The African National Congress' post-Apartheid Politics: Prominence of Individual Personalities above Communications

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Abstract

The post-1994 General Elections ascendancy of the African National Congress (ANC) to state power entailed party evolution as a social system lest the curse of liberation movement popularity dislodgement with shift to ruling party politics. Transition from liberation movement to ruling political party is embedded with contradictions, paradoxes and contestations relating to organizational constitution with "individuals and assets as its elements" or "communications and actions". Evidently, the ruling ANC has increasingly become synonymous with internal squabbles rooted in personalities and power mongering for both party and state. Post-1994 ANC organizational evolution appeared to lack a complementary autopoietic layer that defines systems of communications and actions, away from the nostalgic principle of democratic discipline founded in the allopoietic character of individuals and assets. Consequently, the post-1994 ANC sustained the liberation movement legacy that compromises state governance qualities of responsiveness, effectiveness, accountability, enduring civic duty, inclusivity and service of public interest, because individuals and actions are non-reproducible. Armed with the modernizing project apparatus, former President Mbeki sought for a departure of the conduct of party and state presidency from conventional wisdom prescribed to by former President Mandela, thereby entrenching a dreaded culture of slate political party voting with the appendage of the promise of state resources control and power politics patronage. This article identifies the 2007 Polokwane Elective Conference of the ANC as an important turning point in this political party's anniversary "life story"; and, it concedes that the party has to consciously detest glorification of individuals and assets in order to evolve through communications and actions based on ideal political virtues, which would be transposed onto the state by instilling a sense of civic duty, shared ownership of state machinery and popular mobilization of the citizenry.

Keywords: Social Systems, Individuals and Assets, Communications and Actions, Fighting Corruption, African National Congress, South Africa

1. Introduction

The post-1994 ANC has mediated rather than resolved the profound contradictions over the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), careerism, market economy and liberal constitutionalism, which have surfaced in episodes of succession battles within party and state since at least 2000 (Lodge, 2002, 2004; Binza, 2005a; Reddy, 2005; Ballard, Habib and Valodia, 2006; Butler, 2007; Mbeki, 2009; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013; Parson, 2013). The generational turnover and careerism have appeared to undermine the intrinsic respect for the liberation movement's conventions of authority, to mollify the morality of the struggle and to erode the traditional organizational capacity to reconcile diverse interests (Binza, 2005a; Butler, 2007; Mbeki, 2009; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013). As early as 2005, the ANC hierarchy acknowledged that party activism is consciously accepted as the first step towards public office and private wealth accumulation (Mbeki, 2009; Chikane, 2012; Habib, 2013; Richman and Hendricks, 2013). Hence, Hammett (2010, p.88) points to "evidence of challenges to the entrenchment of democracy, in particular the selective depoliticization of race, potential threats to freedom of speech, spaces for dissent and the independence of the judiciary, and patriarchy's challenge to gender equality". Whilst Secretary-General of the ANC, Kgalema Motlanthe took note that cadre susceptibility to moral decay, which was occasioned by the struggle for access and control of state resources, posed a key challenge to the ruling party (Hyslop, 2005; Hollands, 2006; Butler, 2007), and the post-2000 events seem to

have entrenched that same political trajectory.

It has been almost impossible for the ruling party to exert discipline and control over its cadres because of the perception that its hierarchy and leaders in the National Executive Council (NEC) too have been mortgaged to capital and that they lacked moral authority (Peet, 2002; Hyslop, 2005; Hollands, 2006; Butler, 2007, Southall, 2007; Mbeki, 2009; Hammett, 2010; Rubin, 2011; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013; Richman and Hendricks, 2013). Inevitably, the on-going state governance paralysis is often associated with the ruling party's emphasis on individual personalities and assets as constitutive elements of the organization (Hammett, 2010). Consonant to the emphasis on personalities and assets over communications and actions, the ruling party has opted to manage conflicts through a variety of evidently unsustainable measures such as redeployment, golden handshakes, the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) transfers of individuals to the private sectors and, in isolated cases, dismissals (Lodge, 1999, 2002, 2004; Binza, 2005a; Mbeki, 2009; Hammett, 2010; Chikane, 2012; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013). Presently, the internal politics of the ANC is characteristically secretive, hostile to open debate and increasingly paranoid (Butler 2007, p.43). It would not be farfetched to assert that, in its present form as a social system, the ANC appears to be increasingly undemocratic and intimidating to the core, even to its own cadre (Binza, 2005a; Ballard et al., 2006; Mbeki, 2009; Hammett, 2010; Chikane, 2012; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). The apparent paradoxes, contestations and contradictions appear to have been usurped by private business for manipulation and shaping of the electoral and succession outcomes (Peet, 2002; Mbeki, 2009; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). In this context, the state tends to be selectively owned and controlled by private capital interests, rendering the application of social policy and establishment of a developmental state virtually impossible, the collateral damage of which involves the circumvention of civic virtues, political patronage, unresponsive and unaccountable regimes, endemic corruption and public service delivery setbacks (Hyslop, 2005; Reddy, 2005; Hollands, 2006; Malherbe and van Eck, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Brynard, 2010; Rubin, 2011). Equally, "the euphoria of the transition, and the tempered optimism of the post-apartheid period" (Mason 2009, p.268; Hammett 2010, p.89) is fast dissipating.

