

# The ANC and the Regeneration of Political Power, 1994-2011

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## ABSTRACT

The African National Congress's 17 years *in* political power, 1994-2011, is a crucial yet under-explored part of the party-movement's first 100 years. The paper is anchored in my research project and book, *The African National Congress and the Regeneration of Political Power*, which explores the ANC's power project – its continuous consolidation and regeneration of political power – in the period from the assumption of government power, 1994, to the present, 2011. It assesses the ANC's engagement with power across four 'faces of political power' and on two levels of democracy – electoral-representative and direct engagement with the people. The four faces are the ANC organisationally, the ANC in relation to the people and people's power, the ANC in multi-party electoral contest, and the ANC operating in government and the public sector. In each of the four domains, the paper uses thematic areas to illustrate the ANC's power project. The analysis is thus three-dimensional, taking account of change over time, political power across the four faces, and concurrent power operations on the externalised level of multi-partyism and government, and the parallel level of ANC in direct engagement with the people.

The trends across the domains show an ANC that is remarkably adept at consolidating, protecting and regenerating political power. Despite organisational upheavals, popular disappointments, and manifest shortcomings of the ANC in government, the ANC remains largely electorally unchallenged, in a close and critically engaged but trusted relation to the bulk of the people of South Africa, and firmly in control of the state. The paper concludes that the ANC's overall 'power holding' has by all current indications moved beyond peaks across the four faces, but that it remains strongly entrenched, flaws and all. Whether by design or default, the different faces of ANC power generation have hitherto supplemented one another to maintain ANC power and mask the fault-lines. The convergence and inter-face supplementation help the ANC retain power in the face of declines in any particular domain.

## Introduction

In the process of bringing remarkable change to South Africa, the ANC itself has also become a remarkably changed organisation. The power that it wielded over South Africa, seventeen years-plus after 1994, was persistent and strong, yet simultaneously post-peak and declining across the ‘four faces of power’.<sup>1</sup> Its ‘continuous struggle for liberation’ by 2011 was especially social and economic, yet also political in its interrogation of the 1994 constitutional values. This ANC struggle, at the point of 17 years in power, had in many respects become a struggle to retain its power while recognising that its liberation project was phased, incomplete, and subject to uncertain completion. Even while this power was incomplete, processes set in that detracted from and undermined ANC power gained. In this sense, the liberation was probably never going to be complete.

The paper assesses the state of the ANC’s ‘power project’ in the field of politics, albeit impacted by economics, circa 2011. In the years after 1994 the ANC worked to build, extend and consolidate tentative power. It made incontrovertible progress. Analytically, such advances can be distinguished in the ANC in state and government, the ANC electorally in competition with other political parties, the ANC in relation to the people, and the ANC organisationally. The paper uses these four faces of power to deconstruct the power complex that has surrounded the ANC. It tracks the ebb and flow, consolidation and fraying of ANC power in the last 17 years-plus of its one hundred years.

The analysis shows how the period has been both kind and cruel to the ANC. The burdens and seductions of being in power have rendered the former liberation movement a very different movement from what it had been in the time of the liberation struggle up to 1994, directly impacted by negotiations and other transitional compromises from the late 1980s onwards. By 2011 it had become an amalgam of contradictions, with all four faces speckled with blends of continuous strengths (no new strengths), and new and accumulating weaknesses. The paper’s objective is to compare and synthesise these changes in order to arrive at a multifaceted assessment of the state of ANC power circa 2011. In many respects the ANC’s decades-long challenge to apartheid power and its own ascent into power are well recorded,<sup>2</sup> yet the four faces of its political power (with their economic bases) have not been assessed side-by-side, thematically and over time, as this paper and the book on which it is based<sup>3</sup> do. The research interweaves the ANC’s many interfaces with political power.

The detailed tracking that informs the synthesis is in the author’s 2011 book, *The ANC and the Regeneration of Political Power*.<sup>4</sup>

## The multi-fronted investigation into ANC power, 1994-2011

The ANC obviously wishes to remain in power, ‘until Jesus comes’,<sup>5</sup> or, for any other indefinite period of time. Yet the ANC is not in full control of this mission. It has often had to step in to undo failures or self-inflicted damage. The *multi-fronted* character of the ANC’s ‘project’ for the regeneration of its power (movement, people, elections and government) meant, however, that the ANC has had backup in times of slippage on one front. This afforded the ANC the space to regenerate power lost on one front, on the others. When one ‘face’ part seemed to be vulnerable, others were still steaming ahead on different dynamics and cycles. In addition, these operations were simultaneously happening on two parallel tiers of democracy. The

continuously deep ANC link to ‘the people’ gives it insurance against both failures in government and the threat of declines in electoral support.

This paper presents an interpretative synthesis of arguments and research data generated throughout the period of analysis to explore the argument about counter-balancing resulting from the different faces of power. I conducted the research through direct observation of important ANC events, documentary analysis, interviews, occasional surveys, community focus groups, and continuous media tracking. Full research details are presented in *The African National Congress and the Regeneration of Political Power*.<sup>6</sup> The paper uses this database to assess the state of ANC power circa 2011 – the cut-off point for the current phase of this research project.

The paper argues that the early to mid-phases of the ANC’s fourth term in power, 2009-2014, displayed all of far-reaching strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities. In between, there was evidence of projects to shield the movement, in organisation and in government power, from drastic power decay. The analysis notes both the developments in the specific domains and the interface between movement, people, election outcomes, and performance in government.

