

SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL ELECTIONS 2016

From One Party Dominance
to Effective Plural Democracy

Hlawulani MKHABELA

November 2016

The Institut français des relations internationales (Ifri) is a research center and a forum for debate on major international political and economic issues. Headed by Thierry de Montbrial since its founding in 1979, Ifri is a non-governmental, non-profit organization.

As an independent think tank, Ifri sets its own research agenda, publishing its findings regularly for a global audience. Using an interdisciplinary approach, Ifri brings together political and economic decision-makers, researchers and internationally renowned experts to animate its debate and research activities.

With offices in Paris and Brussels, Ifri stands out as one of the rare French think tanks to have positioned itself at the very heart of European debate.

The opinions expressed in this text are the responsibility of the author alone.

ISBN: 978-2-36567-641-0

© All rights reserved, Ifri, 2016

How to quote this document:

Hlawulani Mkhabela, “South African Local Elections 2016. From One Party Dominance to Effective Plural Democracy”, *Études de l’Ifri*, November 2016.

Ifri

27 rue de la Procession 75740 Paris Cedex 15 – FRANCE

Tel.: +33 (0)1 40 61 60 00 – Fax: +33 (0)1 40 61 60 60

Email: accueil@ifri.org

Ifri-Bruxelles

Rue Marie-Thérèse, 21 1000 – Bruxelles – BELGIQUE

Tel.: +32 (0)2 238 51 10 – Fax: +32 (0)2 238 51 15

Email: bruxelles@ifri.org

Website: ifri.org

Author

Hlawulani Mkhabela is a South African researcher with an interest in African political transitions and civilians in conflict. She holds a Master's Degree in Human Rights and Humanitarian Action from Sciences Po Paris, and is currently preparing a PhD project concerned with African women's movements in times of political crisis. Her career in civil society began in South Africa where she founded Miyela, an NGO facilitating youth civic participation and socio-political debate. She is currently an English lecturer at Arts et Métier's Chalons-en-Champagne campus.

Table of contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 7 |
| UNDERSTANDING THE 2016 LOCAL ELECTIONS | 11 |
| The election result: a bitter defeat | 11 |
| Why local elections matter so much? Understanding the political and economic significance of local government | 16 |
| Patronage and control of the cities | 20 |
| The impact of the presidency's crisis | 21 |
| How the metros were lost: local causes and a disgruntled black middle class | 24 |
| The rise of the opposition | 29 |
| AFTER THE LOCAL ELECTIONS | 35 |
| The DA and the EFF: the partnership and its prospects | 35 |
| The post-election fallout and the battle in the ANC | 38 |
| CONCLUSION: TOWARDS THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS | 43 |

Introduction

The South African political landscape experienced a shock from an unlikely source; the country's local government elections on August 3, 2016 representing the last tier of government and often overlooked in favour of national and provincial polls. This year's vote was a barometer of public sentiment towards the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and heralds a wind of change that is blowing through SA's politics, leaving the possibility for growth and disruption in its wake. The watershed municipal election is the biggest opposition breakthrough since the National Party (NP) government was toppled in 1994 and it excludes the ANC from the running of four of the eight metro municipalities, densely populated cities that generate more than half of the country's wealth.¹ It is unsurprising that the official opposition continues to hold Cape Town, the country's second largest city, the only metropolitan where black people are the minority and the New National Party (the former NP) retained significant support before it was dissolved. But even polls indicating widespread dissatisfaction with the ruling party failed to register the extent to which the party had fallen out of favour with urban voters, and all commentators underestimated the acuity of the opposition united to dethrone the ANC. The party may still rule most of South Africa, but it has been expelled from key centres of political and economic influence. It failed to piece together a coalition to obtain the over 50% majority required to govern the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, the location of two important ports and the country's burgeoning automotive industry. But the hardest blow came from a partnership between the liberal right Democratic Alliance (DA) and the leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) who usurped the ANC's position in two metros in Gauteng. The ANC relinquished Tshwane, home to the city of Pretoria, and also lost the 'City of Gold', Johannesburg, the country's economic powerhouse with over four million

1. There are 278 municipalities, of which 8 are metropolitan municipalities. Metros are largely independent local government structures which exercise exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority within their area. Metros are the most urbanized areas and must have more than 500,000 voters. Metro councils manage the delivery of services and the development of infrastructure. For GDP generated by metros see: "The 2016 Local Government Elections and the Metros – Part II: The Base Line for 2016", Helen Suzman Foundation, 2 July 2016.

inhabitants contributing about 17% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product.²

The arrogance which fed President Jacob Zuma's statement that the ANC would rule until Jesus comes back may be sorely misplaced.³ Though "the Messiah" may not be walking the streets of Johannesburg, the election has introduced a new uncertainty to the nation's politics, making the question of succession within the ANC one that urgently needs an answer, and encouraging many to hazard that in future elections the position of the liberation movement will increasingly be challenged. The election points to falling national popularity, but the party also faces trouble at home with tensions in the ranks of the party rising and increasing friction in its Tripartite Alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the trade union movement.⁴ The embattled ruling party must now contemplate dismantling local level governing structures overlain with a network of political and individual economic interests, and confront a menagerie of opposition parties emboldened by the current climate and eager to compete to govern 27 hung municipalities where no party gained the absolute majority. It is premature to claim that South Africa is primed to be led by another political organisation, but it is now obvious that South Africans appear ready to challenge the regime to rule differently and may welcome other players into the political arena. This is a new era with the possibility to mature and enhance plural democracy as the electorate realises its potential to bring about change through the electoral process. As formal and informal coalitions between oppositions form and political parties shake off ideological straitjackets in order to challenge the ruling party, South Africa could provide an example for the region's opposition parties eager to challenge established governments led by former liberation movements. But what is happening will also likely set forth great disruption as the status-quo is challenged and power is shifted

To fully understand what has occurred in South Africa and the debates that will shape the country's future, this article examines the result of the past election and explains how the ANC progressively eroded the trust of the voting public. The significance of local elections and the metros is

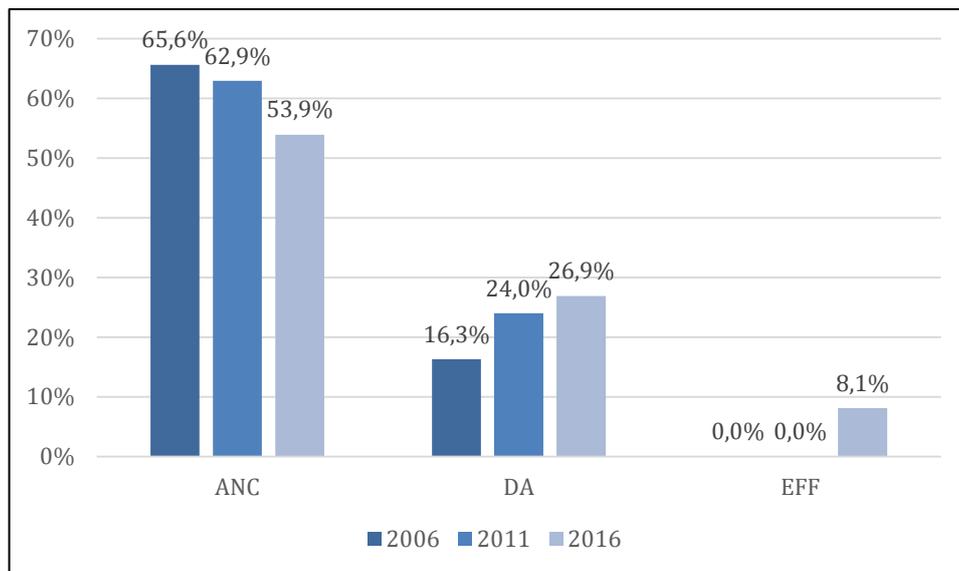
2. "City of Johannesburg: 2012/16 Integrated Development Plan" The City of Johannesburg, May 2013, www.joburg.org.za.

3. "Zuma Repeats that ANC Will Rule until Jesus Comes", *Mail and Guardian*, 5 July 2016, mg.co.za.

4. In early 1990's as the apartheid regime relinquished control, the ANC initiated a strong strategic coalition with the SACP and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the largest federation of trade unions in the country. Since the ANC had been banned until 1991 its activities on the ground in South Africa were limited, but the coalition permitted the party to tap into the support base of workers' movements which had been centres for anti-apartheid protests and enjoyed political legitimacy.

unravelling to describe the new space of political competition and potential instability in which the country finds itself. The discussion then taps into the future, presenting the altered face of South African politics defined by a party used to power and intent on etching its way back, and coalitions that may threaten the ruling administration, but are also barely comfortable marriages of convenience that will be severely tested. Finally, the article asks what could be next for the party that has largely controlled South African politics, and cautions that a change of president may not be enough to revise the ANC's blemished image as the party appears to fracture and tear into itself following its poor showing. The nation's democracy is experiencing a new phase which began with the elections in August 2016, and over the coming years there is the potential for effective multi-party politics and economic growth, as well as instability and violent social disruption.

Percentage of total national vote in municipal elections



Data Source: "Local Government Elections", News24, www.news24.com.

Understanding the 2016 Local Elections

The election result: a bitter defeat

This is an important moment in South Africa's post-apartheid history, and its significance encompasses more than the eventual decline in popularity of liberation movements with the passage of time and as voters' interests gain importance over struggle ideologies. Any claim that the ANC is losing its grip on power needs to be qualified. Simple statements can miss the nuances in South African history and the interaction between local and national political contexts that encouraged the outcome and will alter not only who governs South Africa, but also how the country can be governed. The end is not here for the ANC, but it is the end of a period of unchecked authority and one-party domination. The party will finally have to compete to govern: a process that will be riddled with growing pains for the organisation. The ANC which came into power with Nelson Mandela at its helm after the first democratic elections in 1994 continues to enjoy support and won the majority of local municipalities, securing 53.9% of the vote.⁵ Its closest rival, the Democratic Alliance, obtained 26.9% of the overall vote growing only about 3% since the 2014 national.