This article's argument is presented hereunder in seven sections, including the introduction and conclusion. A brief overview of the ideological incision of the article is made in the next section, after which the post-1994 emphasis on national unity is discussed in order to trace the mutation of the locus of state and political power as well as the attendant social ills of patronage and corruption. Section four analyses the triumphalism of neoliberalism in order to provide context within which the ANC's state policy was shaped and reshaped over time. The ruling party's selective "fight on corruption" is examined in section five to demonstrate that individual personalities and assets have come to dominate state apparatus decision-making in respect of investigations, prosecutions and sanctions. The article illustrates that the powerful and politically-connected people have eluded and, sometimes, undermined the "fight against corruption" through alternate means of horse-trading and tit-for-tad. To this extent, the article holds that individuals and assets, rather than communications and actions, have preoccupied the ANC's incomplete transition from a liberation movement to ruling political party with deleterious socio-economic and governance effects on the majority of the poor South Africans. Sections six traces the reasons for the persistent glorification of individuals and assets in the ruling party to the politics of "slate voting", with Polokwane 2007 Elective Conference held as a watershed moment in the "life story" of the 100 year old liberation movement, now ruling political party, ANC. Finally, concluding remarks are presented in section seven.

2.   Social Systems as Communications and Actions

General System Theories provide that people, through their communications and actions, constitute the environment of social systems within which organizations evolve (Dachler and Hosking, 1995; Luhmann, 1995; van de Ven and Poole, 1995; von Krogh and Roos, 1995; Tsoukas, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Loasby, 1999; Ramutsindela, 2009; Ramutsindela, Yamazaki, Gibson and Mamadouh, 2010; Borghoff, 2011). Whereas their personalities and assets as individuals constitute resources and labour "to conduct necessary activities, and to process meaning in terms of innovation, planning, decision-making, and control" (Borghoff, 2011, p.754), individual human life is outside the social system. But people participate in the reproduction of social systems through their communications and actions, which constitute the building blocks thereof (Luhmann, 1995; van de Ven and Poole, 1995; von Krogh and Roos, 1995; Tsoukas, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Loasby, 1999; Reddy, 2005). Recursively, people are influenced by these social systems, but human beings do not become extinct when the system dies because they are not constituent elements thereof. As stakeholders, catalysts and means for the foundation and maintenance of *autopoietic* social systems, individuals contribute to the reproduction of social systems by acting (working) and processing meaning (planning, thinking, generating ideas, manifesting desires and expectations and so on) (Borghoff, 2011). It is the acting and meaning processing that become part of the social system. Separate from the social system, individuals receive however direct incentives, valuable meaning and access to

relations (Luhmann, 1995; Borghoff, 2011). Effectively, *autopoietic* social system depends on the organization of the recursive interplay of meaning and action that are generated and transmitted by individuals. For this reason, social systems are constituted as action systems with communicative contexts (Luhmann, 1995; van de Ven and Poole, 1995; von Krogh and Roos, 1995; Tsoukas, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Ballard et al., 2006). To this extent, the unit acts in the reproduction process of social systems and the recursive interplay of activity and meaning structure, drive the evolution of social systems. Thus, routinization and institutionalization of actions could lead to a loss of character of decision-making, reflecting organized complexity which may potentially become rigid and dysfunctional.

On its part, organization theory proposes five mechanisms of social systems evolution, which are: life cycle, teleological, dialectical, evolutionary and *autopoietic* layer (van de Ven and Poole, 1995; von Krogh and Roos, 1995; Tsoukas, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Loasby, 1999), which provide the dynamics underlying the principle of differentiation and integration in social evolution. The life cycle model provides for "a unitary sequence, which is cumulative and conjunctive" (Borghoff, 2011, p.758) wherein the singularly discrete entity undergoes change whilst maintaining its identity (Luhmann, 1995; van de Ven and Poole, 1995; Loasby, 1999). The teleological mechanisms present organizations as perfectly rational, purposive and goal-directed social systems; and, the organizational entity "constructs an envisioned end state, takes action to reach it, and monitors the progress" (Borghoff, 2011, p.758). Dialectical mechanisms develop in systems that experience contradictions and collisions, which is rife in political and power struggle contexts (Luhmann, 1995; van de Ven and Poole, 1995; Loasby, 1999; Borghoff, 2011). Characterized by co-existence of change and stability, dialectical synthesis emanates as a temporal stable compromise and fuse of opposing thesis and antithesis which itself could become a new thesis being challenged (Luhmann, 1995; van de Ven and Poole, 1995; Loasby, 1999; Borghoff, 2011). Evolutionary motor causes cumulative changes in social systems, which proceed through "a continuous cycle of variation, selection and retention" (Borghoff, 2011, p.759). Finally, *autopoietic* mechanisms provide the motor of processing meaning and guiding differences in social systems that build dynamic relations. It is "the recursive reproduction of meaning and action on the basis of guiding differences" that is fundamental to the reproduction of organizations as social systems (Luhmann, 1995, p.4; Borghoff, 2011, p.759).