In the words of an ANC intellectual, the decline of ANC electoral power (one of the faces explored in this book) ‘is like an ocean wave rolling towards the coast ... it will happen but we do not know the distance to the shore.’<sup>7</sup> The ANC was not passively sitting back to let the wave wash over it – it was actively working to regenerate its political power. Yet, it was also a constrained and weakened ANC that was conducting the regeneration initiatives. ANC power circa 2011 lent itself to variable verdicts, depending on which face was being explored, and the level of democracy on which the actions were focused. The study unpacks and tracks the faces, levels, and interface through systematic mapping, comparison and synthesis across the faces. To illustrate:

There was the great historical ANC movement, in power since 1994, in a continuously strong and trusting, even if somewhat eroded relationship with the bulk of the *people* of South Africa. It was a party that *electorally* continuously enjoyed a juggernaut status, despite some fraying at the edges, provincial lapse in the Western Cape, and deficit standings in minority communities. From 1994 to 2004 it had repeatedly upped its performance to 69.69 per cent in 2009. Courtesy of floor-crossing it had 74.25 per cent of the National Assembly representatives on the eve of election 2009. It decayed, largely courtesy of Cope. Even with the de facto disappearance of Cope, however, and as shown in local election 2011, the ANC was not returning to its apparent 2004 electoral heights. In *government and in the public institutions of state* the ANC was on continuous improvement quests, even if some crucial projects were insufficiently conceptualised and poorly executed. This was particularly evident in its attempted transformations of local and provincial government. It simultaneously battled the balance between comradely deployment and ruthless pursuits of performance. Corruption, insufficient capacity and self-beneficiation over service frequently impeded the ANC’s rise to the achievement of full state power. *Organisationally* the ANC was a giant on porous legs, courtesy of a plethora of internal contests for position, privilege and influence over state resources, whether for personal or community gains. The mass movement’s branches were often in a sorry state.

These faces of ANC political power unfold on one of two (or both) parallel levels of democracy and popular engagement on which the ANC operates. First, on the representative, multi-party democracy level, electoral conquests formalise the scope of official ANC dominance. The ANC enjoys added

impetus on this level through its continuous positioning as ‘liberation movement’. Through this status it speaks to South Africa as a whole, and effectively claims credit for delivering the country from past evils. Second, in the world of ANC parallel and internal democracy (along with intra-Tripartite Alliance democracy) the ANC relates directly to the people (often mediated by ANC provincial, regional, branch and league structures), and most of the fierce battles of South African politics play out in the Alliance (and the Youth League). This level of action ensures that many of the divisive and intractable issues of South African politics unfold in a space not penetrated by opposition parties that can take electoral power from the ANC.

The main sections in the paper review trends<sup>8</sup> in ANC operations across the four faces of power, offering syntheses of the composite strengths and weaknesses.

### **‘Power’ in the context of the ANC’s 17 years since 1994**

The term ‘power’ refers minimally to the balance between control and consent that governs the relation between ruler and the ruled.<sup>9</sup> Political power, the essence of politics, enables leaders, parties and governments *to do things* in the public realm. It leverages the ability, for example, of the ANC to take decisions, muster public resources in pursuit of goals, and gain compliance. Democratic power operates in the worlds of mandates and reservoirs of support to let governments and their party political leaders ‘get on with the job’ of governance. In operational terms, power in this project is defined as the ability to influence or control decisions and directions, be it in the ANC, in the ANC in government, or in the alliance via the ANC and/or government. Popular and voter support deliver the space to do these things.

Popular trust and loyalty are key phenomena that give the ANC and government these powers. Electoral mandates are crucial expressions of the affirmative popular orientations. Without these forms of power, governments rule by force, coercion and outright violence. The ANC has not entered this trajectory, although it is no stranger to manufacturing consent and limiting dissent through propaganda and the control of information and intra-movement behaviour. Table 1 offers illustrations of what is meant when the paper refers to weak or strong ANC power.

In an altruistically defined ideal world, leaders use the power that political systems put at their disposal to govern with the sole or predominant objective of advancing the interests of their constituents, or a country. In best-reality it is frequently about political leaders who govern from carefully crafted platforms that combine the public and private driving forces and arrive at reasonably credible compromises. In the nemesis world, own interest overshadows the public good in the drive to capture the position and privilege that go with publicly held political power. Parties and leaders aspire to power, because it facilitates their pursuit of high ideals and real-life benefits, both for others and themselves. In the case of the ANC, the personal interests of elite groups have repeatedly converged with their public power projects, in many instances uncomfortably and embarrassingly. The ANC’s saviour has been the reservoir of popular goodwill.

The analysis touches on the dimensions of ‘who has the real power’, and what forces push the ANC to govern in particular ways, or to effect (or not to effect) certain policy decisions.<sup>10</sup> Much of the analysis is located in the behavioural world, while interpretations recognise the likelihood that power is at its most effective when least observable.<sup>11</sup> Much of the economic bases of the reproduction of political power are

covered, although the predominant focus is political. The analysis is thus that of the superstructure – recognised to be extensively impacted by economic power.

Table 1: Continuums of operationalised ANC power			
DOMAINS	Select Indicators – manifested or potential		
	INDICATIONS OF STRONG ANC POWER	Continuum	INDICATIONS OF WEAK ANC POWER
<b>ORGANISATIONAL</b>			
Internal contestation in the ANC	Unity / cooperation and frank assessments despite contestation, smooth leadership handovers	↔	Lingering discontent and incomplete breaks, factions mobilising for government, factional politics dominate
<b>ELECTORAL</b>			
Electoral standing of the ANC	Retains support of above 60 per cent nationally	↔	Slipping support levels, falling below 60 per cent, boycotts of polls by previous supporters
Handling threats posed by opposition parties	Subsume parties, form alliances or co-opt, above-board campaigns to defuse ‘threats’	↔	Losing significant chunks of support, crossing boundary to ‘underhand’ campaigning
Eliciting public participation and gaining co-responsibility	Active participation, belief that it helps governance, inputs have a chance to be successful	↔	Apathy and cynicism about public participation, co-optation and process ‘management’
<b>GOVERNANCE AND POLICY</b>			
Adopting policies that speak to community needs	Policies address the exact community needs directly, effectively implemented	↔	Policies fail to address the target, reluctance to change, policy subject to whims of patrons
Putting in place and managing institutions for policy implementation	Weak institutions are redesigned, removed; coordination of functions	↔	Institutional design that obstructs policy implementation, zones for ANC ‘warfare’
<b>‘THE PEOPLE’</b>			
Affecting the lives of people through improved conditions	Economic and social indicators show that policies are working	↔	Failure to impact on key issues of inequality, poverty and unemployment
Community reaction through protest	ANC continues to be trusted to deliver, despite protest	↔	Protest no longer combines with electoral support
Source: Author’s conceptualisation and operationalisation			