Victory, however, in this election was not defined by whether the party would gain the overall majority, even its staunchest critics cannot deny that the ruling party continues to harness popular appeal. The critical concern was not if the ANC would win votes, but victory for the embattled government was defined in two ways. Firstly, whether the ANC could retain support amongst loyal black voters that make up the majority and who secured the party's uncontested position in the past. The second test for Zuma's government was whether the party under his leadership could continue to practice unmatched control of seven metropolitan municipalities which are the drivers of national economy. The ANC firmly held all metros except for Cape Town, a former National Party (NP)

5. Unless otherwise specified for election result see "Results Summary – All Ballots, Independent Electoral Committee website, printed 11 August 2016", www.elections.org.za.

stronghold, which after some wrangling was captured by a Democratic Alliance-led coalition in 2006.⁶

The leadership has failed on both counts, it could not address the concerns of unhappy voters despite internal reports and media polls that predicated that the party would struggle to gain an absolute majority in the metros.⁷ This has been the ANC's worst showing in an election, seeing its national proportion of local votes fall by 8 points since the 2011 local election, and across the country it has struggled to obtain an outright majority forcing it to enter into coalition with a host of smaller parties.⁸ Over the last decade the drop in the ruling party's support and a swing toward the opposition has been slow but persistent. After the 2006 local election, the ruling party captured 65.6% of the national vote compared to this year's 53.9% while the DA only had 16.3% of vote in 2006 and in ten years their share has steadily climbed about 10%. The swing has been most marked in urban municipalities, but rural support also dipped as well, which signifies a drop that would be impossible without black voters voting differently from what they have in the past. A telling indication is a fall of over 10 points in the largely rural province of Limpopo, where the organisation claimed over 80% of the vote in the local election of 2011, but only took 69.3% in this election permitting the DA to make inroads in the province taking on the running of its first municipality in the area, the Modimolle-Mookgopong Municipality. The ANC's fall from favour in region may be explained by the fact that EFF leader Julius Malema comes from Limpopo, so the new party which took 16.9% of the province's votes could easily garner support with its home crowd. However decline in rural support is generalised and includes Mpumalanga the province where the governing party is its most popular, but saw a similar dip falling from 79% to just over 70%.⁹

6. Unlike the seven other metros Cape Town has only a small black minority. Apartheid era spatial engineering and laws like the Urban Areas Act of 1923 severely limited the areas where blacks could live and relegated the black population to the periphery of the city distanced from its economic centres. The possible avenues for employment already limited nationally by Apartheid laws were particularly stringent in the Western Cape forcing blacks out of the province and its city. Cape Town has retained a sense of "exceptionalism" from the rest of the country, and the national government has accused the provincial Western Cape government of keeping black residents poor and in formerly black townships while securing white privilege in every sector of social and economic life in the province. "Apartheid Ended 20 Years Ago, so Why is Cape Town Still 'a Paradise for the Few'?", *The Guardian*, 30 April 2014, www.theguardian.com.

7. "ANC's Blame Game", *City Press*, 14 August 2016, city-press.news24.com.

8. M. Roodt, "South Africa's Local Elections: Reasons for Each Party to be Happy and Sad", *African Argument*, 8 August 2016.

9. "ANC Lost Ground in Rural Areas as Well as Cities", *Business Day*, 8 August 2016, www.bdlive.co.za.

But the numbers alone do not grasp the magnitude of the disruption in the political space. What is crucial is where the opposition made its gains and how opposition parties were able to manipulate the hybrid electoral systems to its benefit.¹⁰ The result is that even where the opposition failed to gain an outright majority they succeeded in claiming control in key metros by forming coalitions and voting as a single block against a shared opponent.

Since over 60% of South Africans live in urban areas and the urban population is growing rapidly, controlling metropolitan municipalities is essential to political survival and conceding the metros will alter not only the ANC, but also change how political power in the country is understood and practiced.¹¹ In the days that followed the vote, both the ruling party and the DA competed to coax the cooperation of a hodgepodge of opposition parties, especially the EFF which held 8% of the national vote. Though the overall growth in popularity of the DA is slight, the opposition saw a sharp spike in support in important metros. The inclusion of the EFF, competing for the first time in a municipal election bit into the ANC's black voter support base in Limpopo and the North West Province taking 14% of the votes in North West while the ANC has lost nearly 20% of the vote in the province since 2011. The party also took on the role of kingmaker in Gauteng's major metros of Johannesburg and Tshwane.

South Africa was not liberated through a violent military struggle, but a negotiated process which culminated in the monumental 1994 elections putting in place a government of national unity. The history means that elections are central to how citizens understand the state and engage with it. Following the first local government elections in 2001 the number of registered voters in these elections has increased. This year voter turnout was at 58% making this election the most hotly contested since the first national elections.¹² Local elections tend to have a lower voter turnout compared to the general election which had an attendance rate of 73%, but while the turnout for national elections has been declining with every national poll, the turnout for local government elections has risen with

10. Municipalities are divided into wards or constituents each with a ward councillor who represents that ward and interacts directly with residents. Local government elections use a hybrid electoral system that awards ward seats to individuals, often representing parties. But seats in metro, district and local councils are also given proportionally using party lists and these seats reflect the proportion of total votes claimed by the party within that municipality. All votes contribute to assigning seats accorded by proportional representation. By understanding the system and how proportional representation can support smaller parties, the opposition was able to harness its proportion of the vote total to contest the ruling party.

11. "South Africa Survey", South African Institute of Race Relations, January 2013.

12. "Highest Voter Turnout Ever Recorded for Local Elections", *News24*, 7 August 2016.

each one held, highlighting the significance of the recent polls. Far from being disengaged, voters were keen to cast their vote, and had something they had to say about how their municipalities should be governed. With the help of a responsive Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), besides isolated incidents of unrest, voting occurred in an orderly and peaceful environment. South Africans continue to believe in voting and the electoral process and can rely on solid electoral instructions. The outcome of the vote, therefore, should be taken seriously as an indication of public sentiment.

The ruling party was most heavily hit in metros. Compared to the 2011 municipal election, they experienced losses in 90% of wards located in the eight metros areas.¹³ The aptly named Nelson Mandela Bay, home to the port city of Port Elizabeth, was the first metro outside the Western Cape to announce the appointment of a mayor from the opposition, electing the DA's Eastern Cape Provincial leader Athol Trollip. The ANC lost about 11% of its votes in the metropolitan city, and the DA realised the opportunity to take advantage of flagging support for the administration, campaigning early and intensely to secure 46.6% of the vote and quickly forming a coalition of smaller parties to take over the strategically important port.¹⁴

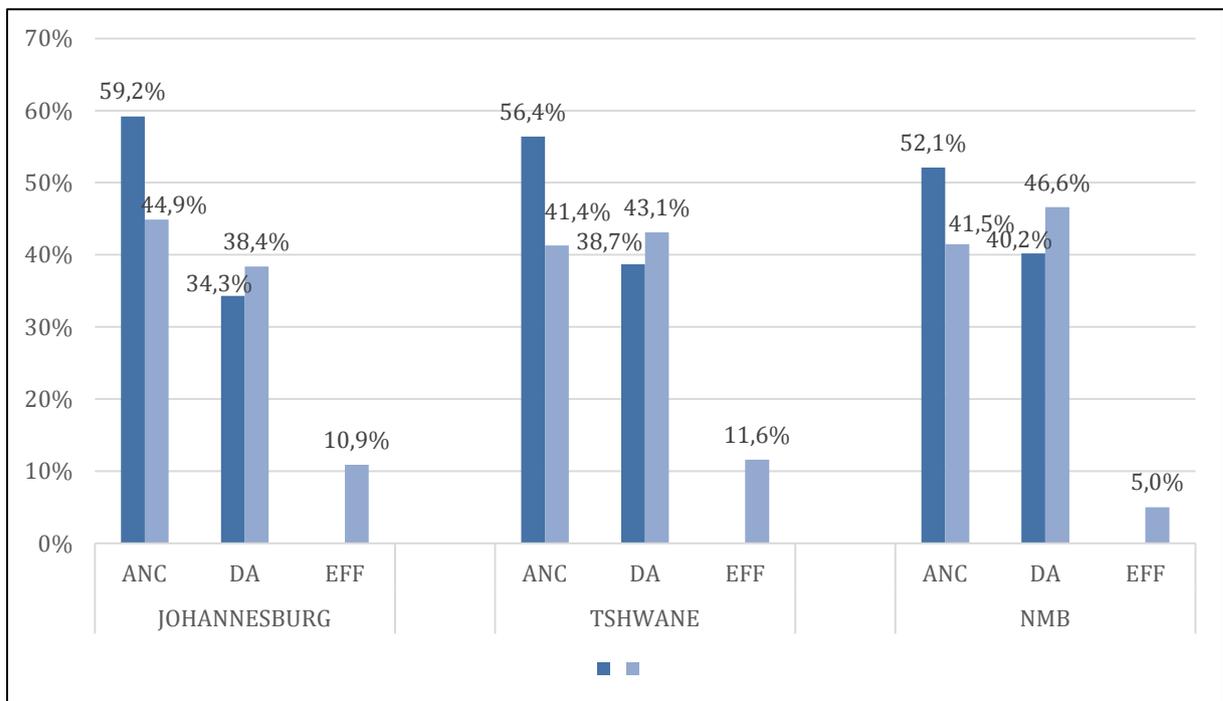
Ekurhuleni, Tshwane and Johannesburg were next on the party's list and with the EFF boldly determined to stunt the ANC's authority, the ruling party stood to lose all three of Gauteng's metros in a situation that would have left them holding the periphery, small towns and semi-urban settlements while the opposition claimed the prosperous centre of the province. After days of political debate, negotiation, and bargaining with opposition parties, Zuma's administration, which is unused to compromise and has few allies, only retained its hold on Ekurhuleni, a municipality bordering Johannesburg. Victory in Ekurhuleni was obtained by piecing together a coalition with the African Independent Congress, a little known party that had just over 1% of the vote and enjoyed the unfamiliar attention and a seat at the table offered by the ANC. Defeat in Tshwane was served by a partnership between the DA and the EFF who defined their engagement as an informal partnership rather than a formal coalition. To capture the city, the DA then formed a collation with smaller parties that organised against the ANC, putting in place a DA-led administration. Johannesburg's ANC managed to get 45% of the vote as opposed to 38% secured by the DA, but the party was unable to attain sufficient support

13. C. Simkins, "Voter Behaviour in the Metros: Technical Report", Helen Suzman Foundation, 23 August 2016.

14. "Smaller Parties in Bay Form a 'Coalition Block' Ahead of Council Meeting", *Herald Live*, 13 August 2016.

outside its own ranks and confronted opposition parties united to knock off the ANC and make way for political contenders in what has been a firmly closed arena. The former liberation movement has the majority of votes, but the opposition now has access to centres of economic and political influence in metros, with serious consequences for South Africa’s economic and political future.

Percentage of total vote in coalition-led metros in 2011 and 2016 local government election



Data Source: "Local Elections 2016", News24, www.news24.com.