Conversely, the *allopoietic* perspective provides for "a teleological, goal-directed approach to management and development of social systems" to the exclusion of the evolutionary view (Borghoff, 2011, p.762). However, the *allopoietic* layer is the precursor of *autopoiesis* in social systems, because it provides the framework and condition within which the latter can take place. Traditionally, organization and management theories portrayed "organizations as *allopoietic* social systems" which are "purposeful, instrumental, and goal-directed systems constituted by individuals" (Borghoff, 2011, p.763). From this perspective, teleological processes of planning and decision-making are expected to drive evolution, in ways that strive to reflect objective reality that can be analyzed quantitatively. This instrumental teleological approach does not account for authentic application of evolutionary principles because it assumes that social systems reproduce themselves on the basis of their elements, which are defined as individuals and assets. But the latter do "provide all necessary tangible and intangible resources by communication and action" (Borghoff, 2011, p.763). Conceptually, therefore, organizations as social systems consist of first-level, *allopoietic* systems of social actors and second-level *autopoietic* systems of social acts (Luhmann, 1995; van de Ven and Poole, 1995; von Krogh and Roos, 1995; Tsoukas, 1996; Hatch, 1997; Loasby, 1999; Borghoff, 2011), because networks of communication and actions, rather than individuals and assets, are self-reproducing.

Theoretically, therefore, youth wearing ANC T-shirts and carrying flags in a remote rural village may be communicating the ruling party's image to the uninterested elderly villagers whilst state functionaries who are ANC leaders working in offices in Pretoria and/or at ANC Head Quarters in Johannesburg could be processing neither communications nor actions (Ballard et al., 2010). Whereas those in state power may be thinking about how to prevent others from removing them from power, ordinary people may be communicating and acting in the interest of the ruling party's image by merely wearing a T-shirt in their normal daily routines (Binza, 2005a; Ballard et al., 2006; Orkin and Jowell, 2006; Butler, 2007; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013; Richman and Hendricks, 2013). For its transition from liberation movement to ruling party, the ANC needed to establish *autopoietic* systems through which the preoccupation with individuals and assets would be countered by effective communications and actions (Hyslop, 2005; Reddy, 2005; Southall, 2007; Thornhill, 2010). The ensuing discussion demonstrates the predominance of individuals and assets over communications and actions in the ANC's twenty years as ruling political party.

3. (Over)Emphasis on National Unity and the Locus of State and Political Power

During the presidency of Nelson Mandela, the ruling party strove for national unity and racial reconciliation (Lodge, 2002; Southall, 2007; Mbeki, 2009; Thornhill, 2010; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). Former President Mbeki, on his

part, strove to build a modern democracy by restructuring and centralizing government under a powerful presidency (Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007; Southall, 2007; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). His aspiration for a developmental state and the modernization of Africa was unmistakable (Vale and Maseko, 1998); and, this desire became clear in 1995, prior to his ascendency to power of state presidency of the Republic in 1999, as typified by the 1996 abandonment of the social policy prescribed in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in favour of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy (Peet, 2002; Hoogeveen and Ozler, 2006; Mbeki, 2009; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). When in state power, former President Mbeki's conceptualization of state and party was captured as the "modernization project" (Vale and Maseko, 1998; Mbeki, 2009; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). The latter took pragmatic effect in the form of curtailing relative autonomy of ministries by establishing five overlapping clusters and by merging the Offices of the Deputy President and President (Lodge, 2004; Butler, 2007; Southall, 2007; Mbeki, 2009; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013; Parsons, 2013).