### *ANC legitimacy, patronage and privilege*

The basis of contemporary ANC power remains its liberation movement status. By virtue of being elected to govern and occupy the positions of government and state power, a further layer of power follows. Institutional or organisational placement brings to the individual and collective the factor of reputation. A party gains power by *being seen* to be making progress in pursuit of shared ideals, or being imagined to be better able to do that than opposition parties. Power also results from being justly financially rewarded in the pursuit of these tasks. The status associated with position in the ANC, but mostly with representing the ANC in government, brings power, prestige and privilege. It is accepted that politics brings wealth to the political elites.<sup>12</sup> If wisely or shrewdly handled, to some extent irrespective of morality, such power can be self-

regenerative, and bring with it the additional power of privilege and economic beneficence, in either ethical or criminally inappropriate ways.

The line that differentiates legitimate<sup>13</sup> personal power and prestige from the untoward is diffuse and winding. When does the award of tenders to acquaintances, friends and constituents cross into inappropriate (dubious, even if perhaps not outwardly corrupt) behaviour? When do constituents start objecting? When does the introduction of these people to power-holders to facilitate tendering and contracting border on (or embrace) corruption? Is it ever sufficient to declare interest and then proceed with involvement in contracts and projects? In terms of organisational power, to what extent is the status of the ANC, as the commanding party, with its liberation struggle icon status, a guarantor of access to private and corporate funding, both national and international?<sup>14</sup>

Patronage, as another form of power, was important in decisions at first not to mobilise against Thabo Mbeki in 2007, fearing that he would retain power and then cut access. It was even more pertinent for those switching allegiance to Jacob Zuma. In 2006 Blade Nzimande argued that because of patronage many people had become fearful of expressing themselves ... they are now 'owned':<sup>15</sup>

Because of the dangers of this patronage, [members] become members of other members of the ANC ... [they] joined certain individuals.

The quiet avalanche of internal conversion to the Zuma camp *circa* 2007 was frequently driven by the knowledge that this grouping at the time represented the victorious order. The phenomenon indicated the extent to which the ANC in its years in government had come to be more than the top leader of the moment, despite being profoundly impacted by each new top leader.

### **Ebb and flow across the four faces of ANC power**

In 2011 the ANC, both as party-movement and governing party, was in a period of working against forces that threatened to reduce its organisational stature and forestall it in achieving greater realisation of its ideals in government. There were many suggestions that the ANC's power was past its peak. The ANC was entrenched in *state power*, yet fraught with lapses and deficits. It remained in a special relationship to the *people*. *Organisationally* it was far stronger than any potential rival. Yet, weakening through factions and indecisive leadership was evident. The primary contradiction was that few substantive turnaround prospects loomed, while the ANC remained assured of dominance in occupation for years, if not decades, to come. There was less certainty than at any time since the ANC's rise to power of the extent to which it would be able to regenerate and restore the power it had lost.

The paper's review of the four faces of ANC power – movement, people, party politics and state – over time offers an estimation of the ebb and flow of ANC power.

### ***The ANC and organisational regeneration of power***

The most effective power of all lies in the ANC as organisation. Organisationally, the ANC cross-cuts the four faces of power that this paper reviews. The ANC's dual power project of simultaneously operating on two parallel levels of democracy is synonymous with the movement: it operates both in the world of 'elections, voters and representative democracy' and in a world of 'direct engagement with the people',

unmediated by the exploits of liberal-representative democracy. The ANC's stature in party politics, and in its command of state power, nurtures an organic, people's relationship.

The ANC has a level of hegemonic presence that no other political party-movement in South Africa approximates. It is well-resourced, and ensures that it stays that way, if necessary through leveraging state resources and the movement acting as a business operative, often dressed in patriotism and empowerment. The ANC was the best resourced party in South Africa. It seamlessly leveraged state power for financial deals – with the state and by ANC benefactors. The ANC's Chancellor House business operations, largely veiled from public scrutiny, dealt in mega-scoring business deals with the state. Chancellor House would help guarantee the ANC the resources to counter opposition advances, including electoral initiatives.<sup>16</sup>

The ANC also suffers organisational flaws that undermine the regeneration of power: opportunism, careerism and preoccupation with movement position and power – for what it can leverage in terms of state power – dominate many ANC operations. Talk about the need for containment was far more widespread than actual action to eliminate it. Action can stimulate reaction and trigger revenge, which leaders aiming at elected office in the organisation wish to avoid at all cost. Intra-ANC silences and 'diplomacy' – whether on colleagues' extravagances in employing state resources, being preoccupied with lucrative business operations while in full-time ANC and/or government employment – were often due to internal ANC positioning for future leadership. The ANCYL's internal revolts against the mother body helped channel potential dissent into the ANC – due to its apparent contra-ideological, 'more radical' positioning vis-à-vis the mother body. This effect was similar to that rendered by Cosatu's critiques-plus-mobilising-for-the-ANC.

