

Populism in South Africa

Sharlene Swartz - Speaking points

1. **A populist President** elected with a 2/3 majority in 2009 – now embattled but with a ruling party unable to ask him to step down
2. **Student protest movement** – focussed on inequality in general, access to higher education, and working class wages especially on university campuses – started with wide public support in 2015, but this year has lost popular support – partly through media representations of student violence, partly because of little student outreach to local communities
3. Popular calls for land restitution - and nationalisation of mines and banks by a newish opposition party – **the Economic Freedom Fighters**, who walks out of Parliament when the President appears. But who have also resulted in many more South Africans watching parliamentary proceedings and potentially becoming more engaged.

What confidence do we in people's ability to see through posturing?