At face value, these moves appear to have been designed to improve coordination, responsiveness and effectiveness in public service delivery (Binza, 2005b, 2010; Atkinson, 2007; Brynard, 2010). But the most pronounced result thereof was to create a hierarchy of ministries that are more equal than others in terms of authority and prestige, as well as to install a powerful presidency that sought to restructure the public service, set instrumental delivery targets for administrators at all scales, imposing teleological performance management contracts for senior public officials and forcing the ruling party to operate within an *allopoietic* framework of co-operative governance system (Mbeki, 2009; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). Unsurprisingly, the centralization of state power in the presidency was accompanied by attempts to impose strict discipline and instrumental order to the ANC as a political organization (Binza, 2005a; Ballard et al., 2006; Butler, 2007; Southall, 2007; Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). Whereas "a powerful presidency is primarily a genuine response to the challenges of service delivery and policy co-ordination", former President Mbeki's modernization project precipitated personalization of rule, exercise of unaccountable power and potential abuse, with the result that succession battles for the presidency degenerated into economic and political prize (Butler, 2007, p.44). Simultaneously and as a necessary support structure for the state modernization project, similar centralization of power took place within the ANC as a political party wherein Luthuli House exercised virtual instrumental control over factionalism and regionalism, neutralized politics, regulated careerism, and transformed the organization into a professional technocratic electoral mechanism (Butler, 2007; Mason, 2009; Hammett, 2010; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013; Parsons, 2013). As a result, debate within the ANC was stifled, patronage for party hierarchy intensified and candidature for office imposed upon branches (Binza, 2005a; Ballard et al., 2006; Orkin and Jowell, 2006; Mbeki, 2009; Chikane, 2012; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). Inescapably, with the former President Mbeki's modernization project, the state was centralized in the presidency and, power was transferred from society to state, from provincial to national scale, from legislature to the executive and from cabinet to the presidency, fuelling the social systems tensions of the constitutional form and reality of the ANC as party and in state, rather than liberation movement (Lodge, 2004; Ballard et al., 2006; Orkin and Jowell, 2006; Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007; Southall, 2007; Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Hammett, 2010; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013).

Former President Mbeki's conception, implementation and management of the ANC as a political organization and ruling party was in stark contrast to the prevailing reality where in 1994 the former liberation movement incorporated a diversity of cultures, mixes of exiles and internal apartheid activists such as those in the United Democratic Front (UDF), former Bantustan politicians and technocrats and, in some extreme cases, former National Party functionaries (Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007; Southall, 2007; Mason, 2009; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013). Indeed, the 1994 accommodation of diversity was not amenable to the same instrumental discipline and loyalty which characterized the former liberation movement. Thus, there was serious tension in the ANC as the national leadership moved to impose premiers on provinces, often in direct conflict with the ones preferred, with the result that a leader favoured by Lithuli House would hold public office as premier whilst the provincial populist holds the provincial chairpersonship of the party (Mason, 2009). As illustrated in the case of Mathole Motshekga being elected in 1997 in Gauteng to replace Tokyo Sexwale as premier (Southall, 2007), such tensions between the provincial and party hierarchy have tended to escalate into actions that deflect focus from service delivery and poverty alleviation (Binza, 2010; Brynard, 2010; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011). The allegations of corruption against Motshekga, which were dismissed by an internal Commission of Inquiry, cannot be assumed to have been genuine because a mere criticism of managerial inadequacies saw him being removed from premiership and replaced by Mbhazima Shilowa in 1999, despite having remained chairperson of provincial executive until May 2000 (Binza, 2005a; Butler, 2007; Southall, 2007; Chikane, 2012). More poignant was the recommendation of that Commission of Inquiry, endorsed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC in 1998, that premiers be henceforth appointed by the ANC President, thereby transferring authority away from the provincial executive to Lithuli House and, perhaps, to Mahlambandhovu in Pretoria (Lodge, 2002, 2004; Butler, 2007; Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007;

Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009). Commentators can be forgiven for blaming the erosion of the ANC's internal democracy on the persistence of "the political habits and ideologies of exile" and intensification of democratic centralism (Butler, 2007, p.45), which were reproduced through the "modernization project", amidst constitutional democracy upheld by the majority of those who subscribed to the UDF idealism (Calland, 2013). Even in 2001, the ANC leadership persistently sought to be nostalgic and to prohibit debates about the party's internal democracy (Binza, 2005a; Butler, 2007; Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Chikane, 2012), notwithstanding it being the champion of South Africa's democratic dispensation.

Effectively, transformation occasioned by the modernization project allowed former President Mbeki to exercise full and virtually exclusive control of the provincial governments, party structures and, by extension, provincial executives (Lodge, 2002, 2004). Perennially, party hierarchy seemed to have had the liberty of replacing provincial executives with interim structures whenever they were confronted with conflicts at the provincial level (Lodge, 1999; Ballard et al., 2006; Orkin and Jowell, 2006; Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007; Butler, 2007). Apparently, the ANC leadership had hoped to defeat regionalism, factionalism and to enforce instrumental co-operative governance by installing, as it were, "the president's men and women to the key positions in the provinces" and elsewhere it mattered (Southall, 2007, p.5). Even after the finalization of the local democratic governments in 2000, the same approach was adopted by the ANC hierarchy to reserve the right to nominate mayors and councillors (Lodge, 2004; Binza, 2005b, 2010; Atkinson, 2007; Thornhill, 2010), which has since remained a bone of fierce contentions in several municipalities until as recently as in the local government elections in 2011.

