

Politikon

South African Journal of Political Studies

ISSN: 0258-9346 (Print) 1470-1014 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cpsa20>

Coexistence as a Strategy for Opposition Parties in Challenging the African National Congress' One-Party Dominance

Isaac Khambule, Amarone Nomdo, Babalwa Siswana & Gilbert Fokou

To cite this article: Isaac Khambule, Amarone Nomdo, Babalwa Siswana & Gilbert Fokou (2019): Coexistence as a Strategy for Opposition Parties in Challenging the African National Congress' One-Party Dominance, *Politikon*, DOI: [10.1080/02589346.2019.1682784](https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2019.1682784)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589346.2019.1682784>



Published online: 24 Oct 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 38




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Coexistence as a Strategy for Opposition Parties in Challenging the African National Congress' One-Party Dominance

Isaac Khambule ^a, Amarone Nomdo^b, Babalwa Siswana^b and Gilbert Fokou^b

^aSchool of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa;

^bDemocracy, Governance, and Service Delivery Research Programme, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, South Africa

ABSTRACT

Post-apartheid democratic South Africa experienced the pitfalls of one-party dominance when the country's fifth democratically elected parliament (2014–2019) faced growing corruption, state capture, undermining of parliamentary oversight and the abuse of political power and state institutions. These events threatened the country's constitutional democracy and its principles of an accountable government as the ruling party undermined parliamentary oversight structures through majoritarianism to evade accountability by the Legislature and Executive. This led to the growing coexistence and cooperation of opposition parties (despite their ideological differences) in parliamentary oversight as a means of challenging the African National Congress' (ANC) one-party dominance. This process resulted in the establishment of formal and informal coalitions for governing key cities such as Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay. Against this backdrop, and building on a case study of these three metropolitan municipalities, this paper analyses the coexistence of the opposition parties in parliamentary oversight and in the governance of key cities as a means of challenging the ANC's one-party dominance. The analysis delineates the prospects and challenges of using coexistence as a strategy for challenging the ANC's one-party-dominance post the 2019 general election.

Introduction

South Africa's post-apartheid political landscape has been defined as a one-party dominant political system as the African National Congress (ANC) has won six consecutive national elections with an overwhelming majority of the votes since its ascension to power in 1994 (Butler 2009a; Southall 2014). International literature defines a one-party dominant state as a country where the political landscape is perpetually overshadowed by a single dominant political party that wins consecutive elections and governs for a prolonged period (Erdmann and Basedau 2013; Ferim 2013). In the South African context, the ANC government has been in power for 25 years, which is largely due to the party's status as a former liberation movement, which resonates with the majority of the voting population. Other African countries such as Zimbabwe, Mali, Namibia, Botswana, Cameroon and Senegal have also witnessed some form of one-party dominance under the control of former liberation parties and movements (Doorenspleet and Nijzink 2013). Notably,

CONTACT Isaac Khambule  Khambulei@ukzn.ac.za  School of Built Environment and Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 238 Mazisi Kunene Rd, Glenwood, Durban 4041

© 2019 South African Association of Political Studies

one-party dominant states are not unique to the African context, as South and Central American countries such as Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica, as well as European states such as Italy and Sweden, have had similar experiences.

One-party dominant states are often criticised for their degeneration into despotism, patronage networks, destruction of economies and refusal to leave office after losing elections (DasGupta 2015; Magaloni 2006; Scheiner 2006). The veracity of this criticism is evident in the case of Zimbabwe's 2005 elections, where authoritarian tactics and violence were used to silence opposition parties and subvert democratic principles as Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) Mugabe refused to relinquish political power (Moore 2014). Thus, ZANU PF could be characterised as a marginally dominant party because of its use of authoritarian methods. In Cameroon, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), previously known as the Cameroonian National Union (CNU), has been in power since independence in 1960. Since the spread of multi-party systems around the world in the 1990s, the CPDM has employed tactics ranging from corruption and nepotism to constitutional manipulation and the marginalisation of oppositions to consolidate its dominance in the political space (Ferim 2013; Van de Walle 2003).

In the South African context, the problems caused by one-party dominance were witnessed when the country's constitutional democracy and its principles of an accountable government were threatened by the governing party's parliamentary majoritarianism. The ANC used this majoritarianism to evade horizontal accountability in the legislature, leading to what can be seen as an abuse of the party's majority to protect individual interests over national interests, thereby blurring state and party lines. These events transpired in the midst of what is now termed the 'state capture' debacle, which exposed the country's growing corruption under the Zuma administration (Bhorat et al. 2017). These events, largely under the Zuma administration, were attributed to the dominant position the ANC enjoys, which resulted in minimal accountability and the abuse of state institutions for individualist purposes. Consequently, opposition parties turned to the judiciary to effect accountability and oversight in an effort to facilitate horizontal accountability.

This paper analyses the coexistence of opposition parties to challenge the ANC's one-party dominant position. Coexistence here refers to multiple parties that coexist with the common goal of challenging a dominant party. Coexistence can be defined as a strategic, temporary and informal coalition between two or more political entities to counter a dominant political party. Various scholars have argued that an electorally dominant party may undermine checks and balances, and as such, once dominance is challenged it opens the political space for a multi-party democracy (Hoff, Horowitz, and Milanovic 2005). This paper identifies two examples that demonstrate the coexistence of opposition parties to challenge a dominant ANC: (1) the coexistence of political parties displayed in effecting the parliament to force the executive to account, including the use of the judiciary, and (2) the informal coalitions of opposition parties in the governance of key metropolitan municipalities such as Nelson Mandela Bay, Tshwane and Johannesburg. Local politics in large metropolitan municipalities is important because it highlights the complex and dynamic challenges that inform the dynamics that shape coexistence between opposition parties who may hold very different ideologies.