Why local elections matter so much? Understanding the political and economic significance of local government

The importance of local government within South Africa's political and economic system cannot be over stated. The opposition now has greater control of two of the biggest metro operating budgets in Cape Town and Johannesburg each presiding over more than R41bn¹⁵ and R54bn respectively¹⁶, and the addition of Tshwane and the smaller Nelson Mandela Bay means that the ANC has ceded direct control of metro budgets totally over R140bn.¹⁷ Local government consists of eight highly populated metropolitan cities, 44 district municipalities with slightly smaller populations and 226 rural and semi-urban local municipalities. It is the place where government interacts with the daily experience of people and an engine to transform communities whose development and access to resources and services was purposefully restricted by the Apartheid regime. National and provincial government may be more overtly powerful within parliaments' lofty corridors, and tasked with deciding macro policies and law-making. But local government is where leaders are expected to affect people's lives in tangible ways. At local level mayoral posts are decided upon and the delivery of services such as water and power is coordinated meaning that the success or failure of elected officials is directly felt by residents in this sphere of government and can be directly attributed to parties. Simultaneously this offers opposition parties a stage on which they can introduce themselves to communities and ask to be tested. In the 2009 national election a factor which contributed to the DA's victory in the Western Cape was the party's record administering Cape Town after claiming the metro, and at the time of the national election the DA-run municipality had gotten successively clean audits from the South African Auditor General.¹⁸

15. "The City of Cape Budget Website", viewed 29 September 2016, www.capetown.gov.za.

16. "City of JHB Budgets R54,8bn Towards 'Better Life for Residents", *Eyewitness News*, 24 May 2016, ewn.co.za.

17. "Election Puts R130bn of Metro Budgets in Play", *fin24*, 11 August 2011, www.fin24.com.

18. Audits reports are released by the South African Auditor-General an office under Chapter 9 of the constitution to "audit and report on the accounts, financial statements and financial management" of the three tiers of government "Office of the Auditor-General Website", viewed 29 August 2016, www.agsa.co.za.

The ruling party's dismal performance denotes a downward slide in public confidence. People no longer unquestioningly believe that the ANC will improve their daily lives and can effectively provide services. Nevertheless, it is important not to ignore the very real gains that have been made in the provision of basic services since the end of Apartheid. For instance, by 2015, 85% of South African households had access to an electrical supply, as opposed to only 50.9% in 1994, now 89% of the country's homes have some access to piped water.¹⁹ But the challenge that local government faces is not only in the initial provision of services, but also in ensuring that local municipalities can offer affordable and reliable services of a reasonable quality. In June 2016 residents of Dube, a neighbourhood of Soweto the country's biggest township, looted and burnt businesses and barricaded streets decrying the crippling cost of electricity and regular blackouts.²⁰ Over the past five years a crisis has been brewing at local government and is embodied in recurrent protests over service delivery often turning violent and in the months preceding the election, the number of protests accelerated and violence intensified with over 70 protests related to local service delivery reported only in the first four months of 2016.²¹ Protests had become so regular and violent that in May 2016 the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the national broadcaster [increasingly in the pocket of the government] banned broadcasts of footage of violent protests claiming that it refused to give attention to "destructive and regressive" protests that threatened the stability of the country.²² The effect of the ban was a feeling that state institutions were conspiring to silence legitimate concerns by communities unhappy with the provision and quality of services, and this may have stamped the idea that the ANC was trying to hide a great failure at local government.

An advantage for smaller parties is that they can easily concentrate their efforts on building public rapport within municipalities under their administration, and their best leaders can be close to the ground. The DA placed recognisable figures such as its former head Helen Zille and famous anti-apartheid activist Patricia de Lille in key positions in Cape Town's administration which slowly helped nurture relationships at local level. The ANC is tasked with overseeing the operation of local, provincial and

19. This does not take into account informal settlements which are a growing phenomenon as people migrate to urban areas. "General Household Survey: 2015" Stats SA, 2 June 2016.

20. "Dube Residence Loot in Soweto Loot Shops in Protest Over Electricity", *Eyewitness News*, 15 June 2016, ewn.co.za.

21. "Service Delivery Protests Set for New Highs this Election Year", *Mail and Guardian*, 18 May 2016.

22. "SABC Will no Longer Broadcast Footage of Violent Protest", *Eyewitness News*, 27 May 2016 ewn.co.za.

national structures across the country. Whereas the opposition may slowly grow the institutional structures and human resources needed to govern a much smaller part of the country, the challenge is much greater for the ANC, and it has let its focus slip from local government and is regularly accused of being out of touch with the communities it administers. Its strongest leaders at community level are promoted to national and provincial government and are taken off the ground leaving a gap and few leaders that have neither roots in communities and a track record of service, nor have the charisma to gain the trust of people. Former Johannesburg mayor Parks Tau who began his career in the Soweto Youth Congress and Gauteng's regional structures of ANC Youth League (ANCYL) is the rare exception of a politician working up the ranks of local government and remaining in local government, the rule is usually that promotion is a move out of municipal politics. In a desperate effort to reconnect with voters angered by a lack of accountability and feeling ignored by the ruling party, as the election approached, the national structure of the party endeavoured to parachute recognisable faces into local government and mapped a strategy to deepen community participation. Most noteworthy was the appointment of Danny Jordaan as the mayoral candidate for Nelson Mandela Bay.²³ The South African Football Association president who hails from the metro managed the country's successful and now controversial bid to host the 2010 Soccer World Cup²⁴, but frustrated residents were unimpressed by his local credentials and unconvinced that he could address their concerns. Winning local municipalities and metros is not a guarantee of spreading and expanding national support. However, South Africa's political future may be altered fundamentally if the ANC continues to appear distant from those it governs, and if opposition parties take advantage of the opportunity to enter into communities which had previously been reserved for the familiar party of the liberation movement.

The current elections demonstrates a marked dip in support for the ANC in metros, home to some of the country's biggest development and infrastructure projects with more than 50% of formal sector economic activity channelled through Johannesburg, Cape Town, eThekweni (Durban) and Nelson Mandela Bay.²⁵ Falling popularity in provinces that have revenue generating urban centres and large populations may result in

23. "I'm Not a Puppet', Says Newly Sworn in Danny Jordaan", *New24*, 22 May 2015, www.news24.com.

24. It is alleged that the team led by Danny Jordaan bribed FIFA officials in order to host the 2010 Soccer World Cup, "FIFA details how SA paid US\$10 million 'bribe'", *Times Live*, 16 March 2016.

25. "Cities and the Economy: Heartbeats of Growth", *Financial Mail*, 2 July 2016, www.financialmail.co.za.

a government that is removed from important centres of economic power. Surrendering the metros, not only means losing the support of urban voters, but for the ruling party, this will mean wrestling for control of a considerable part of the National Development Plan budget directed through metropolitans and district municipalities.

The governing party will have to learn to play with others or risk being a government alienated from key levers of political and economic influence in four major metros. This could encourage a more dynamic political space, introducing true plural democracy as parties negotiate influence and the opposition provides checks and balances to the practice of power. The ANC has little experience working as part of a coalition in a major metro. In Cape Town the first metro to opt out of ANC rule, the relationship between local authorities and national government is often combative, characterised by allegations of sabotage from the governing DA administration and accusations of racism as the national government claims that the opposition-led government in the Western Cape has served the interests of privileged white minorities at the expense of the poor.²⁶

There are already signs that the ruling party, unaccustomed to sitting in the opposition benches may find the task of serving as opposition challenging. Reports have quoted ANC leaders defining a strategy to disrupt the administration of DA and coalition-led municipalities. In Johannesburg, a member of the party's National Executive Committee (NEC), its highest governing body, warned that the party will use its mass support in municipal wards and its control over the provincial government to halt opposition-led programs and implement the party's own plans for the city.²⁷ South Africa is entering a new chapter in its political history and it remains to be seen if the ruling party can develop mechanisms to serve as an effective opposition after its initial growing pains. The temptation may be to employ considerable access to the institutions and the authority of larger spheres of government to bare on metros which may be legally autonomous, but require the support of the provinces and the national government to realise many of their projects. Intergovernmental relations and cooperation in the country's multi-tiered governance structure are detailed in the Constitution and provisions such as the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (2005) which defines institutions that coordinate consultation between tiers of government, but effective cooperation will require the development of relations of trust and a history of positive

26. The ANC's campaign in the Western Cape regularly blamed the DA for replicating Apartheid era divisions in the Cape and keeping black people poor. "Zuma's Race Rants- 'the DA Keeps You Poor'", *Sowetan Live*, 22 July 2016, www.sowetanlive.co.za.

27. "ANC Sells its Lies-to Itself", *Mail and Guardian*, 19 August 2016.

collaboration which may take time to develop in what has largely been a one-party system in most of the country. The true test of the integrity of democratic institutions built over 22 years is whether a party in government can be prevented from using its influence in national and provincial structures to undermine the autonomy and development of local government.

Patronage and control of the cities

Within the ranks of the ANC relinquishing control of administrations held comfortably for over two decades will mean reconfiguring how political power is understood and how favour is bestowed. This process will unravel a complex system of patronage that is present from the highest echelons of the party to its local branches, and promoted by President Jacob Zuma's leadership style. At local government, the attribution of thousands of ward councillor positions is fundamental to a culture of patronage, which extends to the most basic level of governance. Individuals are either nominated independently at branch level or added to the party list by the ANC's national and regional structures. Given the current economic downturn, ward councillor posts are regarded as a source of employment in communities with few opportunities for employment. For members of the party, nomination offers a stable job with relative ease of entry as education and experience are rarely a factor, and ward posts promise the possibility to move up the leadership ranks of the party. In the months leading up to the election, factional battles and violent confrontations over ward positions within the ANC and its alliance partners highlighted the furious competition over positions which offer a rare opportunity for social mobility in many communities. With fewer posts for ANC councillors in urban metros, the national government announced its intention to set aside R300 million as a form of retrenchment scheme providing up to three months of salary for outgoing councillors most of whom will be from the ANC.²⁸ Though this may temporarily placate ANC members that failed to be re-elected, the payment scheme is unlikely to address the gap created by shrinking access to local political administrations and will dent deep relations of patronage.

28. "Outgoing Municipal Councillors to get 300M in Gratuities", *Eyewitness News*, 12 August 2016.