A deduction has to be drawn that former President Mbeki's state and party modernizing project has paradoxically exerted greater centralization of government with democratic decentralization in municipalities whilst simultaneously reducing provinces into administrative entities by withholding their political power, thereby rendering the ruling party an *allopoietic* social system that is purposeful, quantitative goal-driven and inflexible. Consequently, it became increasingly difficult to uproot the culture of corruption and cronyism, which thwarted the scope for municipal public service delivery (Binza, 2005b, 2010; Ballard et al., 2006; Southall, 2007; Thornhill, 2010; Rubin, 2011; Richman and Hendricks, 2013). Indeed, the centralizing modernization project shaped the ANC as an *allopoietic* social system, lending municipalities as "milking cows" for personal self-enrichment (Hyslop, 2005; Hollands, 2006; Atkinson, 2007; Southall, 2007; Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Brynard, 2010; Rubin, 2011; Thornhill, 2010; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). Recently, the ruling party acknowledged that "the politics of patronage and nepotism continues to blight municipal politics" (Atkinson, 2007, p.67).

4. Triumphalism of Political and Economic Neoliberalism

It would not be farfetched to insinuate that the ANC, as a ruling party, has been goaded by capital with public functionaries being purchased and shaped into "bureaugarchs" operating giant public utilities that behave like private companies whilst simultaneously gobbling momentous state funds to survive. In principle, the ANC's policy on representativity was justified by its intention to "extend control of the state" whilst striving to meet the expectations of its constituency by redressing colonial and apartheid social injustices (Peet, 2002; Lodge, 2004; Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Thornhill, 2010; Biko, 2013). South Africa's *Constitution* embraces the right to fair administrative action (Malherbe and van Eck, 2009; Brynard, 2010; Biko, 2013; Qwabe, 2013). However, the present reality appears to suggest that localities find the reason for existence from the local government municipalities, rather than the converse (Binza, 2010). It is now vividly clear that the drive for representativity is incompatible with effective and efficient public service delivery (Southall, 2007; Malherbe and van Eck, 2009; Thornhill, 2010; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011; Habib, 2013; Parsons, 2013). Generally, South Africa's public service has for some years become synonymous with low administrative performance, systematic corruption, extensive abuse of power, culture of entitlement among beneficiaries of racial preferment and cohorts of self-serving public servants (Southall, 2007; Mbeki, 2009; Brynard, 2010; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011; Habib, 2013). The continuing contestations of political and government positions for wealth among the ruling party's functionaries, at all scales, is oblivious of the interests of the South African populace. The requirement for satisfying basic needs for housing, water, education, energy, health care, jobs and, perhaps, recreation came to be sacrificed in seemingly intractable contestations of economic and social power relations of the ruling party (Binza, 2010). Contrary to public pronouncements, the ANC government, just like other old democracies, has not adhered to the merit principle in the appointment of public servants, especially at senior levels (Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Labuschagne, 2010; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013). Globally, democracies have faced the choice between merit and patronage system or merit and representativity in the appointment of public servants (Labuschagne, 2010; Chikane, 2012); and, South Africa's was not choiceless (Mkandawire, 1999; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011). Despite its democratic beliefs, the ANC appears to have firmly preferred patronage and political manipulation of the public service (Mason, 2009; Labuschagne, 2010; Chikane,

2012). This public administration choice by the ruling party appears to have borne adversarial effects on the delivery of basic services, which may be manifesting in the numerous violent protests that are allegedly precipitated by poor and/or inadequate public service delivery (Binza, 2010; Brynard, 2010; Thornhill, 2010; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013).

In time, the scramble for public and political office has seemed to have intensified because "party and state positions are (now overtly) regarded as providing access to private wealth", notwithstanding the legislative entrenchment of the unimpeachable civic virtues that require "accountability of politicians and public servants to the citizenry" (Southall, 2007, pp.8, 9). The state and party modernization project has effectively obliterated the boundaries between party and state, thereby engendering patronage, cronyism and a deep sense of entitlements among public and ANC functionaries who have continued to relentlessly contest party and public office as a scramble for private wealth (Hyslop, 2005; Orkin and Jowell, 2006; Mason, 2009; Mbeki, 2009; Labuschagne, 2010; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013). It now appears as if the ANC has set itself to appropriate state resources and subordinate state institutions to regionalization partisanship and factionalism interests (Southall, 2007; Mason, 2009; Hammett, 2010; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011; Biko, 2013; Calland, 2013; Habib, 2013).