A Review of one party dominance

A one-party dominant state refers to a country in which one political party dominates the political, electoral and governing landscape by winning overwhelming majorities in at least four consecutive democratic elections and staying in power for a prolonged number of years (Doorenspleet and Nijzink 2013). There is no overarching definition for a one-party dominant state as scholars have proposed different thresholds, ranging from 40% to 70% of parliamentary seats, to meet the criteria of a one-party dominant state (Erdmann and Basedau 2013). In addition to perpetual electoral dominance, broad criteria include a party's ability to dominate state institutions and the public agenda (Southall 2005). Ziegfeld and Tudor (2017) highlight that many democracy scholars hold a belief that alternating political power is a key indicator of the strength of a country's democracy. However, Knutsen and Wig (2015, 882) argue that an 'alternation of power biases against estimated economic benefits of democracy'. They further argued that 'strong economic performance reduces the probability of incumbents losing democratic elections, [as such,] young democracies with high growth may falsely be coded dictatorships' (Knutsen and Wig 2015, 882).

Dominant parties win elections and ultimately gain control of the legislature through parliament and the executive through what is seen as *cadre deployment*. Scheiner (2006) called one-party dominant democratic states 'uncommon democracies', due to the inability of opposition parties to attract enough votes to unseat dominant parties. Ziegfeld and Tudor (2015, 263) argued that 'highly proportional electoral rules accurately translate the party's popular majority into a legislative majority, while disproportional electoral rules tend to award it a seat share much larger than its vote share'. While various reasons cause the emergence of a one-party dominant state, the foremost justifications and motives are as follows:

- (1) A party's characteristics and ability to win national legitimacy (Arian and Barnes 1974).
- (2) The embodiment of national consensus (Tudor 2013).
- (3) The use of patronage, targeted public spending, vote-buying, and neopatrimonialism (Magaloni 2006).
- (4) Distinct ideological positions (Greene 2007).
- (5) The absence of a strong opposition party (Scheiner 2006; Ziegfeld and Tudor 2017).
- (6) The way a party stigmatises its opposition (Ferree 2010).
- (7) Sustained economic growth and the effective use of public policy (Kim 2010).

Factors such as a party's characteristics and its ability to build national consciousness play a significant role in ensuring continued electoral success. The capacity for mobilising the political elite through targeted appointments to major government and administrative positions further increases party dominance. As often observed in developing countries, former liberation movements tend to stay in power longer due to their status of bringing democracy or change. This is evident in countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, where the ANC, the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the ZANU PF have respectively governed since the dawn of democracy in those countries (Doorenspleet and Nijzink 2013). Common to these dominant parties are their history of being liberation movements and their ability to unite diverse racial and ethnic groups

during the transition period and by acting as a 'broad church' for diverse political interests (Doorenspleet and Nijzink 2013; Erdmann and Basedau 2013).

One party dominance may not promote meaningful democratisation when there is an abuse of power. The use of majoritarianism by dominant parties often leads to control regimes, whereby the leading party prioritises tightening political control across every level to ensure effective control over resources. For example, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan managed to instil clientelism through a financially centralised government structure in order to undermine opposition parties' ability to challenge its dominance (Scheiner 2006). In Africa, the ability of dominant parties to control government increases the propensity to buy votes and dedicate public resources in areas where the party is popular to consolidate its support (Erdmann and Engel 2007). In some African countries, the dominant parties use government finances to undermine opposition parties, enhance their fissiparous tendencies, and disincentivise any attempts to form anti-government coalitions (Van de Walle 2003). Dominant parties stay in power due to the use of patronage, targeted public spending, vote-buying, and neopatrimonialism (Magaloni 2006). This leads to the emergence of rent-seeking and uncontrollable corruption that affects not only the party, but also the government and society as a whole. The problems associated with many dominant parties can therefore be traced to the historical weaknesses associated with their inability to manage the infighting for resources as well as emerging factional battles (Erdmann and Engel 2007; Magaloni 2006).

Although there are notable drawbacks of one-party dominant states, such as the rise of rent-seeking, neopatrimonialism and clientism, there are also some positive aspects. For example, the Social Democrats in Sweden during the 1930s and 1980s spearheaded one of the prestigious welfare states in the world. Dominant parties may enjoy different levels of legitimacy, depending on their institutionalisation, capacity to deliver developmental outcomes, sustainable economic growth, in conjunction with radical changes in the country's economy. The ability of states such as China to attain unprecedented and rapid economic growth, ultimately moving millions out of poverty, has strengthened the legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, and in turn the political legitimacy of the one-party state system (Kim 2010; Leftwich 2002). The Chinese example highlights a successful case study in a one-party state, and as such it receives less attention from democratic theorists because it is an authoritarian state. Essentially, China does not meet the requirement to be considered a dominant party because there are no general elections as compared to other democratic countries such as Sweden, South Africa and Cameroon (Doorenspleet and Nijzink 2013). This does not mean that the party's ability to sustain unprecedented economic growth should be ignored because dominant parties can learn from some of China's political leadership attributes and characteristics.

The dominance of the ANC, its pitfalls and the coexistence of opposition parties

Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has held six general elections, with the ANC consistently achieving an overwhelming victory. Southall (2005) observes that the dominance the ANC enjoys is complex, over-exaggerated and not static. He also argued that the ANC is a 'weak dominant party' where their power is constrained, which would eventually be 'subjected to considerable challenge over coming years' (Southall 2005, 78). Indeed, the

ANC has, in recent times, faced various challenges in maintaining electoral support resulting in a rise of coexistence amongst opposition parties. In 2014, the ANC won the election with 62.2% of votes, equating to 249 seats in the National Assembly. By 2019, a mere five years later, the party's electoral support fell to 57.5%; its lowest level since the 1994 founding elections, and, for the first time in post-apartheid history, the party could not secure 60% of the vote. Concomitantly, voter turn-out was at 66%, in 2019, the lowest level in post-apartheid history, compared to approximately 74% in 2015. This is a significant decline, especially given an increase in numbers of both registered and eligible voters.