The alliance members play the role of an internal opposition, helping to ensure that voices critical of the ANC would still vote for it.<sup>17</sup> Cosatu has been central to all ANC multiparty election campaigns. Cosatu and the SACP's battles for centrality of influence<sup>18</sup> nurture the idea of a 'world of opposition' within Alliance parameters. Early in the Zuma administration the alliance partners imagined 'open doors' for their exercise of influence and power. However, they were *in* solely on ANC terms and with the ANC as centre of power. Their role was also divisive in their Mangaung-related clash with the ANCYL. The ANCYL argued that the 'communists' and 'unionists' were attempting an ANC takeover.<sup>19</sup>

The ANC attempted to contain dissent and mobilisation that was not under central control, both in leadership contests and in ideology-policy debates. Evidence included the often-stated notion of the 'ANC as a disciplined movement of the left'. It fiercely protected 'democratic centralism' and the obligation of cadres or members to accept the wisdom of the centre. The ANC was successful in this – at least on the surface and in as far as transgressors knew that disciplinary action could follow. Nevertheless, it did not prevent mobilisation and plotting to circumvent the centre, when the centre itself was a political faction. These processes were a small part of the ANC working to manufacture consent. The use and occasional attempted curtailment of mass media, privately and publicly owned, to diffuse authorised ANC messages was another offering in the ANC's manufacturing of consent.

The ANC in the final instance can only be as strong as its branches and membership are. There were many indications that this part of the ANC was not all well.<sup>20</sup> The case study of mobilisation for Polokwane (Table 2 shows the Polokwane delegate details) had relevance for Mangaung 2012 and reveals much about the branches in general. From ANC conference and NGC state of the organisation reports we learn that many ANC branches are inactive, but are revived for special occasions such as national ANC conferences, that chequebook and fly-by-night branches exist, and many are the fiefdoms of local power mongers. Branches and branch membership statistics are manipulated to ensure slate support for candidates. For example, ANC top officials know precisely where the dormant or failed branches are, and they (and others who know the strategy) use the knowledge to win elective conferences before they start. In recent years this has impacted on most of the ANC's provincial conferences. Mantashe described membership auditing as a farce – but averred that the provinces were cleaning up the system.<sup>21</sup> The ANC's *Imvuselelo* campaign for a million members by 2012 was 'challenged' to prove full integrity.

The integrity of cadres has consistently burdened the ANC. ANC concern publicly surfaced at the ANC's first NGC in 2000 and discussions were linked to *Through the eye of the needle*, the document that considers in detail the requirements for good cadres. The ANC's frequent references to corruption in public office, careerism, and 'service' as a concept foreign to ANC deployees relate the scope of the problem. The ANC regards meetings such as the 2010 NGC as its biggest political school, and an opportunity for the socialisation of both the branch delegates that attend and those they will spread the message to back in the branches.

Table 2:  
Illustration of conversion of ANC branch membership figures into conference delegates: the case of pre-vote branch delegate allocation, Polokwane, 2007

Province	ANC membership*	Allocated delegates
Eastern Cape	153,164	906
Free State	61,310	363
Gauteng	59,909	354
KwaZulu-Natal	102,742	608
Limpopo	67,632	400
Mpumalanga	54,913	325
North West	47,353	280
Northern Cape	37,267	220
Western Cape	36,947	219
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>621,237</b>	<b>3,675**</b>

\* These figures are set to be affected by the ANC *Imvuselelo* (one million members) campaign that is underway for its 2012 centenary year.  
 \*\* Ongoing changes in branch credentials resulted in an adjusted 3,983 ballots being issued on Polokwane voting day.  
 Source: ANC Media Briefing, Update on preparations for the ANC 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference, 11 October 2007; adapted from *The ANC and the Regeneration of Political Power*.

### ***The ANC regenerating power in relation to 'the people'***

A substantial proportion of the people of South Africa identify with the ANC, trust the organisation, continue to believe that the ANC is taking the country in the right direction, tolerate weaknesses and misdemeanours of the leadership, and will the movement on to correct itself and better execute its popular mandate.<sup>22</sup> They continue to protest (or condone protest) against the ANC in government, but persist in *alternating* the brick (protest) and pro-ANC ballots. At worst, and still in modest numbers, the seriously discontented amongst these black-African voters – the core ANC constituency – abstain from voting, in preference to endorsing an opposition party. These trends held through local election 2011, and speak to the parallel level of democracy in which the ANC connects to the people. The trends offer evidence of the ANC in 2011 retaining substantial ability to regenerate power, despite definite vulnerabilities.

People's power is usually positioned as the alternative to elective power. Activist literature, however, shows that electoral participation can be compatible with the promotion of peoples' power.<sup>23</sup> In South Africa people's power is associated with resistance, movement and mobilisation, such as was manifested in the United Democratic Front (UDF) of the 1980s.<sup>24</sup> It can also be used to hold incumbents to account. It is similar to power through mobilisation. In socialist systems, and in particular in Cuba,<sup>25</sup> people's power shows how local communities through the *mandat impératif* hold extensive power over their local representatives, with high levels of accountability and biannual meeting-based powers of recall.

There is a popular need in South Africa to continue believing in ‘our liberation movement’, to keep on trusting that the preferred political party-movement remained the one that could be relied on to pursue the people’s interests and help them achieve the better life, or, in many instances, a modestly improving life on a continuous basis. The ANC to the bulk of the black-African voters remained not just patron, but the *parent* as well.<sup>26</sup> Party political ‘alternatives’ were often superfluous where people continued the parallel level of democracy, directly engaging with and protesting against *their* parent-patron party, and, come election time, rallying to unite ranks against a party political enemy of choice.