The common practice within the party has been to deploy party members to senior administrative positions, especially in local municipalities.²⁹ A policy of cadre deployment means that key administrative functions such as municipal managers and supply chain managers that should be assigned according to competencies are regularly assigned to loyalist or those closely tied to the regime.³⁰ The ANC's Secretary-General, Gwede Mantashe, publicly defends the employment of ANC cadre to important operational positions as "the alignment of the administration and political leadership".³¹ New administrations may be wary of entrusting political appointees with the manning of municipalities that have chosen opposition administrations or those that will be governed by opposition collations. A limited number of positions available in large metropolitan administrations will inspire contestation within the party for prime positions and may intensify existing tensions within its ranks. The ANC could take the opportunity to substantially alter how it has operated over the last decade, but any attempt to dismantle systems of patronage and favour will require confrontation between those that stand to gain and those that lose from changes within the party. ANC members left out of positions within the ruling party have already proved that they can become a source of competition. With national elections in less than three years the ANC will be thinking of the North West Province where former ANC councillors that did not make it on party lists and discontented party supporters formed the Forum for Service Delivery. After only a few months in existence, though the Forum only had 2,9% of the vote it took the fourth position in that province and almost claimed the mayoral post in the local municipality of Rustenburg, a key city in the province.³²

The impact of the presidency's crisis

Election outcomes demonstrate that national debates and concerns cannot be divorced from the local level politics. In the first six months of the year the economy shed almost half a million jobs and unemployment reached 26,6% (the highest it has been since the global financial crisis),³³ and

29. S.O (2012) Madumo, 'The Promo on Developmental Local Government to Facilitate a Developmental State', *Administratio Publica* 20(3), 2012.

30. An important case against 'cadre deployment' was taken to the Eastern Cape High Court by Afriforum. The case was against municipal managers and mayors of the Cederberg, Oudtshoorn and Mogalakwena Municipalities in 2014. However, Afriforum's history and reputation as an organization primarily concerned with maintaining white minority interests should also be considered when claims of corrupt cadre deployment are made by interest groups.

31. 'Cadre deployment is not a swear word', IOL, 9 June 2014, www.iol.co.za.

32. The Forum was backed by the EFF and only lost the mayoral vote by three votes. "Newly Elected Rustenburg ANC Mayor 'Shocked' at Result", *News24*, 23 August 2016, www.news24.com.

33. "Huge Loss of Jobs set off Alarm Bells", *Business Day*, 29 July 2016.

concurrently a picture was formed of a ruling party failing to transform the economy and deliver jobs.

Most noteworthy amongst numerous fumbles was the finance minister's overnight firing. On December 9, 2015 the currency plummeted after Nhlanhla Nene, a minister who had been vocal about the abuse of state funds was replaced by David van Rooyen, an inexperienced backbencher and Zuma loyalist.³⁴ Within days van Rooyen was begrudgingly substituted by former Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan. In addition to the game of chair-swapping in the finance ministry there also emerged allegations from both within the party and opposition benches that the president had allowed the Guptas, a wealthy Indian family, to have undue influence on the state's economic affairs. The complex story of the ANC's relationship with the wealthy family asserts that the Guptas have been given free rein of South Africa's economy, getting preferential access to state tenders; gaining control of important public procurement processes; and receiving mining licenses without due process.³⁵ It is alleged that representatives of the family even approached the Deputy Finance Mcebisi Jonas and offered him the opportunity to take the top job replacing Nene.³⁶ It remains to be seen how Zuma may directly benefit from this irregular relationship that has marred the presidency, but members of his family have close ties with the Guptas. In early 2016 Optimum Coal Mine was acquired from Glencore PLC by Tegeta Exploration and Resources, a company in which Zuma's son Duduzane Zuma held a 28,5% stake and in which Oakbay Investments, a Gupta-owned company has a shareholding.³⁷ In April 2016 the struggling coal mine was given a boost from Eskom, the state-owned energy utility which signed contracts giving the mine a R586m cash advance. Though Eskom CEO Brian Molefe defended the utility's decision, the deal was heavily criticised by Gordhan who pointed to an obscure tender process, and on September 1, 2016 National Treasury denied Eskom's request to extend the contract.³⁸ In March 2016 the Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, was provided funds from Treasury to investigate the allegation that the Guptas

34. Nhlanhla Nene Removed as Finance Minister, *Mail and Guardian*, 9 December 2015, mg.co.za.

35. "South Africa: The Power of the Family Business", *FT.com*, 8 March 2016, www.ft.com.

36. South African media is buzzing with what has been labelled 'state capture' investigating claims that the president has allowed a single family to capture government institutions for their own enrichment. "Gupta's Denies 'State Capture'", *City Press*, 26 June 2016.

37. "Internal Warfare Tears at South Africa's Ruling African National Congress", *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 September 2016, www.wsj.com.

38. "Treasury Blocks Eskom's Tegeta Contract", *Mail and Guardian*, 1 September 2016, amabhungane.co.za.

and their entourage had ‘captured’ the state with the collusion of the President and other high ranking ANC officials.³⁹

Appearing to embody the country’s current troubles is the embattled President Jacob Zuma. The President, protected by his office, stands to be served with 783 charges including racketeering, accepting bribes and money laundering relating to an arms deal which cost the country billions of dollars in the late 1990’s.⁴⁰ Though the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) had dropped the charges following Zuma’s ascension to power, the High Court criticised the decision as irrational and likely motivated by political pressure, ordering that the charges be reinstated.

On April 5, 2016 Zuma escaped an impeachment motion after the Constitutional Court found that he had infringed the Constitution by disregarding the Public Protector’s recommendation that he pay back part of \$16 million in public funds used to improve his private residence in Nkandla, in the Kwa-Zulu Natal. Though the president promised to reimburse tax payers and apologised to the nation, his actions failed to grasp the significance of the Constitution. Zuma dodged impeachment in parliament, but the image of the presidency and the ANC was severely damaged in the process. In an unprecedented move, in March 2016, veterans of the ANC’s former armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe called for the president to relinquish his seat for the good of the country, citing a culture of corruption and mismanagement nurtured by his presidency.⁴¹ Around the same time a social media campaign entitled #Zumamustfall which was spearheaded by NGOs gained fast traction by offering South Africans a platform to express their outrage, exchange information and organise mass protests in cities.⁴² In the ruling party cracks continued to show and had been widening since the Nkandla scandal. Numerous ANC struggle stalwarts such as Ronnie Kasrils and Trevor Manuel, well known and respected nationally and in their communities, joined calls for Zuma to step down claiming that he had besmirched the party’s integrity and history.⁴³ If figures that had led the anti-apartheid struggle and governed

39. “Madonsela Gets Funding Boost to Probe Guptas and State Capture”, *Fin24*, 7 July 2016, www.fin24.com.

40. “Jacob Zuma ‘Should’ Face 783 Criminal Charges, Declares South African Court”, *The Telegraph*, 29 April 2016.

41. The full text by MK veterans notes the president’s various scandals and focuses on grave financial mismanagement “MK Generals, Veterans Call for Zuma to Step Down”, *News24*, 23 March 2016, www.news24.com.

42. The ruling party has been quick to say the movement serves as a vehicle for opposition interests and funded by white capital which supports white media, Jackson Mthembu accuses journalists of #Zumamustfall bias, *Mail and Guardian*, 21 December 2015.

43. Trevor Manuel is one of the most respected figures in South African politics having served as the finance minister and though close to the Mbeki administration has remained a prominent

alongside Mandela had lost faith in the party, it may have given a form of “permission” for previously loyal voters to consider alternatives and inspired the slightly higher voter turnout.

A new factor in this election was the growing notion that the party has developed a disregard for the law and is suffering a leadership-crisis that could have dire consequences for the country. The disintegration appears to begin at the presidency and is violently mimicked at every tier of government including the local level which is closest to people. In the months preceding voting and since the elections, media reports have revealed an ANC that seems to be tearing into itself and the tripartite alliance, its long held partnership with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). Prior to the elections, factional battles and competition over posts within the party were played out violently leaving 12 ANC councillors dead and fostering an atmosphere of instability.⁴⁴ Since the elections, disturbing reports brought to light the brutal murders of SACP members in KZN killed as tripartite partners jostle for positions on party lists.⁴⁵ Though violence has mostly taken place in Mpumalanga, KZN and Tshwane, it is an unwanted reminder of a dark period in the ANC’s past when factions battled each other and other black parties for political supremacy, sparking unrest across the country’s townships.

How the metros were lost: local causes and a disgruntled black middle class

Though national debates have greatly informed local sentiments, it is important to understand the nuanced specificities of local elections and the very particular sources of discontent that lead the party to lose the metros. A failure to respond to the concerns of residents and conflict within local ANC branches as well as a convergence of national tensions foreran the party’s defeat.

In Nelson Mandela Bay, the DA formed a multiparty government announcing its intention to launch an investigation into corrupt city officials and irregular public expenditure.⁴⁶ Eastern Cape residents had

figure, so his criticism of Zuma’s regime would have been a hit to the ANC’s campaign. “Trevor Manuel Calls on Zuma to Step Down”, *Business Day*, 5 April 2016, www.bdlive.co.za.

44. Twelfth ANC Councillor Killed in KZN ahead of 3 August Election, *Eyewitness News*, 18 July 2016, ewn.co.za.

45. “Protests in Inchanga after ‘Execution-style’ Killing of SACP Member”, *Times Live*, 22 August 2016, www.timeslive.co.za.

46. “Trollip’s Plan to Root out Rotten Apples in Nelson Mandela Bay”, *Times Live*, 19 August 2016, www.timeslive.co.za.

witnessed factional skirmishes that reduced party membership and motivated the ANC to disband the Regional Executive Committee in December 2015.⁴⁷ Reports including an audit from the office of the Auditor-General for the 2014/2015 financial year noted that more than a billion Rand had been lost to mismanagement and irregular and wasteful expenditure in the metro.⁴⁸ The Bay's residents were ready for change, and again the party simply did not act fast enough to turn back the tide.

However, the confluence between local and national was particularly felt in Gauteng, home to Tshwane and Johannesburg, the country's cosmopolitan centres. In the last decade the ANC saw support in Tshwane dip from a comfortable 57% in 2006 to 41.4% in this round, while the DA enjoyed a swing towards it from only claiming 30.7% in 2006 to surpassing the ANC in popularity in the city taking 43.1% of cast ballots. The EFF, also crept up on the ANC seizing nearly 12% of the vote in its first municipal election. The trend was followed in Johannesburg where the ANC's support dived from 62.7% in 2006 to 44.9%, leaving it vulnerable to an agreement between the EFF and the DA who combined their respective 10.9% and 38.4% of the vote to boot the sitting municipal government.