Figure 1 demonstrates that between 1994 and 2019 electoral support for the ANC surpassed the combined support for the opposition parties. The ability of the ANC to win six consecutive elections is due to its history as the liberation movement, the legacy of Nelson Mandela, and its ability to embody national consensus under the umbrella of the 'rainbow nation' (Maserumule 2016a). Tudor (2013) defined this as the ability to embody national consensus. This consensus was critical given the transition from apartheid and rebuilding an inclusive and democratic society. The ANC thus constructed itself as an inclusive party to gain resonance with the majority of voters.

Under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, the ANC continued its dominance when it secured its highest election win with 69.7% in 2004; the highest level of electoral support it has secured to date. Butler (2009b) noted that one-party dominance in South Africa worked to create political stability. However, the ANC's dominance under Zuma's tenure undermined good governance and hampered service delivery, as evidenced by the ongoing service delivery protests (Southall 2014). Furthermore, one saw extraordinary cases of corruption, under the Zuma administration. As with most dominant party systems, Zuma drew on patronage to maintain political control.

A key mandate of South Africa's democratic parliament is to ensure the promotion of accountability and the independence of state institutions, particularly those tasked with supporting the country's Constitution.¹ Despite these important institutional norms, there are several examples that show to what degree one-party dominance undermine South Africa's constitutional democracy. Noticeable examples include the abuse of state institutions for political goals, as evidenced in the cases of the State Security Agency and the disbandment of South Africa's anti-corruption unit, the Scorpions.² The extent

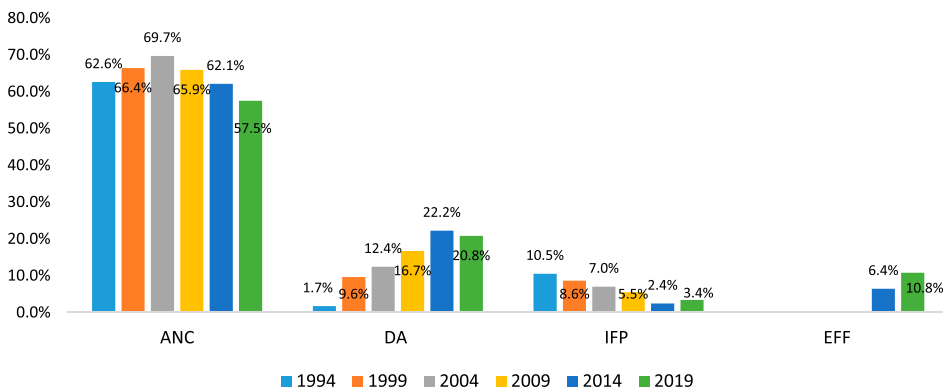


Figure 1. National Assembly Representation (%) from 1994 to 2019 (IEC 2019).

of the abuse of state institutions was detailed in a report entitled *High Level Review Panel Report on the State Security*:

There has been a serious politicisation and factionalisation of the intelligence community ... based on factions in the ruling party, resulting in an almost complete disregard for the Constitution ... turning our civilian intelligence community into a private resource to serve the political and personal interests of particular individuals. (High Level Panel Report 2018, ii)

Drawing on its hegemonic dominant position in the legislature and executive, the ANC used its majority to disband the Scorpions due to a belief that the anti-corruption unit was abusing its power by prosecuting high-ranking political figures and government officers (Berning and Montesh 2016). According to Schönteich (2014), however, the disbandment was due to infighting within the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), which was brought about by the political capture of this state institution by prominent figures within the party. Thus, the ANC was able to exert its influence on state institutions, undermining the independence of state institutions, and effectively blurring the line between party and state.

Chapter 13 of the *South African National Development Plan* (NDP) identified parliamentary oversight as a key component to strengthen the country's democracy and achieving its developmental goals (National Development Plan 2012). While this function is recognised as a key priority by the NDP, under the Zuma administration, parliament did not carry out its oversight role to hold the executive to account in the midst of the state capture debacle. Munzhedzi (2016) highlights that accountability measures were undermined through the ANC's majority, which enabled the party to shield members from scrutiny. Consequently, the ANC used its dominance to weaken the ability of parliament to hold the executive to account.

The most notably example of parliament's inability to hold the executive to account is the Nkandla matter, where the parliament failed to hold then President Zuma to account for misusing public funds to upgrade his homestead. Here the ANC drew on its overwhelming majority in parliament, seemingly, to protect former President Jacob Zuma from the political repercussions of the Nkandla scandal. Despite the Public Protector's *'State of Capture'* report (Public Protector of South Africa 2016) and its binding recommendations, the ANC used its majority to abuse and undermine democratic processes by outvoting opposition parties and disregarding the Public Protector's report. This led to the former President Jacob Zuma being 'exonerated' from any wrongdoing. The ANC achieved this through its dominant status with 62% of parliamentary seats. This case demonstrates the ANC's inability to draw party lines over parliamentary functions as it resulted in a failure to promote accountability and oversight as members of parliament voted along party lines. The case also demonstrates the beginning of the coexistence of opposition parties in challenging the ANC's dominant position in the legislature.

The emergence of the coexistence of opposition parties in challenging the ANC's dominant position is evident in many instances. For example, in dealing with the Nkandla scandal, opposition parties began to coordinate their efforts and work collectively to push the legislature to hold the executive accountable. Opposition parties voted together in subcommittees such as the Nkandla and State Capture committees, and walked out of sittings when the ruling party used its dominant position to evade accountability and

shield its members. It is noteworthy that although the opposition parties have very different ideologies, they chose coexistence in an attempt to ensure effective parliamentary oversight.