The disciplinary hearing involving the former leaders of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) was more about clash of individual personalities, assets and powers of President Zuma, Secretary-General Mantashe, former Youth League President Malema, Spokesperson Shibambo and Secretary-General Magaqa, rather than contestations over systems of communications and actions. Unsurprisingly, the same ANCYL champions who propelled President Zuma to political and state power through the Polokwane 2007 Elective Conference campaigned at the coalface and forefront of Manguaung 2012 succession battle to remove the same individual they had so fiercely placed in power. In the process of campaigning for the removal of President Zuma from power, remarks have tended to suggest that the former ANCYL leadership had hoped to draw back into their corner former President, Thabo Mbeki, who they had single-handedly humiliated by leading his downfall at the Polokwane 2007 Elective Conference and, subsequently, championing his recall from Presidency of the Republic in 2008 (Chikane, 2012). A vexed question needs to be asked: in the process of such paradoxical and contradictory contestations, how does the intractability of the involvement of the state and its apparatus shape and reshape the ability to uphold tenets of good governance, such as fighting corruption?

5. The ANC-led State's Fight on Corruption

There is a general admission that the ruling party's fight on corruption is half-hearted because it tends to be selective where it involves the investigation of highly-placed ANC elites (Hyslop, 2005; Hollands, 2006; Southall, 2007; Desai, Maharaj and Bond, 2011; Chikane, 2012; Calland, 2013). It now appears that the ruling party is increasingly shy of investigating high-profile ANC functionaries; instead, it is who they are in relation to the ruling elite that matters. To the ruling party, therefore, the prosecution of former Deputy President Jacob Zuma had to be avoided at all costs when he was central to the antithesis against former President Mbeki (Chikane, 2012). The transgressions of the former ANCYL leadership, including the longstanding allegations of misuse of state resources relating to the Oilgate Scandal, PetroSA and the R15 million payment to Imvume Management, which allegedly diverted R11 million to the ANC before the 2004 elections, remain unattended. Under former Minister of Minerals and Energy, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, allegations of PetroSA making financial advances of R50 000 and R65 000 to Uluntu Investments owned by her brother and Hartkom (company that renovated former Minister Zola Skweyiya's residence), respectively, have not attracted investigations despite the investigative expose of the *Mail & Guardian* in June 2005. Perhaps, it is more about personalities and assets that matters for the ruling party because the former Public Protector cleared PetroSA of wrong-doing but argued that he did not have the authority to investigate money once it was in the hands of private company (Southall 2007).

The conviction of Shabir Shaik of two counts of corruption and one of fraud, together with the drawing of a finding that he had generally corrupt relationship with Jacob Zuma in June 2005, when the latter was never afforded the opportunity to state his case in court provide further evidence that in government the ANC's operations came to be about individuals and assets, rather than communications and actions (Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007; Southall, 2007; Mason, 2009; Chikane, 2012). The Arms Deal, which was signed-off by the former Minister of Defence, Mosiuoa Lekota, in December 1999 attracted questions immediately and in September 2000 the Auditor-General recommended a forensic audit that never happened. Former President Mbeki ordered an investigation by Auditor-General, National Prosecuting Authority (formerly, Scorpions) and the Public Protector, leading to the generation of evidence for selective prosecution of Shabir Shaik. Subsequently, a protracted process was embarked upon to allegedly discredit and/or prosecute Zuma, now President, under Bulelani Ngcuka as Director of Public Prosecutions since at least August 2003. These moves were interpreted as attempts orchestrated by former President Mbeki to tarnish former Deputy President Zuma's reputation and

derail his bid for the Presidency of party and state. The conduct of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and apparent manipulation of the media in respect of former Deputy President Zuma's investigation, contrary to the Constitutional provisions for the right to human dignity and innocence until proven guilty in a Court of Law, did raise eye brows and fuelled speculation that former President Mbeki exploited state apparatus to derail the imminent succession and ascendency to presidency of party and state by his deputy (Southall, 2007; Chikane, 2012). The antithesis of former President Mbeki's alleged state-driven campaign against his deputy was then discernible when the former NPA Director, Ngcuka, faced accusations in September 2003 of apartheid spying against the ANC. Analytically, it has become impossible to divorce the verdict of Judge Joos Hefer Commission that cleared Ngcuka in January 2004 from the latter's pronouncements of unwinnable corruption case against former Deputy President Zuma, despite claiming to have "prima facie" evidence (Southall, 2007; Chikane, 2012). These eventualities created a sense of ANC internal horse-trading, using state apparatus and resources, on matters of national public interest.