The ANC’s intimate association with ‘people’s power’ and the movement’s status of custodianship of the power of the people bring home a hybrid understanding – one of both a layer of direct links with the people and the legitimacy of the representational and electoral spheres. The ANC’s model, however, has refrained from exposing its representatives to direct popular scrutiny. Powers of recall are mostly limited to the construction of new candidate lists for elections. People’s discontent with local representation has become manifest in multiple community protests in which they have insisted (overwhelmingly without direct impact) on the immediate recall of faltering municipal representatives. The results of local election 2011 testified to moderate punishment of the ANC in the form of, for example, more DA support, predominantly but not only in minority communities, and a comparatively low turnout amongst its core supporters (lower for the ANC than for the DA).<sup>27</sup> The ANC’s 2011 local government candidate screenings, and implicit powers of recall through ANC community participation, faltered in many instances due to candidate rivalry, intersection with ‘service delivery protests’ (community protests), application of gender, youth and race quotas, and the imposition by ANC structures of candidates who would aid their preferred positioning for Mangaung 2012.<sup>28</sup>

Between-election protest behaviour<sup>29</sup> thus alternated, and co-existed, with strong electoral mandates for the ANC. This coexistence has persisted from 2004–11. ANC and government investigations showed that it was often (but by far not always) ANC members, including rival councillor candidates, behind community protests. There was evidence of shortening periods of grace extended to the ANC. The protests of May 2009 came within a month of the ANC’s 2009 election victory. The 2009–10 protests specifically started holding *national government* responsible for making good on local demands, a link that had previously not been as explicit. In the 2010–11 cycle protesters regularly retaliated against police’s rubber bullets – mostly with stones, occasionally with live ammunition. Communities also did not hesitate to do bottom-up fusion of party and state. Problems with ANC local election candidate lists seamlessly metamorphosed into service delivery protest.<sup>30</sup> It was in this context that the August 2011 ANCYL-triggered Luthuli House revolt signalled a change of pace and direct ‘people’s engagement’ with the top ANC structures. These were ‘mobilisable’ constituents, often young and with reduced life prospects, angry with the ANC, yet not willing to electorally choose an alternative government.<sup>31</sup>

The early-democracy phases of consultative, participatory policy formulation had been the easy parts of public participation in South Africa. Several subsequent government initiatives followed to solicit feedback from the citizens on how policy implementation (or the lack thereof) was affecting them. These ranged from izimbizo to co-optive structures in and around the successive presidencies of South Africa, and legislative institutions. The opportunities for public were largely controlled, and failed to evolve into fora for concerted engagement of people and government. Opportunities abounded, but the impact fell short of deliberative participatory engagement.<sup>32</sup>

Despite a continuously close relationship between the ANC and the people, the 2011 ANC and ANC-in-government were unlikely to experience the luxury of another 17 years of popular patience, without working hard to nurture it – and the ANC itself keeping its people-bond going. The people had to find the proof that the parent still cared enough to really exert itself to ‘bring the food home tonight’.<sup>33</sup> Protest was used to tell the erring parent that the relationship with the community should not be taken for granted.

### ***The ANC regenerating power through electoral, multiparty politics***

The bulk of the people of South Africa – at least those who are politically active and are expressing their political preferences through elections, and *as judged through electoral expression* – by 2011 had retained patience and trust that the ANC would indeed deliver some form of continuously improving ‘better lives for all’. In cases of failure, thus far and judged by electoral outcomes, voters have generally retained the belief that the ANC is at least *more likely than other political parties* to edge them closer to the better life. Yet, the ANC was moving towards a point where much of its electoral support would come to depend on a confluence of performance in government and movement credibility, in which distractions through resource and succession warfare would have been left behind.

Despite lapses, the ANC remained unrivalled in the electoral stakes (Table 3) – and this aspect came to constitute a backbone of the ANC’s regeneration of political power. Huge electoral victories gave the ANC room to manoeuvre the minefields of protest and governance in the between-election periods. DA gains in local election 2011 (Table 4) marked small footholds in the ANC’s core black-African support base that were beyond the ANC’s comfort zone.<sup>34</sup> The ANC lost approximately 2.6 per cent of its 2006 local election support to the DA. Yet, the margin of remaining support was huge. Opposition parties in their prevailing configurations at best offered intermittent or gradually accumulating threats. The ANC in 2009 had lost about a million of its previous voters to Cope. This conundrum was contained, and served as message to would-be splinters of fates that await them should they embark on Cope-like experiments.<sup>35</sup> In another mode, the earlier disappearance of the NP also demonstrated challenger fates. Such opposition destinies further concentrated oppositional pressures *within* the ANC, making the ANC electorally safer but internally more combustible.

The IFP in KwaZulu-Natal and the DA in the Western Cape shed light on the provincial electoral states of the ANC. The ANC’s 2009 KwaZulu-Natal eclipse of the IFP (through a turnout surge in urban-metropolitan ANC support) helped veil the multi-province decline of the ANC vote – its vote proportion having declined in a majority of the provinces, and, in 2011, in all provinces except KwaZulu-Natal. The DA’s outright Western Cape victory of 2009 (continued in the local elections of 2011) was, however, not due to extensive voter realignment. It was largely courtesy of higher turnout amongst the DA’s traditional white and coloured voter base and migration to the DA of some in the coloured middle class (previously ANC-aligned). On national proportional vote calculations in 2011, the ANC remained roughly three times as strong as the DA.

ANC electoral power hitherto has been shielded by the ‘different world’ status that ANC supporters have afforded the ANC. Grievances about elusive rights were not ‘dragged into party politics’ (elections).<sup>36</sup> The Alliance and the ANCYL also aided the ANC through its practice of contained internal opposition that helped prevent vote slippage to opposition parties. This was legitimate opposition, all around, coexisting with the multiparty electoral domain. The ANC, however, could not be assured of the indefinite continuation of

these trends. It was in need of regeneration to stop opposition party creep into the buffer of electoral support.