Southall (2014) asks whether the problems caused by the ANC's one-party dominance are a threat to South Africa's democracy. The blurred line between the political party and the state is marked by the rise of unprecedented corruption in the public sphere, especially under the Zuma administration. Southall rightly observed that the ANC:

appoints party loyalists to positions of state and wider public office ... party loyalty trumps qualifications, relevant experience, and competence; the constitutionally required independence of various bodies is thereby seriously undermined, and the functionality of numerous institutions (and the commercial health of parastatals) is severely compromised. (Southall 2014, 59)

Nowhere is this more evident than in the growing prevalence of state capture, where state-owned enterprises such as Transnet, PRASA, Eskom and Denel have served rent-seeking interests and party loyalists have channelled lucrative procurement contracts to business interests closely linked to former president Jacob Zuma and his loyalists. Cadre deployment in key state entities impact on the government's ability to effectively deal with corruption, as the deployed cadres may influence decisions to the benefit of individuals rather than common societal good. As such, the blurred line between the state and the party threatens South Africa's democratic principles and norms because it impedes on accountability and transparent governance.

Coexistence between opposition parties in South Africa has also been demonstrated in other instances, both inside and outside parliamentary structures. Outside parliamentary structures, coexistence was seen in two Constitutional Court cases (*Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others*; *Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others* [2016] ZACC 11) when the opposition parties coordinated their efforts and approached the Constitutional Court to assist in ensuring that the parliament held the executive to account in the face of the ANC abusing its majority in parliament for political expediency, most notably to absolve former President Zuma of any wrongdoing in the Nkandla saga. The court judgement ruled that:

[99] By passing that [to absolve the president of wrongdoing] resolution the National Assembly effectively flouted its obligations ... [105] Neither the President nor the National Assembly was entitled to respond to the binding remedial action taken by the Public Protector as if it is of no force or effect or has been set aside through a proper judicial process. The ineluctable conclusion is therefore, that the National Assembly's resolution based on the Minister's findings exonerating the President from liability is inconsistent with the Constitution and unlawful ... [104] Similarly, the failure by the National Assembly to hold the President accountable by ensuring that he complies with the remedial action taken against him, is inconsistent with its obligations to scrutinise and oversee executive action and to maintain oversight of the exercise of executive powers by the President. (Constitutional Court of South Africa 2016, Cases CCT 143/15 and CCT 171/15)

The failure of parliament to perform its oversight role has led to the courts often having to make decisions entrusted to the legislature. The involvement of the judiciary in parliamentary matters, despite the separation of powers, suggests the pitfalls of one-party dominance in a democratic system. In this particular context, the persistent use of the ANC's dominant position in parliament not only signalled an abuse of democratic processes,

but also resulted in undermining parliament to effectively exercise its constitutional mandate of executive oversight. At the heart of this issue is the promotion of party interests over the constitutional duties of parliament and broader South African national interests (Southall 2014). This is also indicative that the ANC may see the state and its constitutional obligations within the *trias politica* as secondary to the party. This is seen in the United Democratic Movement v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others [2017] ZACC 21 judgement.

The coexistence of opposition parties in governing key metros

The coexistence of opposition parties in challenging the ANC’s one-party dominance has thus far been covered at a macro scale through reviewing parliamentary oversight. Outside parliamentary structures, coexistence was further seen with opposition parties coordinating court cases against the speaker and the National Assembly to enforce parliamentary oversight and counter the ANC’s dominance. One also finds further significant examples of coexistence are demonstrated via informal coalitions at the micro-level in metropolitan municipalities. At a micro level, coexistence is demonstrated through opposition parties forming formal and informal coalitions or partnerships to keep the ANC out of power in several metros after the 2016 local government elections. Figure 2 provides the voting outcomes in South Africa’s metropolitan municipalities from the 2011 and 2016 local government elections, which saw opposition parties oust the ANC from power in several metropolitan municipalities.

The 2016 local government elections signified the rise of opposition parties in challenging the electoral dominance of the ANC at the micro-level. Figure 2 demonstrates that the ANC experienced a significant decrease in electoral support in all metropolitan municipalities. The DA and the EFF (which contested its first local government elections) emerged as key players in challenging the ANC’s electorally dominant position in the South African political landscape. In comparison with the 2011 Local Government Elections, the 2016 Local Government Elections saw the ANC losing 13% in Ekurhuleni, 11% in Buffalo City,

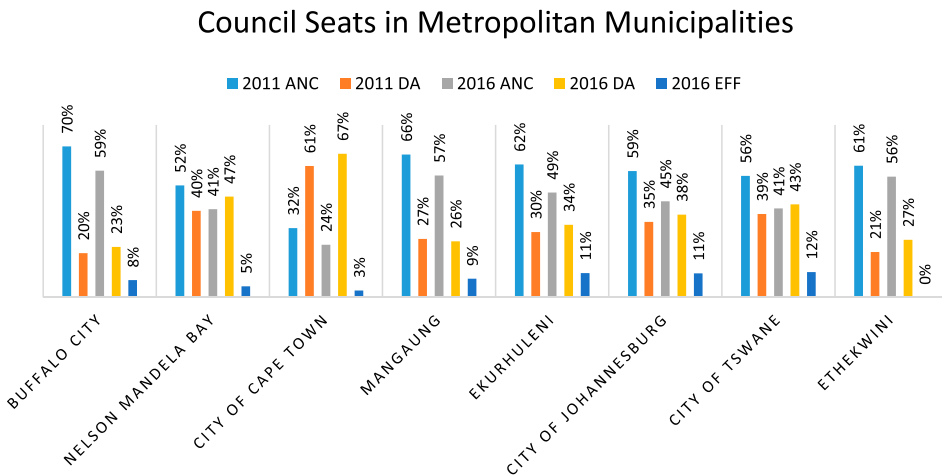


Figure 2. Council Seats in Metropolitan Municipalities (IEC 2011, 2016).