In Gauteng despite some progress made by local government and the Provincial Premier in the provision of basic services and efforts to facilitate the ease of doing business, decisions made at the national level severely limited the party's electoral success. As votes were cast in Johannesburg and Tshwane, Gauteng witnessed the largest yet least publicised civil disobedience campaign in the country's post-apartheid history.⁴⁹ Millions of motorists refused to register or pay levies to use national roads after the South African Roads Agency under the authority of the Transport Ministry introduced an electronic tolling system obliging road users to pay to use newly improved national roads. The government tried to cast the struggle over the tolls along class lines arguing that only the rich and the middle class own private vehicles and that minibus taxis which transport the majority of people are unaffected. But in the absence of a comprehensive mass public transport system, high earning labourers and professionals are forced to invest in inexpensive cars and unlike high income groups, they tend to commute greater distances from their homes to workplaces making owning a car alone an inappropriate indicator of wealth.⁵⁰ So with

47. "Removal of ANC Leaders Welcomed", *Dispatch Live*, 16 December 2015, www.dispatchlive.co.za.

48. This was the worst performing metro in terms of financial management. "Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Chief Offender in Fruitless and Wasteful Expenditure", *Business Day*, 1 June 2016, www.bdlive.co.za.

49. "Etolls Gauteng Residents Remain Defiant", *News24*, 18 March 2015, www.news24.com.

50. "IFP: Single Moms Most Vulnerable to E-tolling", *IOL*, 11 October 2014, www.iol.co.za.

residents unwilling and in many cases unable to pay high charges, there is little that can be done at local level to halt the standoff between the national government and the province's residents. There also appears to be a rift between Gauteng branches of the ANC and the party's national structure. In light of the Constitutional Court ruling against the President, Gauteng's provincial leaders boldly appealed to Zuma to "do the right thing" implying that the President should resign on his own.⁵¹

In Tshwane strong-arm tactics by the local administration and the NEC combined to loosen the grip of the ruling party on the metro. In May 2016, the city's decision to continue with forced removals of communities illegally occupying land belonging to the Kekana Royal Family in Hammanskraal led to violent confrontations with dwellers.⁵² Settlers claimed that removals resembled those practiced by the Apartheid government that used to forcefully evict blacks as part of its separate development policy. In June, members of the ANC and residents protested a decision by the NEC to replace the sitting Tshwane mayor Kgosientso Ramokgopa, with Thoko Didiza, a former cabinet minister.⁵³ Protesters clashed with police, burnt and looted businesses, and blocked roads as they demanded the sitting mayor remain as their preferred candidate. The protest then involved in the dispute those whose property and safety were threatened by the violence, but also highlighted a disconnection between the national structures of government, communities on the ground, and branch members. While the ANC was fighting with itself over the nomination of the mayor, the party turned away from the electorate who would in turn vote them out of office.

Not only does the ruling party appear increasingly detached from the experiences and expectations of communities, in Gauteng the ANC's underwhelming performance in two metros hints at a strained relationship between the party's current leadership and the black middle class. A study released by South Africa's University of Cape Town in 2012 estimated that the black middle class are made up of about 4.2 million black Africans and had doubled in 8 years since 2004. The group is composed of professionals and highly skilled labourers working in the public and private sector earning between \$1,550 and \$4,800 per month.⁵⁴ More than half of the black middle class resides in Gauteng, and while it continues to rise now

51. "Gauteng ANC: Zuma Must Step Down", *Mail and Guardian*, 12 April 2016.

52. "Chief Kekana Denies Getting Hammanskraal Eviction Order", *News24*, 27 May 2016, www.news24.com.

53. "Thoko Didiza: 'I Feel a Part of Tshwane'", *Daily Maverick*, 23 June 2016.

54. "Million and Rising", University of Cape Town Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing, June 2012, www.uctunileverinstitute.co.za.

roughly estimated at 5 million, the middle class is expanding at a slower pace.⁵⁵ In many ways the entry of more black people into the middle class serves as testament to the fact that development and transformation policies, though slow and halting, have progressively altered South African society nurturing a generation of black people that are vastly more financially independent and educated than previous generations. The ANC has enjoyed the support of black professionals in urban centres since its first election. The party was established by an elite black middle class in the early 1910's and its leadership generally comes from the burgeoning middle class. However, since 2009 with the ousting of former president Thabo Mbeki a figure linked to black intellectualism and in the wake of Zuma's tumultuous presidency, rather than feeling grateful to the ANC for its position, there has emerged a bigger black middle class willing and eager to hold their government accountable. National debates over the ruling of the Constitutional Court and perceptions that the ANC had become unaccountable and irresponsible with the country's economy weighed on voters' minds, and losses in Gauteng's middle income neighbourhoods seem to suggest that the middle class may be increasingly willing to shift their loyalty from the party.⁵⁶ The decline in middle class support should not only worry the ANC because of the numbers they wield in metros, but the party risks being leached of the intellectual and professional base that has always formed its foundation, and in the coming years it could become primarily a party of the poor and declining rural communities, increasingly becoming marginalised from the locations of economic influence and black innovators and thinkers.

Often viewed as the beneficiaries of transformation, the black middle class is also most likely to feel that the rate of transformation has been slow or superficial, and turn their frustration on the government that has managed South Africa's transformation project. Black professionals live within a predominately white business and professional environment in a way that the unemployed and the poor do not.⁵⁷ In the private sector South Africa remains a white man's world. 68.9% of top management positions

55. The South African institute for Race Relations claims that one in ten South Africans can claim to fall within the middle class and though the number of black middle class people may have doubled over the last decade, the growth of the middle class is set to slow due to a mix of factors including rising interest rates and a downturn in the economy. "Black Middle Class Has Expanded Quickly but May Now Slow", South African Institute for Race Relations, August 2015.

56. "Editorial: Voters Have Sent a Message the ANC Ignores at its Peril", *Sunday Times*, 7 August 2016.

57. Noted South African economist and academic Steven Friedman describes the black middle class as a "ticking bomb" most likely to turn against the ANC and demand faster progress. S. Friedman, "South Africa's Real Ticking Time Bomb – The Black Middle Class", The South African Civil Society Information Service, 2014.

are occupied by white people that make up just a little over 10% of the total population and the majority of those posts are taken by white men.⁵⁸ White people are also promoted faster and have greater opportunities for learning and development than their colleagues.⁵⁹ Not only are the black middle class confronted with a professional space that stunts growth, they are also particularly wary of economic instability, so shocks to the economy experienced in the last year would trouble the first generation of middle income South Africans who are particularly vulnerable to losing their recently obtained status through loss of employment and debt. In the lead up to the election, this group met an ANC which appeared at times to want to detach itself from the black middle class who were regularly dismissed as the “too clever blacks” unwitting endorsing white political and economic interests.⁶⁰

For black people in the middle class, the DA promising a leaner and more stable economy has gradually become an option for voters feeling insecure and rejected by the ANC, though the shift is small and was only in large urban metros. And for those that believe the DA is simply too white and too fervent in its support for minority interests, the EFF is a possibility that self-consciously presents itself as black and willing to fast-track slow transformation. The middle class does not exist in a bubble, but within the context of black South Africa and it is possible that dissatisfaction with the current government radiates outwards influencing the opinions of black voters that form the social space of the middle class. When white South Africans express displeasure with the government it can be dismissed as the continued cycle of white whining and pining for the old regime, whereas the black middle class often holds elevated social positions within black communities due to their education and professional standing and have access to media and channels of communication.⁶¹ As it reviews the devastating loss in Gauteng, the ANC must be concerned that the feeling of disgruntlement fostered in this group may take root and threaten its broader base of support in the entire province.

58. Commission for Employment Equity, Annual Report 2015-2016, South African Department of Labour, www.labour.gov.za.

59. “White Males Still SA’s Top Managers, Despite Push for Employment Equity Across Race and Gender”, *Times Live*, 25 April 2016, www.timeslive.co.za.

60. In a memorable speech at the National House of Traditional Leaders in 2012 Zuma lambasted black intellectuals and professionals as “clever blacks” that are obstacles to the party. “ANC Woos Black Middle Class”, *Mail and Guardian*, 1 April 2016.

61. A. Ngoma, “Black Middle Class: Black Professionals and the ANC in the 2014 election”, KAS International Reports, 2014.

The rise of the opposition

South Africa yet again finds itself at a moment when politics could be defined by cooperation with a former foe or complete disruption if political short-sightedness and egos enter the interaction. This is as true for the ANC playing the role of opposition for the first time in three key metros, and learning the delicate balance between being a constructive check to power and being a destructive force within metro administrations that cannot afford to fail. The learning curve will also be sharp for leaders of the new partnerships formed to take over hung municipalities and obliged to partner with organisations that are ideologically oppositional. But this new wave of formal and informal coalitions may present a different phase of political action which is not locked in political and ideological straitjackets, but is directed by pragmatism and collective action as opposition actors challenge the authority of a settled regime.

The campaign process was highly competitive and a record breaking 204 political parties were vying for the ear of potential voters as well as independent candidates responding to the specific needs of communities.⁶² Both the ANC and DA warned voters against voting for smaller parties and independent candidates fearing that they would act as spoilers eating away at their part of the proportional vote.⁶³ Many independent candidates were disgruntled members of the ruling party who did not make it on party lists or were community level responses to very specific local concerns left unaddressed by political parties.⁶⁴ The slow delivery of basic services and the rising costs of water and electricity especially in predominately black municipalities were the key focus of small parties wanting to attract local support. In the 27 hung municipalities where no party reached a 50% majority, small parties that barely won 1% of the vote leveraged their vote in the game of coalition-making which followed the election.⁶⁵ Organisations that risked extinction like Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), a party that could have rivalled the ANC in 1994 but whose support base rapidly declined only obtaining 2.4% of the national vote in the 2014 election, were able to take advantage of the opportunity to make strategic alliances. Buthelezi won four local municipalities and a new

62. "2016 Local Election by Number", *News24*, 2 August 2016, www.news24.com.

63. Former African Union chair, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma has recently returned to South Africa and is a likely presidential candidate. She joined voices encouraging voters to vote ANC and not smaller parties and independent candidates. "Forget' About Independents", 28 July 2016.