Table 3:  
**Comparative history of the ANC's performance in South Africa's four national elections**

<b>ELECTION RESULTS OF ALL PARTIES WINNING REPRESENTATION</b>				
	1994	1999	2004	2009
Party	In each column: percentage vote (%) / number of seats / number of votes			
ANC	62.65 / 252 / 12,237,655	66.35 / 266 / 10,601,330	69.69 / 279 / 10,880,915	65.90 / 264 / 11,650,648
DP / DA	1.73 / 7 / 338,426	9.56 / 38 / 1,527,337	12.37 / 50 / 1,931,201	16.66 / 67 / 2,945,829
COPE	-	-	-	7.42 / 30 / 1,311,027
IFP	10.54 / 43 / 2,058,294	8.58 / 34 / 1,371,477	6.97 / 28 / 1,088,664	4.55 / 18 / 804,260
ID	-	-	1.73 / 7 / 269,765	0.92 / 4 / 162,915
UDM	-	3.42 / 14 / 546,790	2.28 / 9 / 355,717	0.85 / 4 / 149,680
FF / FF+	2.17 / 9 / 424,555	0.80 / 3 / 127,217	0.89 / 4 / 139,465	0.84 / 4 / 146,796
ACDP	0.45 / 2 / 88,104	1.43 / 6 / 228,975	1.60 / 7 / 250,272	0.81 / 3 / 142,658
UCDP	-	0.785 / 3 / 125,280	0.75 / 3 / 117,792	0.37 / 2 / 66,086
PAC	1.25 / 5 / 243,478	0.71 / 3 / 113,125	0.73 / 3 / 113,512	0.27 / 1 / 48,530
MF	0.07 / 0 / 13,433	0.30 / 1 / 48,277	0.35 / 2 / 55,267	0.25 / 1 / 43, 474
Azapo	-	0.17 / 1 / 27,257	0.25 / 1 / 39,116	0.22 / 1 / 38,245
APC	-	-	-	0.20 / 1 / 35,867
NP / NNP	20.39 / 82 / 3,983,690	6.87 / 28 / 1,098,215	1.65 / 7 / 257,824	-
FA	-	0.54 / 2 / 86,704	-	-
AEB	-	0.29 / 1 / 46, 292	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 / 400 / 19,533,498</b>	<b>100 / 400 / 15,977,142</b>	<b>100 / 400 / 15,612,671</b>	<b>100 / 400 / 17,680,729</b>
Key to party acronyms: ANC: African National Congress; DP/DA: Democratic Party / Alliance; Cope: Congress of the People; IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party; ID: Independent Democrats; UDM: United Democratic Movement; FF/FF+: Freedom Front/Plus; ACDP: African Christian Democratic Party; UCDP: United Christian Democratic Party; PAC: Pan Africanist Congress; MF: Minority Front; Azapo: Azanian People's Organisation; APC: African People's Convention; N/NNP: New/National Party; FA: Federal Alliance; AEB: Afrikaner Eenheidsbeweging (Unity Movement).				
Sources: Compiled by author, based on IEC 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009. <sup>37</sup>				

The ANC's main weaknesses were its wracked state when it came to positioning for internal ANC elections,<sup>38</sup> and its inability from 2005–2011 to prevent these battles from spilling over into the state and undermining both credibility and performance. It also suffered problems of representation. The ANC's regenerated power was often *despite* the low quality of democratic representation. Public representatives frequently failed to maintain close contact with their communities. Constituency offices were frequently ineffective. There was variable and reluctant oversight of the ANC political chiefs and the top ANC people in the government executive. Parliamentary outreach projects hardly exposed representatives to the critical mass of suboptimal representation. Elected representatives were shielded from direct voter scrutiny, except for the municipalities' ward councillors who buffered community discontent.<sup>39</sup>

### ***The ANC regenerating of power through government and state institutions***

The ANC's government-delivery project was where the essence of power regeneration circa 2011 onwards was set to reside. With the liberation dividend wearing increasingly thin, new and disgruntled born-frees joining the electorate and other politically important groupings, vote defections to opposition parties growing more likely, and the ANC becoming ever more undermined by internal factions vying for power and position, it was the fourth face of power, performance and leadership in government and public sector, that held the key to the ANC continuously being able to regenerate its political power.

Table 4:  
Changes of support between the 2006 and 2011 local government elections  
on the proportional representation (PR) ballot

Party	Local Election 2006		Local Election 2011		Change from 2006 to 2011	
	Total votes	%	Total votes	%	Total votes	% points
ANC	6,469,420	65.67	8,405,429	62.93	1,936,009	-2.74
DA	1,608,154	16.32	3,216,006	24.08	1,607,852	7.76
IFP	744,486	7.56	475,621	3.56	-268,865	-4.00
NFP	-	-	318,352	2.38	318,352	2.38
Cope	-	-	296,624	2.22	296,624	2.22
UDM	129,047	1.31	84,623	0.63	-44,424	-0.68
ACDP	128,990	1.31	78,737	0.59	-50,253	-0.72
PAC	109,816	1.11	54,846	0.41	-54,970	-0.70
APC	-	-	54,332	0.41	54,332	0.41
FF+	94,140	0.96	53,931	0.40	-40,209	-0.56
MF	42,530	0.43	53,042	0.40	10,512	-0.03
Azapo	30,321	0.31	26,300	0.20	-4,021	-0.11
UCDP	62,459	0.63	25,971	0.19	-36,488	-0.44
ID*	217,761	2.21	-	-	-217,761	-2.21
Other	214,975	2.18	213,697	1.60	-1,278	-0.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,852,099</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>13,357,511</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3,505,412</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Note: \* ID merged into the DA in Local Election 2011; Party not in previous table: NFP; National Freedom Party.  
Sources: IEC results system, 2011 (accessed 30 May 2011, various windows); SABC results system, 2011; Local Government Research Centre, 2011.