9% in Mangaung and 5% in EThekweni (IEC 2011, 2016). The increasing support for opposition parties such as the DA and the EFF led to coalition governments in three key metros—Tshwane, Johannesburg and Nelson Mandela Bay. However, coexistence as a political strategy produced varied outcomes in different metropolitan municipalities.

City of Johannesburg

An ANC-led government controlled the City of Johannesburg from the first democratic local government elections in 2000 until the 2016 local government elections. Under the ANC-led government, the city experienced rising corruption and a lack of accountability, which led to a loss of trust in the government (Booyesen 2016). Within the city, 89% of residents believed that corruption impacts negatively on democracy, while 78% believed that public officials were failing to live up to the *Batho Pele* principles that prioritise the developmental needs of citizens (Gauteng City Region Observatory 2017).

Consequently, the ANC experienced a 15% decline in electoral support in the Johannesburg metro in 2016, with the party's support dropping from 59% to 44%. Booyesen (2016) observed that many previous ANC supporters either voted for opposition parties or abstained from voting. While the ANC dropped support, Figure 2 demonstrates that the DA went from 35% in 2011 to 38% in the 2016 local government elections. The EFF, which contested its first local government elections, received 11% of the vote. These results led to the DA and EFF engaging in an informal partnership, which saw the ANC losing political power in this metropolitan municipality. Several reasons led to the EFF working with the DA. This includes the failure of the ANC to effectively deal with corruption, the recall former President Jacob Zuma and a lack of exercising effective oversight (Booyesen 2016). While these may be seen as national issues, they had a significant impact on which party ended up governing the City of Johannesburg.

The informal partnership between the DA and the EFF in the City of Johannesburg demonstrates the emergence of coexistence as a political strategy used by the opposition in challenging the ANC's hegemony but also to advance the party agenda. For example, even though the DA is seen as a liberal party (DA 2019) and the EFF (EFF 2019) being a socialist party, the two political parties collaborated to allow the DA to take political power in the City of Johannesburg. This was, however, contingent on the Mayor of Johannesburg tabling a pro-poor budget acceptable to the EFF. Mokgosi, Shai, and Ogunnubi (2017) observed that such a move allowed the EFF to promote their political agenda and exercise political influence in shaping policy directives. For example, the City of Johannesburg insourced all security guards and cleaning staff based on the proposition of the EFF. Through coexistence and coalition, we note that no political party can maintain a policy hegemony, thus promoting collaboration between ideologically diverse parties. Through coexistence, political parties at the micro-level may work to undermine the ANC's dominance in the long term through building grassroots support and dismantling partisan structures that facilitated the ANC's electoral dominance in previous elections.

The City of Tshwane

The ANC was the governing party in the City of Tshwane from 2000 to 2016. Darkey and Visagie (2013) demonstrate that under the ANC-led government, the quality of life in

Tshwane's informal settlements barely changed, with discontent growing amongst the poor about the lack of access to water, jobs, houses and electricity. The underlying issues related to this are poverty, unemployment and inequality. Stats SA (2017) identified unemployment and a lack of basic services such as water, electricity and housing as drivers of multi-dimensional poverty in the country.

The ANC electoral support in the City of Tshwane declined by 11% to 41% in the 2016 Local Government Elections compared to the 56% the party had garnered in the 2011 Local Government Elections (IEC 2011, 2016). The loss of the City of Tshwane signifies the growing anger and loss of trust associated with the ANC-led government at the micro-level due to a lack of adequate service delivery. A contributing factor to the ANC losing the City of Tshwane was the announcement of National Executive Committee (NEC) member, Thoko Didiza, as a mayoral candidate for the city, despite the region having submitted its preferred candidates (Maserumule 2016b). This led to widespread violence and destructive protests from ANC supporters. Kgatle (2017, 1) argued that the Tshwane protests were driven by 'factionalism, tribalism, sexism, economic exclusion and patronage politics'. While the ANC's support declined, the EFF gained 12% of the vote. The DA saw a 4% increase in electoral support from 39% in 2011 to 43% in the 2016.

The coexistence of the DA and the EFF in the City of Tshwane signifies another milestone in the bid to challenge the ANC's political dominance in the South African political landscape. The informal partnership between the DA and the EFF is driven by factors such as the need to address corruption, the promotion of accountability, and the provision of basic services to the most marginalised. As with the case of the Johannesburg metro, the EFF votes with the DA on an issue by issue basis (Essop 2016), particularly on the DA tabling a pro-poor budget that will resonate with the EFF's constituents. The coexistence of these parties was tested when it emerged that the mayor of the City of Tshwane had hired an unqualified Chief of Staff and was accused of corruption in the Glad Africa project (Nicolson 2018). This led to a vote of no confidence that the EFF did not support because it was tabled by the ANC. This seems to demonstrate that the coexistence of these parties is not only dependent on keeping the ANC out of power, but on promoting good governance as evident in Msimang resigning as the Mayor of City of Tshwane. Here the EFF pushed for the resignation of the mayor from his position and the termination of the Glad Africa project.

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality

Nelson Mandela Bay Metro is a key municipality in the Eastern Cape, which contributes 44% of the province's economy (Socio-Economic Review 2017). The ANC held comfortable majorities in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, until the 2006 Local Government Elections. Increasingly one saw allegations and evidence of high rates of corruption that remained unaddressed by the political leadership. In the run up to the 2016 local government elections, the ANC leadership and the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs deployed prominent figures to head the metro to regain voter confidence. Olver (2017), in his book entitled *How to Steal a City: The Battle for Nelson Mandela Bay*, detailed how this metropolitan municipality was captured by rogue and corrupt elements in partnership with the political leaders. According to Olver (2017), the ANC fired its regional leadership in Nelson Mandela Bay due to the party's decaying local structures,

which had created various factions that sought to control the administration's fiscus. Political infighting, factionalism and corruption undermined the ability of the council to deliver basic services to its citizens, promoting widespread protests from disgruntled citizens.