64. See the formation of the Forum for Service Delivery mentioned above.

65. Parties which had since lost popularity such as Cope, a splinter of the ANC as well as the EFF quickly claimed the spotlight as 'kingmakers'. "Hung Municipalities Destined for Minority Councils as EFF Opts to Abstain", *Daily Maverick*, 17 August 2016, www.dailymaverick.co.za.

district municipality in his former stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The ANC's support in the province remained strong at 58% dropping by less than a point since 2011, however the IFP profited from the absence of the National Freedom Front, an organisation that had competed for votes in the last election but failed to register correctly with the IEC. Banding together with the EFF and the DA, Buthelezi has harnessed the IFP's 18% of the province's vote to emerge from the shadows of political obscurity, and with the assistance of its coalition partners, the IFP now has the potential to claim hung municipalities and contest the ANC's dominance in Zuma's home province.⁶⁶

It must be recalled that Jacob Zuma created his own nightmare in the EFF when he turned his back on Julius Malema and purged the leadership of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL).⁶⁷ The young firebrands had been the kingmakers in his battle to unseat President Thabo Mbeki and claw his way from charges of rape and corruption to the presidency. Malema's Youth League stood at the side of the disgraced former deputy president, mobilizing support within the ANC. But the ANCYL had become a thorn in Zuma's side and he was increasingly suspicious that those that had put him in his current seat were becoming more demanding. Under Malema's loud and charismatic leadership, the organization gathered the youth; publicly criticizing the ANC's current leadership; denouncing the slow pace of economic transformation; and pushing for nationalisation of local industry. At its centre was a close knit circle comprised of its president as well as the Spokesperson Floyd Shivambu and Secretary-General Sindiso Magaqa, all of whom were suspended from the organisation in November 2011. A more politically astute mind would have realized that stripping the Youth League of its popular leaders would have major repercussions and that its outspoken and capable leaders, having tasted their own power, would not sink into obscurity as had others that had been booted from the ruling party.⁶⁸ In October 2013, the man who had said that the organisation he led was prepared "to kill for Zuma" turned his zeal against the current regime, forming the EFF which made it clear that it planned to shake the

66. "KwaZulu-Natal: Opposition Big Three Get Ready to Stand up to the ANC", *Daily Maverick*, 18 August 2016, www.dailymaverick.co.za.

67. Guilty: Julius Malema Suspended from ANC", *Mail and Guardian*, 10 November 2011, mg.co.za.

68. Those that have decided to leave the party or had been kicked out of it have found little success outside. Bantu Holomisa a popular figure within the ANC who could have potentially rivalled the leadership for control was expelled in 1996 and started the United Democratic Movement, a splinter group which failed to gain significant support. After Mbeki stepped down, a faction of the ANC led by former members Mosiuoa Lekota and Sam Shilowa started COPE, an organisation that quickly became the third opposition only to fall apart due to internal battles.

ANC from power and work in the service of South Africa's impoverished masses and the youth whom it claimed the ANC had forsaken.⁶⁹

In the post-election landscape, the most unlikely and important duo was between the EFF and the DA united by pragmatism and the goal of weakening the ANC's position. They have introduced a new era in South African politics where serious opposition can be practised collectively as parties temporarily sidestep ideological differences. The Economic Freedom Fighters are left-wing and sport Soviet-red overalls threatening to disassemble property rights and nationalise industry to accelerate the process of transformation and spread the county's wealth. While the Democratic Alliance, an offshoot of the liberal Progressive Party, is a centre-right association which advocates that a respect for property rights and a focus on economic growth will foster development and socio-economic transformation. Ideologically the DA is closer to the ANC which is at its core a moderate liberal organisation despite its occasional leftist alliance mutterings.

Opposition parties took advantage of the gap between the ANC in power and its constituents on ground. As the ANC boasted about a billion Rand budget which dwarfed the spending of all other opposition parties combined⁷⁰, the EFF which had a budget of R10m was in their customary overalls suggesting that they were ready to do the hands-on work at local level. The DA had a sizable budget of over R350m and ran a campaign that stressed the deficiencies of the ruling party at local government level and promoted itself as responsive to the problems faced by ordinary people.⁷¹ In a move that angered the ANC and had many South Africans debating liberation narratives and their continued relevance, the DA argued that given how the ANC had failed to deliver on its promises of a better life for all South Africans, even Mandela would vote for an alternative, perhaps even the DA.⁷² The campaign encouraged South Africans to wonder whether their loyalty to a party embroiled in consecutive scandals may not be misplaced.

The ANC has retained an ageing leadership with ties to the anti-apartheid struggle, allowing no young voices to enter into the inner circle of the 'top six' members of the NEC. While the two main opposition parties

69. "Belligerent Malema Launches EFF", *News24*, 13 October 2013, www.news24.com.

70. "ANC Spends a Hefty R1BN on its Election Campaign", *Eye Witness News*, 21 July 2016, ewn.co.za.

71. "Local Elections: Voters Should Know Who Funds Parties", *News24*, 2 August 2016, www.news24.com.

72. "Mandela Would Vote for the DA, says Herman Mashaba", *Business Day*, 30 July 2016 www.bdlive.co.za.

both have leaders that are in their thirties, the youngest member of the ‘top six’ former KZN Premier Zweli Mkhize turned 60 earlier this year. The EFF consciously presents itself as young and has worked to attract educated thought-leaders in all spheres of South African society. Malema who publicly completed his university degree has immediately shown support for youth protest movements, and reflects a young South Africa eager for opportunity and growth. While the ANC retains its loyal foot soldiers in ANCYL⁷³, the EFF has adopted the inverse structure, actively recruiting young people as the voice and face of the organisation while slowly fostering a support system of older members such as EFF national chairperson Advocate Dali Mpofu.

Over 60% of South Africans are under the age of 35 and almost 30% are between the ages of 15 and 35.⁷⁴ They have little memory of the ANC’s past glory as a liberation movement, and young people have begun to actively question the party’s struggle credentials and relevance. Many of the so-called “born frees”, who have lived all or most of their lives with the ANC in power, disparage the ruling party for leading South Africa’s settlement which protected white privilege and limited meaningful transformation. The “# movement” describing the use of social media as the primary means to communicate dissatisfaction reflects growing youth and student activism. In March 2015 university students led the #Rhodesmustfall movement critical of the slow rate of transformation in the country’s universities and in October of the same year launched the #Feesmustfall movement decrying the high costs of education which bar the majority of South Africans from entry into institutions of higher learning. In September 2016 the ministry of Higher Education announced that the government would subsidise university and college fee increases for low and middle income households, but student protests continue to intensify as young people demand free education not temporary concessions.⁷⁵ The country’s young electorate is raring for change and unless the ANC can quickly and significantly change its leadership, membership and approach to governance, it risks being undercut by younger faces with Malema and the DA’s Mmusi Maimane only introducing a new trend in a country with over 200 parties.

73. Rather than serving as a training ground for new leaders and a separate wing of the ruling party tasked with voicing the concerns of young people and attracting new voters, “the current crop of ANCYL leaders certainly believe that defending [the leadership] is their core mandate”. “Young Blood Versus Old Wood”, *Daily Maverick*, 22 August 2016, www.dailymaverick.co.za.

74. UNFPA South Africa Website, accessed 25 August 2016, southafrica.unfpa.org.

75. “Effectively a 0% Increase in Fees’: What Nzimande’s Announcement Means”, *Mail and Guardian*, 19 September 2016, mg.co.za.

The official opposition approached the local election with vigour, buoyed by polls indicating that widespread dissatisfaction with the current leadership and disgruntlement within ANC-run local administrations would provide an opportunity for them to establish a foothold outside the Western Cape. This was a chance for the party to finally shake its image as an organisation formed by white people to serve their interests, and the DA could possibly break through the “white ceiling”⁷⁶, the threshold beyond which it would fail to grow without gaining support from the black majority. At its head was a 36 year-old, black and educated leader, Mmusi Maimane, elected in May 2015 and urging South Africa to vote for change. The party managed to obtain a share of the vote in black townships where they had barely registered any support in previous elections. In Khayelitsha, Cape Town’s biggest historically black township, support for the party grew to 7.5% from 1.7% in 2011, and from 7% to 30% in Tshwane’s township of Mamelodi.⁷⁷ However, though the party made small gains across neighbourhoods demarcated for blacks under apartheid law, these winnings were relatively small compared to its following in middle and high income areas and its support amongst black voters tends to be concentrated in urban areas. It is also telling that even in Cape Town where the DA has a lengthy reputation as a government, it has been unable to completely win over black townships and Maimane’s party only gained 8% of the vote in his hometown of Soweto.⁷⁸

Rather than winning in areas with a black majority, what assisted the DA was a good turnout in wards that had previously voted DA and in urban high and middle income neighbourhoods whose number of black residents is rising.⁷⁹ A day following the election, ANC Secretary-General, Gwede Mantashe was quick to silence those that claimed that the ANC had lost its popularity to opposition parties, instead the party’s leadership blamed its disappointing results on low turnout by black voters that had become apathetic since the country’s first election over two decades ago.⁸⁰ Voters that had previously voted ANC accounted for a large segment of those that stayed away, negatively influencing the party’s share of the proportional vote.⁸¹ In seven of the eight metros (except eThekweni) all wards which had

76. “DA’s Long Game Finally Pays off”, *Mail and Guardian*, 19 August 2016.

77. “Behind the DA’s Surge”, *Financial Mail*, 12 August 2016, www.financialmail.co.za.

78. “Has the DA Really Grown its Support in Cape Townships?”, *Times Live*, 6 August 2016, www.timeslive.co.za.

79. “The 2016 Local Government Elections and the Metros – Part II: The Base Line for 2016”, Helen Suzman Foundation, 2 July 2016.

80. “Blacks Withhold their Votes While Whites Vote to Get Change, Mantashe Says”, *Business Day*, 4 August 2016, www.bdlive.co.za.

81. “South Africa’s Local Election Shock Down to Anger and Apathy”, *The Guardian*, 5 August 2016, www.theguardian.com.

previously voted for the DA in the last three elections had a higher turnout than those that had voted for the ANC.⁸² But not voting can also be a political act, especially when coupled with having registered to vote. The IEC recorded the highest number of registered voters of any South African election, and black voters may be sending a message to the ruling party making absenteeism a conscious action to undermine the status-quo.⁸³ A worrying interpretation of poor voter turnout in ANC wards could be that many black communities and young voters who made up a significant part of those that failed to vote, may be losing faith not only in the ruling party, but in South Africa's democratic project as whole. The opposition could be benefiting from a perceived dearth of viable political alternatives and the diminishing relevance of party politics in the country's future.

However, though many voters chose not to vote in ANC strongholds, the decision not to participate is not generalized amongst black voters. Gauteng which has the biggest voting pool and a large black majority experienced a 2% increase in voter turnout since the last municipal election, and while support for the ANC dropped from 54.9% in the last national election to 46.1% in the latest poll, the DA has seen support rise in the province from 28.5% in the last national election to 37.2% in the August municipal polls. There is a segment part of the electorate, including black South Africans that formerly voted ANC, that have turned towards opposition parties explaining small, but strategically important shifts in support for the opposition in urban metros. Between the 2014 national elections and the 2016 local election, whilst the ANC experienced a swing away from it in almost 90% of wards in metros, opposition parties made gains with the DA augmenting votes in 75% of wards and the EFF increasing its support in 79% of metro wards in the last 2 years.⁸⁴

82. "The 2016 Local Government Elections and the Metros – Part II: The Base Line for 2016", Helen Suzman Foundation, 2 July 2016.