But the events subsequent to Hefer Commission's verdict on former NPA Director, Ngcuka, defied logic because the latter resigned in July 2004 following Public Protector's, Lawrence Mushwane, finding that he unfairly and improperly abused authority of office against Zuma when he pronounced about "prima facie" evidence in August 2003 to Newspaper Editors. Yet, former President Mbeki removed former Deputy President Zuma from office on 14 June 2005 because of Judge Hilary Squires' conviction of Shaik who was found to have facilitated bribes on behalf of Zuma, without the latter ever being drawn into the case, even as witness (Southall, 2007). It was not farfetched to speculate that the apparent horse-trading was subsequently replaced with a tit-for-tad, as the intra-party squabbles and contestations remained focused on personalities, individuals and assets. Whereas former President Mbeki made no claims of Zuma's guilt at the time, replacing him with former NPA Director Ngcuka's wife, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, precipitated momentous political fallout, further fuelling speculation of a political conspiracy against the former Deputy President's imminent ascendency to state and party power. Paradoxically, it became less baffling when Zuma's battles against the NPA since at least 11 October 2005 came to an abrupt halt as charges against him were formally withdrawn by NPA Director Mpshe on the grounds of a secret tape of the conversation between Ngcuka and other NPA officials. It was against the same backdrop that Zuma's rape charges of February 2006 were generally interpreted as former President Mbeki's conspiracy to use state machinery against the former in order to guarantee himself of a third term as party president. Together with the majority of the rank-and-file ANC membership, the ANCYL, Cosatu and SACP led the counter-Mbeki third presidency campaign through a concerted focus on the individual Zuma and, among other assets, the Friends of Jacob Zuma Trust (Buhlungu and Atkinson, 2007; Butler, 2007; Southall, 2007; Chikane, 2012).

This evidence show that the ANC contestations, which appeared to be focused on individuals and assets, involved manipulation of state institutions such as the NIA to the extent that the party was seen to be using its political dominance to supposedly subordinate their independence to its political authority and squabbles (Southall, 2007; Mason, 2009). Allegations of illegal surveillance of high profile ANC functionaries such as Saki Macozoma and Fikile Mbalula by security forces cannot be dismissed as unfounded, given the benefit of hindsight. Attempts to separate the presidency of state from that of party became loud in late 2005 at the same time as former ANC Secretary-General, Kgalema Motlanthe, circulated intercepted e-mail messages that allegedly involved attempts by Macozoma, Mlambo-Ngcuka and Vusi Pikoli (former NPA Director) to discredit both Zuma and Motlanthe (*Business Day* 24 October 2005; *Business Day* 23 December 2005; *Mail & Guardian* 14-20 October 2005). With this hindsight, it appears that the Zuma/Motlanthe 2007 ANC Polokwane Elective Conference slate, the recall of former President Mbeki, the 2008/2009 acting presidency of Motlanthe, and the ultimate pairing of Zuma and Motlanthe as President and Deputy President during 2009-2014 were premeditated arrangements, rather than coincidences, of the Mbeki-antithesis.

That the ANC as ruling political party remained preoccupied with individuals and assets is illustrated further by the events that unfolded following Zuma's assumption of party presidency in 2007, and more vividly after taking over the state presidency in 2009. Some of the key stakeholders in the Friends of Jacob Zuma Trust, which included the ANCYL, Cosatu and the SACP, became his fiercest detractors in the period leading to the ANC 2012 Mangaung Elective Conference. The ANCYL, which supported Zuma throughout all his legal and political battles, especially prior to the 2007 ANC Polokwane Elective Conference, fiercely campaigned in opposition to his re-election to party presidency. To this extent, the dismissal of the former ANCYL leadership appears to be replaying the same tendencies that confronted the party through the proxies of former President Mbeki and Deputy Zuma. Whereas former ANCYL President Malema was not holding any state power, he came to face charges of money laundering and corruption, supported by a weaker franchise called Friends of the ANCYL. Malema too has persistently linked his charges to political squabbles in the ANC and access to state apparatus, resources and power. In 2012, as president of party and state, Zuma paradoxically established a Commission of Inquiry on the Arms Deal, despite having been previously portrayed as a victim of its abuse by former incumbents in the presidency and NPA. Recent withdrawals of Commissioners on allegations that the

Chairperson is selective and dismissive of evidence submitted by activists who have always claimed that President Zuma had a case to answer, precipitates a sense of this Commission being another political tool at the disposal of ANC hierarchy. Undoubtedly, the ANC's post-1994 history is riddled with selective clamping down on the abuse of party and public office for private wealth and personal acclaim. Inescapably, the ANC is itself characterized by battles, regionalism and factionalism that are intricately linked to the fierce struggles for succession, unprecedented since its founding in 1912. The ANC hierarchy too accepts that political connections reign supreme over principles of "impartiality, fairness, public accountability, transparency, empowerment and effective use of resources" (Southall, 2007, p.11). The 2007 Polokwane and 2012 Mangaung ANC Elective Conference slate voting, notwithstanding the party presidency's passionate call for post-Mangaung unity, do not inspire confidence in the capacity of the ANC functionaries desisting from divisive contestations for succession to party power, state resources and personal acclaim.