Overall, the ANC's support in the metro dropped by 11% from the 52% it had obtained in 2011 (IEC 2011, 2016); in spite of the moral and leadership regeneration project that the ANC had embarked on in the region. The main opposition party, the DA, managed to increase its support by 7%, as it moved from the 40% it obtained in 2011 to 47% in the 2016 local government elections. The EFF gained 5% of the vote. Other parties such as the United Democratic Movement (UDM) earned 2% of the vote, whereas the remaining parties such as the African Independent Congress (AIC), United Front of the Eastern Cape (UFEC), Congress of the People (Cope) and Patriotic Alliance (PA) gained less than 1%, resulting in each party gaining one seat in the council. The demise of the ANC led government in Nelson Mandela Bay can therefore be attributed to the corrupt elements and activities that undermined the municipality's ability to adequately deliver basic services to the people.

The 2016 local government election results in Nelson Mandela Bay led to a formal coalition of opposition parties to oust the ANC from power. The DA, UDM, Patriotic Front (PA) and other smaller parties forged their coexistence, which resulted in a DA mayor and a UDM deputy mayor, with other several important positions such as Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) being spread out across other coexisting partners. This was the first visible coexistence of opposition parties without the EFF playing a central role, and was short-lived due to various internal issues such as corruption, infighting for positions, ideological differences and the land expropriation debate. The breakdown of the relationship between the DA and the UDM (after the ousting of Deputy Mayor Bobani) led to the removal of Trollip, who was later replaced by former deputy mayor, Bobani, of the UDM (Ndletyana 2018). A key issue for the EFF in supporting the recall of Trollip was the inability of the DA to vote for the EFF's motion for land to be expropriated without compensation, as the DA believes that expropriation should be with compensation, illustrating key ideological differences between the the parties. These sets of challenges resulted in small parties withdrawing their formal and informal support for the DA, thereby undermining the ability to challenge the ANC's dominance.

The prospects and challenges of using coexistence to challenge the ANC's dominance

The coexistence of opposition parties in governing key metropolitan municipalities signals a new era in South African politics – an era that demonstrates the depth of opposition parties in challenging the ANC's dominance. Ndletyana (2018) argued that it is misleading to suggest that coalitions are new in South Africa, based on the observation that there were 97 coalition municipalities before the 2016 local government elections. While Ndletyana's (2018) observation is true, coalitions at the metropolitan level represents a new era in South African politics because the country's economic hubs are no longer governed by one party. The changing political landscape in metropolitan areas is due to the ability of opposition parties to appeal and penetrate metropolitan voters and coexist when governing. This is evident in that the EFF has been able to absorb some of the disillusioned ANC

voters since 2014, largely due to their unique ideological and radical nature which sets it apart from the ANC and the DA.

The outcome of the 2016 Local Government Elections shows that there is no one rising opposition party, but rather an emergence of the coexistence of better-performing opposition parties and other smaller parties in challenging the ANC's dominance. As observed from the 2014 and 2019 national government elections, the ANC continued to earn the majority of the national votes. The DA experienced a 5% increase from 17% in 2009 to 22% in 2014, before dropping to 20% in 2019, with the EFF managing 6% in 2014 and 10% in 2019. (IEC 2019, 2014, 2009). While opposition parties lack the requisite numbers to challenge the ANC's electoral dominance at the macro level, key trends suggest that opposition parties are challenging the ANC's dominance at the micro-level as seen in the case studies presented in this paper. Here we see opposition parties engaging in both formal coalitions and informal partnerships to ensure that the ANC does not take the reins of political power. The DA and EFF demonstrated coexistence to govern the various metropolitan municipalities despite their ideological differences. The coexistence of these opposition parties is driven by their desire to challenge and undermine the ANC's long-held dominance in the South African political landscape.

The success of coalition governments in Johannesburg and Tshwane demonstrates that the strategy of opposition parties coexisting to challenge the dominance of the ANC is sound. A particularly important phenomenon to note is that the informal partnerships include parties with opposing ideologies, with the DA being proponents of a free market economy and the EFF aspiring to create a state-led economy (DA 2019; EFF 2019). These differing ideologies influence the policy direction of coexisting parties, as evident in that the EFF votes with the DA on an issue by issue basis, signalling the need for consensus on key issues. As observed by Mokgosi, Shai, and Ogunnubi (2017), balancing the expectations of the left-wing EFF constituency and the liberal DA constituency is a key task for mayors in Johannesburg and Tshwane, as it has the potential to weaken both parties' identities. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of the DA-led government insourcing security guards and stopping the privatisation of PIKITUP, as the EFF advocated for and effected by the DA-led local government.

Balancing the political agendas of ideologically different parties promotes consensus-based governance between the ideologically opposed parties. Consensus-based governance in the context of governing the three metropolitan municipalities is important because it promotes accountability in the absence of one dominant party. The City of Johannesburg and the City of Tshwane showed improved governance due to their enhanced oversight and ability to address corruption in their administrations. Further to this, consensus-based governance also strengthens the coexistence of these parties through the use of consultation, negotiation and joint-decision making processes. In this regard, consensus on policy coordination and compromises between the DA and EFF are fundamental conditions for the success of the coexistence of these parties in not only challenging the ANC's dominance, but also in consolidating their governance of the metros.