83. In Vuwani Limpopo, only about 1,500 of the 40,000 registered voters cast a vote. The community publically announced that they had made decided not to vote as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction with the ANC. "Fewer than 1,600 vote in Vuwani" ENCA, 4 August 2016.

84. "The 2016 Local Government Elections and the Metros – Part II: The Base Line for 2016", Helen Suzman Foundation, 2 July 2016.

After the Local Elections

The DA and the EFF: the partnership and its prospects

South Africa's opposition parties challenged how political action and processes are understood in the country; making the number of votes parties have as important as what parties do after elections to consolidate power and fully claim the vote.⁸⁵ The ANC may have gotten the popular vote, but it did not translate popularity into control of metros. Its main opposition failed to obtain 50% of the votes in all three of the new metros they eventually claimed and in Johannesburg the ANC got the most votes. However, the DA's campaign focused not only on gaining votes, but also extended to negotiating the post-election landscape. Before, during and after voting, they harnessed the ambitions of smaller parties keen to open the political space to players other than the ANC. The ruling party, confident that they would yet again get a comfortable win in the metros had few possible allies lined up on the ground and no clear strategy to form alliances. The DA's success was in its ability to draw votes where it would most hurt the ANC's authority, and utilising whatever votes they had to gain a position in metros, finally allowing the party to prove itself outside the Western Cape. Now it remains to be seen if coalitions hastily formed will resist internal squabbling and could govern more successfully than the ANC which has more experience and greater access to the apparatus of state.

The EFF's performance in the election fell below expectation growing by only 1.91% nationally since the 2014 election, and expended by less than a percentage point in Johannesburg and Tshwane since their first campaign.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the party has proved politically astute as Malema again assumes the role of kingmaker, this time in hung

85. The DA understands that collations can disintegrate. The Democratic Party joined the NNP becoming the DA in 2000 in order to take over Cape Town and consolidate support in the Western Cape. But in 2002 an amendment to the constitution which allowed for "floor crossing" permitted individuals to change parties and retain their seat in the council. The ruling party encouraged disgruntled members of the DA coalition to join the ANC, giving the party brief control of the city of Cape Town.

86. "A Mediocre EFF 2016 Election Performance", *Business Day*, 12 August 2016, www.bdlive.co.za.

municipalities where the EFF gained the second or third position. The party made public a list of demands that would need to be met by the ruling party before it would consider coalition. Chief amongst its conditions was that the President step down; land be expropriated without compensation; and that mines and banks be nationalised. The ANC sent its old cohort of struggle veterans to negotiate with the young bloods of the EFF.⁸⁷ For the smaller party this was not a genuine negotiation but an opportunity for it to restate its platform and reassure the public that voting with the DA did not mean the party had changed its policies. After selling itself as anti-ANC, its credibility would not have survived a coalition with the ANC. But Malema's team also refused a formal coalition with the DA accusing it of protecting white capital but saying that compared to Zuma's ANC it was the lesser evil. Turning the game of coalition-making on its head, the EFF said it would enter an informal coalition with the DA and opposition parties where it would vote with the opposition to claim hung municipalities but keep voting on a case-by-case basis. They purposefully avoided claiming key formal positions in metros and district municipalities including mayoral posts, instead it negotiated a place on budget committees and the important South African Local Government Association [SALGA] which represents local government in provincial and national structures.⁸⁸

The EFF's position will allow the young party with no real experience of governing to continue to act as the opposition, demonstrating and protesting decisions taken by municipal governments without formally being a part of administrations nor being tied down by the bureaucracies and practical concerns of running large metros. By negotiating political power to suit its interests and capabilities, the EFF has infused new life into the political space and made political activism rather than formal political processes its central operating mechanism. It has taken activism into parliament and structures of formal government at local, national and provincial level, sparking public protests in parliaments which had previously been dead spaces bound by procedure and where the ruling party could freely exercise its considerable authority. Since its entry in 2014, the EFF has been a loud and demanding young crowd shaking South Africa's parliament and making fist fights, shouting matches and security part of the previously dreary national parliament.⁸⁹ With Malema and

87. Included in the ANC negotiation team was Gwede Mantashe the current national spokesperson for the party who has regularly disparaged any opposition to the ANC as trivial and unpatriotic.

88. "No Coalitions for EFF — But it Plans to Vote with the DA", *Business Day*, 17 August 2016, www.bdlive.co.za.

89. "Brawl Erupts in Parliament", *Times Live*, 17 May 2016, www.timeslive.co.za.

Mbuyiseni Ndlozi a keen strategist and the party's national spokesperson at the helm, the EFF has refused to fall into formal coalitions which would lock it into positions that may not fit its core principles. Instead they have opened a fluid relationship with the opposition based on pragmatism, while giving them the space to expand on a strategy of political activism centred on issues such as the distribution of land and the fight against poor service delivery and mass land evictions. This may also be strategy for the party to gain time to fully develop a clear ideology and plan for governance. So far Malema's men in red have depended heavily on antiquated 1960's inspired rhetoric calling for the fall of capitalism and a Marxist utopia in a tone nicked from Zimbabwe's Mugabe and Castro's socialist revolution. The language continues to be evocative and gain populist support, but the EFF has yet to put forward anything new or suggest that behind its slogans lies policy or concrete objectives that can be realised at local level, let alone a clear national agenda. For the moment the EFF has perfected its role as the opposition, able to create a stir and gain support, but it will need to develop as a political entity able to govern.

The DA and the EFF should rightly enjoy the victory of their informal partnership, but they face an uphill battle to garner public trust and govern effectively with the ANC waiting in the wings. Gauteng is not the Western Cape and Johannesburg and Tshwane are very different from Cape Town. In the Western Cape the old National Party government continued to enjoy support from a white and coloured population given particular preferential treatment by the former regime. In the province other racial groups historically suffered even greater restrictions to services and had little access to jobs so the majority of the Cape's black population migrated out of the province and a significant part of the population which remains has stayed in enclaves formerly demarcated for blacks. It was a relatively easy launching pad for the DA, a predominately white party promising to protect private-property rights and facilitate enterprise. Gauteng's metros are home to a diverse population and a large black majority, and issues of race and its intersection with class take centre-stage. Cleavages between the rich and poor are sharply felt, and the successes and failures of the state's projects to transform the social and economic fabric of the country are apparent. The DA will be unable to dodge debates about race and the impression that the party is inherently working to support white interests, especially when business interest and social development butt heads. The party will also be looking to grow its base of strong black leaders and political minds that may help it negotiate new and predominantly black spaces. The EFF will have to prove that beyond political grandstanding and populist rhetoric, when empowered to affect decisions, they are able to ensure the interests of the poor and check the neoliberal impulses of its

informal partner. Though coalitions and informal partnerships may have won the strategic game against the ANC, they still need to win over residents. Except for Cape Town, the DA did not get more than 50% of the vote in any metro and must now convince a large portion of people who did not vote for them that they can govern firmly and effectively.

The working relationship between the liberal DA and Malema's EFF can only endure if both veer away from letting macro-economic and grand political debates stifle action on the ground, but in metros keeping discussions restricted to the local will be challenging, if not impossible. The line between the national and local is not always clear and deciding on how to effectively implement national growth and economic strategies and who and what should be prioritised at the local level will be a difficult exercise.

The post-election fallout and the battle in the ANC

The figure of Jacob Zuma has taken an almost cult status which divides the public and the party between those that call for him to step down given the weight of scandal and the disappointing election result, and those that stand behind the President. Zuma is unlikely to step down early but under his watch the ANC has fragmented into multiple factions each with a competing idea of the future of the party and the country. In the lead up to the election he reminded members of the party's leadership that he retains a solid support base within the branches of the ANC and if his position is threatened he has promised to return to his branch of the party to exercise influence.⁹⁰ In a state governed by one strong party, the centre of power is the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ruling party and the branches of the ANC.⁹¹ For the moment the NEC is unwilling to rock the boat. Instead of holding its leader accountable, the committee ducked the question by claiming to take "collective responsibility" for August's defeat.⁹² The following discussion examines the ANC as it finds itself after the local election and the nature of the various schisms and tensions that have been exposed and intensified under Zuma's leadership. Taking into

90. "Jacob Zuma Dares the ANC to Fire Him", *Sowetan*, 22 March 2016, www.sowetanlive.co.za.

91. Former President Thabo Mbeki was asked to vacate his office after an allegation that he had used his office to put undue pressure on the judiciary in the course of Zuma's corruption trial. But the impetus behind the early resignation was that by the 2007 ANC elective conference the president had few allies in the party and ANC branches had been mobilised against him.

See T. Vircoulon, "Africa in Questions No. 4: Thabo Mbeki's Fall and Succession", *Institut français des relations internationales*, 2008.

92. "S. Africa's ANC Sticks with Zuma, Risking Eroding Support", *Bloomberg*, 15 August 2016, www.bloomberg.com.

account the current condition of the party in government, the analysis offers possible scenarios for the nation's political and economic future under the leadership of a weakened ANC.

The customs that govern interaction between the ANC's members and the public have changed. The unwritten rule within the party has been that internal squabbles are kept inside the organisation and hidden from the public eye. But in the months preceding the election and since the vote, media and public meetings have become platforms on which disgruntlement within the party is expressed, sending a message not only to the general public but also to branches of the ANC and its alliance partners. Former President Kgalema Motlanthe earned Zuma's contempt after he told local press that the Tripartite Alliance was dead and the bonds between the ANC and trade unionists were eroding.⁹³ At an elective conference in KZN the President publicly disparaged Motlanthe and other ANC cadre who have spoken out against the party. He told those speaking out to "sit and be quiet" because "no one is bigger than the ANC".⁹⁴ Yet the ANC's internal tussles have become increasingly public. In August the Sefako Makgatho Branch of Johannesburg's ANC asked that the president step down blaming the loss of Johannesburg on the sullied reputation of the national leadership, and in the ANC's traditional base of the Eastern Cape, the Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay branches joined calls asking for Zuma to resign.⁹⁵ In early September a movement of ANC members calling themselves "Occupy Luthuli House" implored other members to march on Luthuli House the party's headquarters in central Johannesburg and they demanded the disbanding of the NEC and a change in leadership.⁹⁶ The leadership said it would consider bringing forward the elective conference scheduled for December 2017.⁹⁷ The conference brings ANC members together to elect the NEC and Zuma's successor, but it remains to be seen whether this is a genuine concession. The initiative came from the ANCYL which strongly backs the standing president and an early conference may give Zuma an opportunity to exercise his influence over the structure of the party's new leadership before his detractors in the organisation have time to mobilize branches against him.