Performance centred on policy and accompanying institutional-procedural arrangements to give effect to plans and projects.<sup>40</sup> The promotion in government of the ANC's Polokwane resolutions as a more caring, state interventionist and developmental version of the preceding policy order stimulated expectations.<sup>41</sup> A process of down-scaling expectations nevertheless started with the ANC's 2009 election manifesto. By the time of assuming power, the Zuma administration was falling back on limited institutional restructuring, and a few strategies to bring better policy realisation (including monitoring and evaluation), along with incremental policy adjustments. By 2011 the policy gradualism ruled, with new initiatives bouncing against constitutional constraints – while government plans were also falling short of realising the expectations embedded in the constitution.

The shortcomings and fault lines in government performance were glaring, both on policy and government-institutional fronts. Unemployment, poverty, inequality and underdevelopment, and a multitude of companion problems, were stubborn. Targets were missed because of both inefficiency-ineffectiveness, and elusiveness and shifting targets. Some of the causes and solutions were in global policy networks, rather than just in the hands of the government. The complex of local causes ranged from regional and rural-urban migration of populations, to the pursuit of inappropriate policies, government getting bogged down in repeat cycles of policy and process inventions, unsuitable organisation of state power and its diffusion between the spheres-levels of power, institutional lack of capacity and the failure of cadreship through corruption, tender manipulation and elevating the pursuit of personal power and position above the primary objective of serving the people of South Africa.<sup>42</sup>

Evidence of the vulnerability of the alliance-in-government was manifest in the policy domain, where policy innovation was desperately needed. Promises of policy to match in implementation the issues of the day came to a head with Zuma's 2010 State of the Nation address and the 2010 national budget statement. The reverie ended. Leading Cosatu members, including Vavi, concluded that the Zuma administration was trudging along old growth paths and discredited Mbeki-ist trajectories. In September 2010, Zuma sought rapprochement and Cosatu saw new light in NGC speeches, which *again* was dimmed with the emergence of details of the New Growth Path (NGP) in 2010–11. The 2011 State of the Nation address brought more trust that the ANC-in-government was achieving job creation, albeit with a repositioned and focused mix of the old and the new, in the mode of 'only possible with private sector help'. One year into the NGP, it was falling far short of its job creation targets. By September 2011 it was reported that governance operations in the Presidency had in effect halted, given the primacy of succession in the ANC, the engine room of government in the Zuma administration.

Shortcomings in government performance also resulted from poor-fit institutions, maladministration, corruption and government arrogance. The ANC in conferences and senior government persons speaking out became the primary source to confirm that corruption was rife and debilitating.<sup>43</sup> The ANC-in-government exercised patronage and government was a primary source of employment and career advancement. It agonised about the pitfalls of deployment, but continued hoping that trusted cadres would self-correct to make the imprint of the governance project more coherent. There were many instances of local and provincial infighting to secure positions of political power and socio-economic self-empowerment via state deployment. This happened despite some ANC efforts at correction. There were approved purges of political and bureaucratic incumbents, and the top-level political bureaucrats. There were national ANC efforts, from the ANC's first NGC meeting of 2000 onwards, to rehabilitate the cadres who were once believed to be prepared to serve selflessly, if not die for their country. State institutions continuously constituted the trenches for intra-ANC warfare. These wars were increasingly overlain by nationalist/communist/unionist lines of mobilisation for the next succession battle.

Redesigned state institutions in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) – with central positioning in the Presidency to help reinforce the determination of the Zuma era – were set to falter for lack of ability to implement an accurate system in conditions of imperfect and good-news reporting. National departments and provincial governments, for example, infused reports with appropriate political, developmental and achievement spin, before clearing the reports for submission to the political chiefs.<sup>44</sup> Joint executive teams of the Presidency and premiers' offices tried to fill in the gaps.<sup>45</sup> Policies sometimes faltered at the point of implementation because the spheres of government were ill-aligned, functions insufficiently coordinated, and civil servants unqualified – despite many institutional design efforts to address the problem. Local government turnaround strategies, when diffused to local municipalities, often lost the potential of meaningful interventions. Bureaucrats were often unsuitably deployed and were insufficiently benefiting from a plethora of training programmes. The greatest fragility, sabotaging the regeneration of ANC power, was in the interface of long-standing community observations of lack of accountability that combined with pervasive evidence of corruption.

The ANC organisational interface with the state – and superimposition of the ANC on the state – was a potential strength in as far as it could leverage concerted policy action and governance. However, it hardly happened this way. In the provinces, Provincial Executive Committees (PECs) often dictated to the provincial governments. The dictates were overwhelmingly focused on appointment of loyalists. Qualifications and experience were secondary – although in many cases it would not have made a difference,

because the predecessors had been appointed on the same basis. Early cracks in the assertion that the ANC *was* government emerged when the SACP ascended into top-ANC positions in the Eastern Cape and it became necessary to differentiate between the members of the Alliance being in party power and in state power. ANC cadres felt threatened, fearing marginalisation from key positions (and loss of control over power and positions). Add to this the personal vulnerabilities of the president (seen to be weak on personal probity, leadership and decisiveness in government) and a range of cabinet members, party problems seamlessly translated into public power problems – and public sector problems impacted the character and dignity of the former liberation movement.

### ***Complementarity of the four faces***

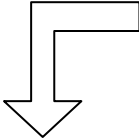
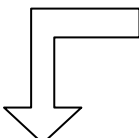
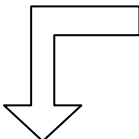
The four faces of ANC power thus combined to generate and regenerate the political power of the ANC, cross-cutting with the ANC concurrently operating on the two parallel levels of democracy. Cracks and contradictions abounded, along with continuous manifestations of strengths. Even if these were compromised, the ANC, on the balance of forces, by 2011 remained entrenched and by far superior in strength to any opposition challenger.