The coexistence of the opposition parties at the micro-level cannot be studied in isolation of the macro level, as the loss of the Johannesburg and Tshwane metros was linked to the Nkandla debacle and the ANC's reluctance to recall former President Jacob Zuma. A further link was the failure of the DA to vote with the EFF to expropriate

land without compensation, which played a significant role in the ousting of the mayor of the Nelson Mandela Bay metro. This is in addition to the former mayor being accused of protecting corrupt officials and the recall of former deputy mayor without any evidence implicating him in any wrongdoing. These events suggest that national issues also affect the coexistence of the opposition parties in governing key cities and fighting the ANC's dominance. Greene (2007) emphasised that ideological differences play a crucial role in undermining coexistence, resulting in the maintenance of the status quo of single-party dominance. The case of Nelson Mandela Bay, therefore demonstrates how different ideologies and competing interests might undermine the coexistence of opposition parties in challenging the ANC's dominance. In this context, national issues can undermine the coexistence of opposition parties if there is a lack of compromise on immediate socio-economic conditions, such as the land issue in South Africa.

It remains unclear, however, to what extent such coexistence can be sustained, particularly for a country divided along racial and economic fault lines. As is evident in the South African context, the bitter history of disposition under apartheid and colonialism that the EFF is proclaiming to address stands in contrast to the DA's indifference to the country's history. The coexistence of these parties will therefore intensify or attenuate the country's ideological tensions through trade-offs between the parties. The ability of parties to compromise on policy issues is a prerequisite for coexistence to work, especially when it comes to governing metros.

Conclusion

The rise of the ANC in post-apartheid South African politics has been accompanied by rampant corruption and the abuse of state resources, with little to no accountability. While corruption was evident in the later years of Nelson Mandela's and Thabo Mbeki's presidencies, the Zuma years can be regarded as being heightened years of rampant corruption due to the state capture debacle, the Nkandla saga, and the ANC's role in undermining parliamentary oversight and accountability. This article has demonstrated that there is not one single rising opposition party to the ANC, but rather an increase in the number of opposition parties that have chosen to coexist under the banner of informal coalitions to challenge the one-party dominance of the ANC. The extent of coexistence was demonstrated by the opposition parties that came together to challenge the ANC's use of majoritarianism through parliamentary processes and outside parliamentary structures (i.e. the Judiciary). At the subnational or metropolitan level, coexistence has been demonstrated through the informal coalitions of opposition parties in governing the Johannesburg, Tshwane and Nelson Mandela Bay metros.

The overall observation based on recent key developments in the coexistence of opposition parties that are ideologically different suggests that coexistence will only work through consensus-based governance. The ability of the DA, EFF and other smaller parties to govern Tshwane and Johannesburg has ensured continuity in accountability and service delivery, accompanied by the protection of workers through insourcing. Further to this, the coexistence of the opposition parties is evident in their ability to compromise on their ideological differences and ensure enhanced accountability. Accountability is enhanced through the absence of unilateral power of one political party to make or veto decisions. While such coexistence is the cornerstone of these coalitions, underlying

issues such as ideological differences may undermine the coexistence of opposition parties, as already seen in the case of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. This example demonstrates how national issues are likely to impact on coexistence at the sub-national level if parties fail to compromise on their ideological and policy differences.

Drawing from the three examples, this paper concludes that coexistence is a possible strategy for challenging the ANC's one-party dominance in a South African context. Given the immediate socio-economic challenges facing the country, such as high unemployment, poverty and inequality, coexistence can promote accountability, transparency, good governance, and access to basic social services, as well as minimise corruption. The prospects of using coexistence as a strategy to challenge the ANC's dominance depend on the ability of opposition parties to strengthen their consensus-based governance in metros.

Notes

1. It should be noted that one-party dominant states can also have significant positives as discussed on page 6 which is the case for the ANC as well. However, for the scope of this article, the pitfalls and loss of support are important. For a comprehensive view on OPD in South Africa, see Butler (2009a) and Southall (2005) as referenced below.
2. South Africa has been experiencing a rapid increase in the use of state institutions to fight political battles as evident in the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), State Security Agency (SSA) and more recently, the Hawks. The High Level Review Panel on SSA report found that there was a 'parallel intelligence structure serving a faction of the ruling party and, in particular, the personal political interests of the sitting president of the party and country'. Therefore, illustrating a compromise of state institutions and blurring party and state lines.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Isaac Khambule  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4227-6916>

References

- Arian, A., and Barnes, S. 1974. "The Dominant Party System: A Neglected Model of Democratic Stability." *The Journal of Politics*, 36 (3): 592–614.
- Berning, J., and M. Montesh. 2016. "Countering Corruption in South Africa: The Rise and Fall of the Scorpions and Hawks." *SA Crime Quarterly* 39: 3–10.
- Bhorat, H., M. Buthelezi, I. Chipkin, S. Duma, L. Mondli, M. Peter, M. Qobo, M. Swilling, and H. Friedenstein. 2017. *Betrayal of the Promise: How the Nation is Being Stolen*. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute.
- Booyesen, S. 2016. "Edging Out the African National Congress in the City of Johannesburg: A Case of Collective Punishment." *Journal of Public Administration* 51 (3.1): 532–548.
- Butler, A. 2009a. "Considerations on the Erosion of One-Party Dominance." *Representation* 45 (2): 159–171.
- Butler, A. 2009b. *The ANC's National Election Campaign of 2009: Siyanqoba!*. *Zunami*. Pretoria: Jacana Media.