6. Discussion: Slate Voting and the 2007 Polokwane Watershed

The succession battles, especially those leading to the 2007 Elective Conference, have evidently eroded the ANC's political capacity to enforce service delivery civic virtues as a ruling party. These battles have affected governance deeply because they are also fought in the corridors of the state. Thus, Limpopo Provincial Government public servants in the Office of the Premier have in the run-up to the 2012 Mangaung Elective Conference, embarked on campaigns hoping to force former Premier Cassel Mathale out of Office, despite him being elected to the provincial chairpersonship of the executive in December 2011. Such events related to the broader contestations for presidency of the ANC, especially since 2007 when former President Mbeki sought to secure third-term power. The succession contests between former President Mbeki and former Deputy Party President Zuma, highlight the uncomfortable convergence of state and party. The 1996 Constitutional imposition of two five-year presidency term did not confer a similar change in the number of terms for presidency of the ANC. However, former President Mandela's conduct of state and party presidency created a precedence wherein state pragmatic template determined that for party. Former President Mbeki evidently sought to depart from ANC convention by not facilitating the selection of president by party elite for endorsement by the rank and file membership. This apparent omission by former President Mbeki and his attempt to secure third-term party presidency came to bear deeper effects on the ANC's conduct of elections for Lithuli House hierarchy and, later, ascendancy to state power. In all likelihood, the departure of the conduct of party and state presidency by the former President Mbeki from conventional wisdom, entrenched a dreaded culture of slate voting with the appendage of the promise of state resources control and power.

Those who supported former President Mbeki's third-term came to accept that Zuma was "unfit" to operate the state and party modernizing project. For this reason, former President Mbeki allegedly found reason to deploy state apparatus to, as it were, disrupt former Deputy President's bid for ascension to presidency of both party and state. Equally, the ANC's preoccupation with individuals and assets was evident in sentiments of former President Mbeki being "distant, dictatorial" and representative of the "emergent wealthy, political and empowered black elite", whilst President Zuma was alleged to be a populist who lacked leftist credentials but destined to capture the soul of the party and state for ordinary people (Southall, 2007, p.15). President Zuma's detractors in the period leading to the 2012 Mangaung Elective Conference were unsurprisingly united around personalities and assets.

Having fiercely fought for the successful installation of President Zuma, former ANCYL President came to contest Zuma's fitness to hold presidency of party and state to the extent that he sought to salvage even the most fatalistic August 2012 Marikana Mine tragedy to insinuate questionable leadership credentials. Generally, former President Mbeki was accepted by liberal observers as a necessary individual who would modernize the state and party, whereas President Zuma was then disliked as backward, corruptible, populist "old-fashioned 'Big Man' politics" who believes in distributive over productive economics (Southall, 2007, p.18). Conversely, the majority within the ANC and tripartite alliance held that former President Mbeki "negated the ANC's history as an organ of popular power, marginalized the SACP and Cosatu, and alienated ordinary working people and the power", thereby creating a commandist state that consists of an "over-powerful presidency, driven by a new political elite of state managers and technocratic ministers and supported by a new generation of empowerment managers and capitalists" (Southall, 2007, p.18). With the 2007 Polokwane Elective Conference's defeat of former President Mbeki on the grounds that he was an intellectual, out of touch with the rank-and-file membership, considerations in the ANC have since continued to be focused on individuals and assets at the expense of establishing *autopoietic* systems of communications and actions for organizational evolution and transition from liberation movement to ruling political party. Unsurprisingly, even when he was severely frail, mention of former President Mandela held an unparalleled power to pull all factions together into submission. Evidently, the ruling party has continued to evolve as a system constituted by personalities, individuals and assets, rather than

communications and actions.

7. Conclusion

This article proposed that allegations of corruption against high profile ANC hierarchy may be improbable to prove in the post-2000 context where, as party and state, it was preoccupied with individual personalities and assets to the extent that the dividing lines between genuine and politically-fomented charges came to be blurred. Corruption and crony capitalism charges pursued against President Zuma by the NPA, under the presidency of Mbeki, appeared to have involved variable and alternate applications of horse-trading and tit-for-tad mechanisms. Hence, detractors have written-off the Arms Deal Commission as a cover-up strategy. This article affirms that the centralization effects of the former President Mbeki's party and state modernization project were to exacerbate the ANC's internal tensions as well as the fragmentation of the state through party careerism and factionalism. The absence of an *autopoietic* layer of communications and actions in the ANC liberation movement-turned ruling party made the resolution of intra-ANC conflicts extraordinarily protracted. With time, the ANC ruling party has evolved into an incrementally sophisticated organizational system with deep contradictions, hypocritical positioning and potentially fatal paradoxes. Hence, the predicament of the expelled former ANCYL leadership has a life of its own as an antithesis against the former President Mbeki prior to 2007, a synthesis around President Zuma during 2007 to 2010, and ultimately posing a vigorous challenge to the prevailing Zuma second-term thesis leading to Mangaung 2012 Elective Conference. Theoretically, the ANC's inability to complete its transition is a function of the missing emphasis on the primacy of *autopoietic* systems of communications and actions.

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