93. "Tripartite Alliance is Dead, says Motlanthe", *Business Day*, 2 November 2015, www.bdlive.co.za.

94. "Zuma Takes Swipe at 'Former Party Members Turned Critics'", ENCA, 7 November 2015, www.enca.com.

95. "Eastern Cape ANC Branches Make 'Zuma-must-go' Call", *Times Live*, 30 August 2016.

96. "Afrique du Sud: qui est derrière Occupy Luthuli House ?", *Jeune Afrique*, 5 September 2016, www.jeuneafrique.com.

97. "ANC Considers Holding an Early Conference to Replace its Top Leadership", *Mail and Guardian*, 23 August 2016, mg.co.za.

On September 9, 2016 at the annual summit of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa gave credence to whispers of a war in the centre of the ANC with grave consequences for the unity of the party and the country. At the meeting which brings together the nation's business and government heads he broke the ANC's code of silence saying: "We call upon the state machinery, if not to have a ceasefire, at least to act in a way that will not disturb the stability that our people call for".⁹⁸ His words refer to a conflict which has embroiled state-owned enterprises and institutions of state and will determine the economic and political future of the country. Light was shone on this battle after Gordhan refused to obey a summons from the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (the Hawks) demanding that the Finance Minister present himself to the police unit to answer to allegations of a so-called rogue intelligence unit operating within the Internal Revenue Service (SARS) while he was its head.⁹⁹ The elite crime fighting unit led by former apartheid-era policeman Mthandazo Ntlemenza has been unmotivated to investigate Zuma's various corruption allegations and is accused of acting at Zuma's bidding.¹⁰⁰ Gordhan denies any wrongdoing and claims that the SARS investigative unit operated with the consent of then Finance Minister Trevor Manuel. The summons validates claims of a plot to unseat Gordhan who has criticised excessive spending and the abuse of Treasury funds by SOEs demanding tighter controls and supporting Treasury's decision to fund the Public Protector's investigation into allegations of state-capture which put Zuma and the infamous Gupta family at their centre.¹⁰¹

Confrontations with the Finance ministry have exposed Zuma's significant control of the country's security sector and further factionalised the government. On the one side is the president who is hastening efforts to centralise financial and economic spheres of government placing them within the ambit of his office before his mandate ends. Zuma's band of loyalists has been critical of the two pillars of South Africa economy: a privately held South African Reserve Bank and the Treasury directed by the finance ministry. They want the executive to have greater overview and

98. "Ramaphosa Hits Out at 'a Government at War with Itself'", *Sunday Times*, 11 September 2016, www.timeslive.co.za.

99. "Internal Warfare Tears at South Africa's Ruling African National Congress", *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 September 2016, www.wsj.com.

100. "Zuma Bids to Tighten Grip as S. Africa Police Target Gordhan" *Bloomberg*, 24 August 2016, www.bloomberg.com.

101. It is also alleged that Gordhan and axed Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene both opposed a costly nuclear energy deal with Russia that is championed by the president and is linked to a Gupta-Zuma mining venture in uranium mines. "SA's Proposed \$100bn Nuclear Fleet – Driven by Arrogance or Ignorance?", *BizNews.com*, 6 July 2015, www.biznews.com.

influence on the country's economy championing structures such as Presidential State-Owned Enterprises Coordinating Council, a new committee chaired by the President to oversee the running of all state-owned enterprises.¹⁰² Those close to the President argue that the South African Treasury and the Reserve Bank have been used to uphold neoliberal policies which sustain the mining and the financial services industry dominated by white minority capital and aligning the country in favour of western economic interests.¹⁰³ On the other side is a growing faction in support of the Finance Minister and Treasury which has signalled the alarm, warning that attacks on the integrity of Gordhan's office and economic institutions will make the state vulnerable to corruption and predatory looting of the state's financial apparatus bringing about the threatened downgrade of the country's credit rating to junk status.¹⁰⁴ The members of this faction have yet to fully emerge, but Enoch Godongwana the ANC's head of transformation was the first member of the NEC to join the fray, labelling the charges against Gordhan as politically motivated and factionalising. What is clear is that factional battles not only have relevance for the party, but will mark South Africa's political economy.

Succession within the party is always shrouded in secrecy and presented as a *fait accompli* following its elective conference, however this year public lobbying and endorsements are increasingly commonplace. Two candidates have stood out, but with the elective conference more than a year away and the ANC in desperate need of an image makeover in the lead up to the 2019 national election, new contenders may present themselves. The obvious successor is the president's second in-command and former Lonmin mine director Cyril Ramaphosa who has stood in the wings since he competed for the post with Thabo Mbeki in the late 1990's. Though he has tried to remain on the side-lines of Gordhan's battle with the president, his history negotiating South Africa's peace settlement which put in the nation's post-apartheid financial structures disquiets Zuma's loyalist. He has strained a relationship with the President and is often sidelined by the administration with the most recent episode being the establishment of a presidential oversight committee to oversee SOE's which renders the Inter-Ministerial Committee for SOEs which he chairs redundant. Furthermore, the image of the ex-trade union leader turned

102. "President Zuma Set to Sit at the Helm of SOEs", *Mail and Guardian*, 23 August 2016, mg.co.za.

103. "White Capital Losing Control of SA Mining & Treasury Under Zuma", *City Sun*, 21 September 2016, citysun.co.za.

104. "South African Finance Minister Says Will Not Meet Police, Assets Extend Slump", *Reuters*, 24 August 2016, www.reuters.com.

businessman has been tarnished by allegations that as the non-executive director and shareholder of Lonmin he precipitated in the massacre of 34 striking Lonmin miners on August 16, 2012.¹⁰⁵ It is unclear from where within the current ANC Ramaphosa can establish a base of support. Though it is whispered that Cosatu will back his candidature, the union has been slow to announce its intentions, but it helps his case that the National Union of Mineworkers, one of the country's oldest mining unions, is officially endorsing Ramaphosa.¹⁰⁶

With Ramaphosa's allegiance unclear, before the local election the President welcomed outgoing African Union Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma back into the political fold. She began her campaign in their stronghold of KZN receiving the immediate endorsement of the KZN wing the ANC Youth League.¹⁰⁷ But the extent to which Dlamini-Zuma, a cabinet minister in Thabo Mbeki's administration will serve the interests of factions loyal to Zuma is difficult to gauge. She has been away from domestic politics since 2012 and at the famous Polokwane elective conference which booted Thabo Mbeki from the presidential seat, she stood on Mbeki's ticket against her ex-husband. But she was appointed into Zuma's cabinet and the president supported her nomination to the AU.¹⁰⁸ However the endorsement of the President may hurt her campaign within different factions of the ANC and earn her the distrust of voters wary of having another "Zuma" in the president's office. The current struggle in the former liberation movement may present an opportunity for new faces to penetrate the party's tight leadership circle. A wildcard in the election race may still emerge as branches either stand with the current NEC's "top six" or take up oppositional positions in relations to Zuma administration.

105. A judicial commission into the deaths cleared him of wrongdoing, but the Deputy President's reputation is tainted by his involvement in Lonmin at the time of the tragedy. "Cyril Ramaphosa – South Africa's Leader in Waiting", *The Africa Report*, 9 January 2015, www.theafricareport.com.

106. Ramaphosa was NUM's first General Secretary and despite events in Marikina they will stand by him in the election race. "NUM Officially Backs Cyril Ramaphosa to Succeed Zuma as ANC President", *Mail and Guardian*, 26 September 2016, mg.co.za.

107. "KZN ANC Youth League Endorses Dlamini-Zuma for President", ENCA, 27 July 2016, www.enca.com.

108. Dlamini-Zuma's was essentially exiled from South African politics while in the AU making her seat in the regional organisation more of a stick than a carrot for a politician with ambitions for the presidency.

Conclusion: towards the National Elections

There are worrying signs of turbulence ahead as a threatened ruling party which lacks credible leadership tries to claw back authority and progressively endeavours to centralise the organs of state and abuse the state apparatus to serve limited party and individual interests. The ANC cannot govern as it has before, and the party's growing pains will undoubtedly be felt across the country. Its base of influence is shrinking in urban centres and so are opportunities to feed a complex system of patronage founded on complete control especially in big revenue generating metropolitan municipalities. As the political space evolves to embrace more actors which can be credible contenders, change is likely to introduce a period of significant instability and insecurity.

A faction of the ANC that circulates around the presidency is intensifying efforts to consolidate political power and control of the country's economy with wide spreading implications for the party, South Africa's three-tiered government, and the region's most powerful economy. Initiatives such as the recently created ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs mandated with ensuring the smooth function of all layers of government and led by Zuma's loyalist and short-lived Finance Minister David Van Rooyen, point to a governing party eager to concentrate authority and undermine not only the new opposition led local administrations, but also a constitutional democracy built on a respect for the separation of powers.

Under Zuma's leadership the party has torn into itself and its central pillars have been damaged. The Tripartite Alliance with the SACP and Cosatu is under threat¹⁰⁹ and the women's and youth leagues meant to balance power and attract voters have been completely flattened and turned into the defence-wing of the presidency. If the ANC does not confront fractures within itself and failings in its national structure, it is unlikely to make the necessary changes needed to hold back the tide of voter dissatisfaction revealed by the hotly contested local elections. If its

109. Cosatu is greatly weakened by the loss of its biggest union, now faces losing another significant union the Food and Allied Workers' Union, "Leave Cosatu, Join Us – Numsa's Call to Workers", *News24*, 1 May 2016, www.news24.com.

current leadership remains in place, unreflective and unresponsive, South Africa needs to settle in for a period of unpredictability and significant changes in the political terrain.

The local government election demonstrates that the ANC is not alone in deciding South Africa's future. The party must answer to a burgeoning opposition capable of thinking creatively; an active electorate sensitive to both local and national dynamics; as well as civil society and democratic institutions ready to check its authority. The student protests that have been raging across the country since late 2015 as young South Africans demand that the government honour the promise to make education accessible and free have been met with increasingly violent responses from the police, revealing the inaptitude of the regime in the face of an active young citizenry that is likely to become more vocal.¹¹⁰

This election outcome promises great possibility for growth and contestation, with opposition parties supporting a deep change in how politics is understood and carried out with implications not only for South Africa, but also for those in opposition against established powers throughout the region. For a government that has become too comfortable, August 2016 serves as a stern warning from the country's people and introduces a period that will test the relatively young democracy.

110. "Mayhem at Wits after Police Release Rubber Bullets and Stun Grenades on Students", *Mail and Guardian*, 4 October 2016, mg.co.za.