- Constitutional Court of South Africa. 2016. *Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others; Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others* [2016] ZACC 11. Johannesburg: Constitutional Court.
- Darkey, D., and J. Visagie. 2013. "The More Things Change the More They Remain the Same: A Study on the Quality of Life in an Informal Township in Tshwane." *Habitat International* 39: 302–309.
- DasGupta, A. 2015. "Why Dominant Parties Decline: Evidence from India's Green Revolution." Unpublished manuscript. Harvard University, USA.
- Democratic Alliance. 2019. *The Manifesto for Change: One South Africa For All*. Cape Town: DA.
- Doorenspleet, R., and L. Nijzink. 2013. *One-Party Dominance in African Democracies*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- EFF. 2019. *Our Land and Our Jobs Now! People's Manifesto and A Plan of Action*. Johannesburg: EFF.
- Erdmann, G., and M. Basedau. 2013. "An Overview of African Party Systems." In *One-party Dominance in African Democracies*, edited by R. Doorenspleet, and L. Nijzink, 25–48. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Erdmann, G., and U. Engel. 2007. "Neopatrimonialism Reconsidered: Critical Review and Elaboration of an Elusive Concept." *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 45 (1): 1–25.
- Essop, R. 2016. "There Will be No Coalition with Any Party." *Eyewitness News*, 17 August.
- Ferim, V. 2013. "One-Party Domination, a Flaw in Africa's Democracy: Comparative Cases from Cameroon and South Africa." *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 7 (7): 304–309.
- Ferree, K. E. 2010. *Framing the Race in South Africa: The Political Origins of Racial-census Elections*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gauteng City Region Observatory. 2017. *Quality of Life IV Survey (2015/16)*. Johannesburg: GCRO.
- Greene, K. F. 2007. *Why Dominant Parties Lose: Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- High Level Review Panel Report. 2018. *High Level Review Panel Report on the State Security Agency*. Pretoria: The Presidency.
- Hoff, K., S. Horowitz, and B. Milanovic. 2005. *Political Alternation, Regardless of Ideology, Diminishes Influence: Buying Lessons from Transitions in Former Communist States*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- IEC. 2009. *Detailed Results Data: 2009 National and Provincial Elections*. Pretoria: IEC.
- IEC. 2011. *Detailed Results Data: 2011 Municipal Elections*. Pretoria: IEC.
- IEC. 2014. *National and Provincial Elections Report 2014*. Pretoria: IEC.
- IEC. 2016. *Local Government Elections 2016*. Pretoria: IEC.
- IEC. 2019. *National and Provincial Elections Results*. Pretoria: IEC.
- Kgatle, M. S. 2019. "The Causes and Nature of the June 2016 Protests in the City of Tshwane: A Practical Theological Reflection." *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73 (3): 1–8.
- Kim, E. M. 2010. "Limits of the Authoritarian Developmental State of South Korea." In *Constructing a Developmental State in South Africa*, edited by O. Edigheji, 97–125. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Knutsen, H. K., and T. Wig. 2015. "Government Turnover and the Effects of Regime Type: How Requiring Alternation in Power Biases Against the Estimated Economic Benefits of Democracy." *Comparative Political Studies* 48 (7): 882–914.
- Leftwich, A. 2002. "Debate: Democracy and Development. A Contradiction in the Politics of Economics." *New Political Economy* 7 (2): 269–281.
- Magaloni, B. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Maserumule, M. 2016a. "South Africa's ANC has Remained Dominant Despite Shifts in Support Base." *The Conversation*, Accessed 12 May 2019. <http://theconversation.com/south-africas-anc-has-remained-dominant-despite-shifts-in-support-base-63285>.
- Maserumule, M. H. 2016b. "City on Fire: Pre-Poll Mayhem in Tshwane and the Fate of the African National Congress." *Journal of Public Administration* 5 (3.1): 549–572.
- Mokgosi, K., K. Shai, and O. Ogunnubi. 2017. "Local Government Coalition in Gauteng Province of South Africa: Challenges and Opportunities." *Ubuntu: Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation* 6 (1): 37–57.

- Moore, D. 2014. "Death or Dearth of Democracy in Zimbabwe?" *Africa Spectrum* 49 (1): 101–114.
- Munzhedzi, P. H. 2016. "Fostering Public Accountability in South Africa: A Reflection of Successes and Challenges." *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 12 (1): 1–7.
- National Planning Commission. 2012. *National Development Plan: Vision for 2030*. Pretoria: The Presidency.
- Ndletyana, M. 2018. "Coalition Councils: Origin, Composition and Impact on Local Governance." *Journal of Public Administration* 53 (2): 139–141.
- Nicolson, G. 2018. "DA Takes Tough Stand Against EFF-led No Confidence Vote in Tshwane." *Daily Maverick*. Accessed 20 August 2019. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2018-08-29-da-takes-tough-stand-against-eff-led-no-confidence-vote-in-tshwane/>.
- Olver, C. 2017. *How to Steal a City: The Battle for Nelson Mandela Bay*. Port Elizabeth: Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Public Protector of South Africa. 2016. *State of Capture: A Report of the Public Protector*. Johannesburg: Public Protector of South Africa.
- Schönteich, M. 2014. "The National Prosecuting Authority, 1998–2014." *SA Crime Quarterly* 50: 5–15.
- Scheiner, E. 2006. *Democracy Without Competition in Japan: Opposition Failure in a One-party Dominant State*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Socio-Economic Review. 2017. *The Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Review and Outlook 2017*. East London: Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism.
- Southall, R. 2005. "The 'Dominant Party Debate' in South Africa." *Africa Spectrum* 40 (1): 61–82.
- Southall, R. 2014. "Democracy at Risk? Politics and Governance Under the ANC." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 652 (1): 48–69.
- Tudor, M. 2013. *The Promise of Power: The Origins of Democracy in India and Autocracy in Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van de Walle, N. 2003. "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems." *Journal of African Studies* 41 (2): 97–321.
- Ziegfeld, A., and M. Tudor. 2017. "How Opposition Parties Sustain Single-Party Dominance: Lessons From India." *Party Politics* 23 (3): 262–273.