linguistic, mistrust is not confined to the relationship between provincial and local government representatives and the people they are charged with providing services. It torments the ANC itself. Since the beginning of Ramaphosa's presidency the provincial government has been led by figures – especially Sihle Zikalala – distinguished only by their loyalty to the national party, and their refusal to align themselves wholeheartedly with Zuma. As the July 2021 riots showed, they have also completely lost control and influence over their own party members in the province. Two corruption prosecutions stripped the party of its long dominant provincial leaders. The first, of former premier, S'bu Ndebele, was initiated under the Zuma administration for corruption in the national Department of Transport. The second, of Zweli Mkhize, who had challenged Ramaphosa for leadership of the party with Zuma's support at the ANC's 2022 convention. That investigation was triggered by the Digital Vibes scandal into bribes and over-billing in Mkhize's national department of cooperative governance and traditional affairs. While in both cases the accusations are substantial, they have also effectively decapitated the party – stripping it of the authority of the dominant political figures in the province. The dismissals also strengthened the sense of unfair targeting of prosecutions of politicians from KwaZulu-Natal. And made it possible for the Zuma faction, now outside of the ANC, to turn the party's own local government officials against it. National leaders of the party spoke darkly and anonymously to the Sunday Times after the election of “comrades who are MK in ANC t-shirts” and of deliberate scheming to encourage the municipal workers' strike and “sabotaging the ANC's efforts to end it.” Given the way that party branch politics works in South Africa, some, at least, of this pervasive mood of mistrust seems justified by the astonishingly high turnouts for MKP in the province's townships.⁸

In Zuma's case, the views of his supporters are both clear and perplexing. In these accounts, the ANC leaders, at both the national and the local government levels, are relentlessly and shamelessly corrupt. They are also arrogant, and incompetent. And they have left their supporters without the basic forms of service provision long promised by the state, especially in the sprawling working-class suburbs of Durban, where reticulated water into the home and electricity now routinely fail. The collapse of municipal services has, indeed, been intense in Durban both before and after the looting and flooding in 2021. It has been exacerbated by trafficking in the electrical infrastructures required to sustain distribution, sometimes with the obvious collusion of the police, and frequently distorted by the use of privately contracted water tankers to address failures of distribution. The very public alliance between the self-described *izigebengu* of the amandelangokubona construction extortionists, the previous ANC mayor of Durban, Zanele Gumedede, and the former president marked a moment of existential crisis for the country's black and white businesses.⁹ This all provides a powerful mix of suspicion and deprivation, with intense mistrust over the agonising delays over many years in repairing infrastructures. The municipal failures help to explain some of

⁸ Matiwane Zimasa, “Triumphant MK ‘Sets Its Sights on KZN Local Councils,’” *Sunday Times*, June 2, 2024, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/politics/2024-06-02-triumphant-mk-sets-its-sights-on-kzn-local-councils/>; Jacob Dlamini, “The Root of the Matter: Scenes from an ANC Branch,” *African Studies* 69, no. 1 (April 1, 2010): 187–203, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00020181003647280>.

the dramatic swing from the ANC to the MKP in the townships of Umlazi and KwaMashu. But it is also true that the ANC local government figures in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, many of them accused of corruption, are amongst Zuma's most fervent supporters, and that Zuma is widely understood to have freely helped himself to state resources. His supporters respond to these questions by suggesting that all politicians are corrupt: "No one is innocent, they all have skeletons."¹⁰

The rest of this essay will go on to discuss three forms of tribal trust in KwaZulu-Natal – the Ingonyama Trust, the Richards Bay Minerals trusts, and the Mayibuye trust in KwaXimba – and their effects on politics and violence in the province. It will focus, especially, on the KwaXimba district, home of the progressive Mlaba chieftaincy that allied with the ANC and the Ethekwini municipality under the mayoralty of Obed Mlaba before Zuma's 2007 ascendancy. The essay will examine how the promise of the Mayibuye trust disintegrated, leading to the assassination of the old chief, and the institutionalisation of conflict around the unregulated rents from illegal land sales. It will examine how the KwaXimba ANC branch became a Zuma fortress and how the branch located increasingly violent conflicts over municipal patronage. The final part of the essay examines the biometric technologies used by the ANC centre to gain control over the branches, and the effects of these audit and identification tools – derived from and linked to the biometric population register -- on the Zuma megabranches, and of KwaXimba in particular. It will conclude with a discussion of biometric devices as tools of trust.

9 Jenni Irish-Qhobosheane, "Extortion or Transformation: The Construction Mafia in South-Africa" (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, June 2022); *President of Delangokubona Business Forum, Mr Nathi (Bhamuza) Mnyandu at #RETConference Part1*, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWW188Xzq1c>; *President of Delangokubona Business Forum, Mr Nathi (Bhamuza) Mnyandu at #RETConference Part2*, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5LPzQNpcAc>; Ayabonga Cawe, "'Delangokubona' and the Distribution of Rents and Opportunity," June 2022, <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/%E2%80%98delangokubona%E2%80%99-and-distribution-rents-and-opportunity>.

10 Sakhiseni Nxumalo and Nkosikhona Duma, "'We Just Love Zuma, and We Trust Him': MK Party Supporters Say They Are Hopeful for Positive Change," *News24*, May 31, 2024, sec. News24, <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/we-just-love-zuma-and-we-trust-him-mk-party-supporters-say-they-are-hopeful-for-positive-change-20240531>.