The sustainability of ANC all-round power had increasingly come to depend, circa 2011, on performance in government. Here, the ANC was battling itself, and time, to salvage the government project from frequent ineptness, mismanagement and corruption. There was a continuous popular need to believe in ‘the liberation movement in government’, to keep on trusting that the widely preferred political party-movement remained the one that could be trusted to pursue popular interests and get more definitive outcomes. By now, however, the popular beliefs in the ANC were without the innocence and idealism of 1994. The organisation itself and specifically the leadership showed evidence of countering ANC organisational power through incessant leadership factional and league contests and clashes. This was precisely at a time when concerted ANC focus on the matters of government was required. This cumulative effect suggested that the ANC was still regenerating power but at lower than replacement level. Only future election results would show whether the combination of weaknesses would result in linear or exponential deficits.

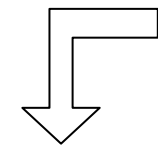
### **Comparative trends and the looming Mangaung moment**

There was the eminent possibility half-way into the Zuma 2009-2014 term that many of the chances for renewal to bring back in preceding strengths had been eclipsed. It seemed likely that the ebbs would grow and the flows contract. The observed declines, up to 2011, were still not calamitous. They constituted dips from the ANC’s heights of power. Despite the declines the ANC retained immense, cross-domain power. The possibility of reversals remained, as did the chance of further decreases, potentially also of a cumulative-exponential nature. The convergence of declines in ANC power over all four power faces that the paper reviewed suggests that the ANC’s weaknesses in organisation and government militated against recovery of previous ANC peaks. Disappointments and disenchantment had gained footholds which the ANC still might contain, but was unlikely to reverse.

Table 5:  
The 2011 state of ANC regeneration of political power over four faces and on parallel levels of democracy

	Regenerating power	Failures in regenerating power
<p><b>ANC as organisation / movement</b></p> 	<p>Societal presence that is close to hegemonic tends to self-sustain. By far the dominant party political game in town; thus projects itself into continuous public focus. Well-resourced and investments growing; campaign and resources attract people into the movement. Alliance brings opposition into self-contained world of ANC, legitimising criticism and then pulls it back into the ANC. Doing work on membership and branches; claims to have a branch in every ward; actively pursues growth. Survives serious leadership struggles and uses them for organisational renewal. Uses ANC meetings such as NGC to socialise new generations of ANC cadres. Zuma leadership became accepted and consolidated. ANC works hard to keep memory of past and of oppression alive, along with its liberation role.</p>	<p>Branches are often weak and phantom; can be manipulated for conferences and elections. Quality of cadres is an ongoing concern since at least 2000 due to careerism, opportunism, self-interest. Motivation of self-enrichment, opportunities often highly visible amongst leadership. Decline of democratic centralism and internal discipline cause the ANC top-leadership to lose control of centripetal forces, risking factionalism and proliferation of decentralised power enclaves. Incessant leadership struggles, positioning for the next election dominates much of party deliberations, even nomination of ANC candidates for local election in 2011.</p>
<p><b>State of regeneration</b></p>	<p><b>ANC works on rebuilding branches but weaknesses are also self-regenerative, the central ANC no longer has the power and authority of a decade ago, Imvuselelo campaign for 1 million membership and centenary celebrations likely to fill in some gaps, the central problem of quality and dedication of cadres is unaddressed.</b></p>	
<p><b>ANC in relation to the people</b></p> 	<p>People respond to ANC mobilisation, give endorsements, evidence is found in the ANC by far remaining the most trusted party. People in visible adoration at appearances of iconic leaders. People identify with ANC, and this helps constitute their identity in continuously semi-transformed SA. Follow ballot-and-brick repertoire to exercise protest within ambit of ANC support – first protest, then vote ANC, this relationship is sustained through 2011. People relate to ANC in both parallel tiers of democracy – a world foreign to opposition parties.</p>	<p>Ballot-and-brick repertoire could be a period effect that will lapse at certain point, the tipping point remains uncertain and ANC does not know how much of this borrowed time it has. Dark corners of protest (also xenophobic) show that anarchic tendencies combine with community power vacuums. Widespread poverty, unemployment and inequality render ANC fragile – not in ANC's power to correct these phenomena. Public participation is often 'manufactured'. Younger generations find it increasingly difficult to associate with the ANC's liberation ethos.</p>
<p><b>State of regeneration</b></p>	<p><b>ANC retains the ability to 'speak to', connect with people, its credibility and incumbency work as mutually reinforcing, the ballot-brick repertoire seems to be continuous for now, ANC campaigns attempt to bring its people-relationship into the state — but with mixed success.</b></p>	
<p><b>Elections &amp; multiparty politics</b></p> 	<p>ANC remains the dominant colossus, remains at 60 per cent plus support levels. ANC subverts Cope onslaught and Cope's fate serves as reminder of '(no) life after the ANC'. ANC suffers decline, yet remains by far the strongest party in eight provinces, continuously expanding in KwaZulu-Natal. ANC supporters show repeated willingness in time of elections to close ranks against a party political enemy – elections still overwhelmingly <i>not</i> the time of reckoning for the ANC. ANC support is particularly unrelenting in black-African communities – the bulk of electorate. ANC has more resources than any other party to keep campaigns and persuasion going.</p>	<p>The days of two-thirds electoral majorities may be in the past, except if ANC makes dramatic turnarounds. National decline by 4 per cent only in 2009 courtesy of surge in KwaZulu-Natal; and 2-4 per cent (depending on calculation method) in local election 2011. ANC 2009 vote proportion down in eight provinces; and actual number of votes down in five provinces (total number of votes in national election up by just over 2 million compared with 2004); ANC support in 2011 down in eight provinces. <i>Occasional</i> murmurs surface about new political parties – business-driven, labour, civil society.</p>
<p><b>State of</b></p>	<p><b>Well-resourced ANC campaigns prevail, opposition has limited ability to compete, DA working on gradual inroads on status as 'winner' that can take on ANC, elections retain status as phenomenon that is</b></p>	

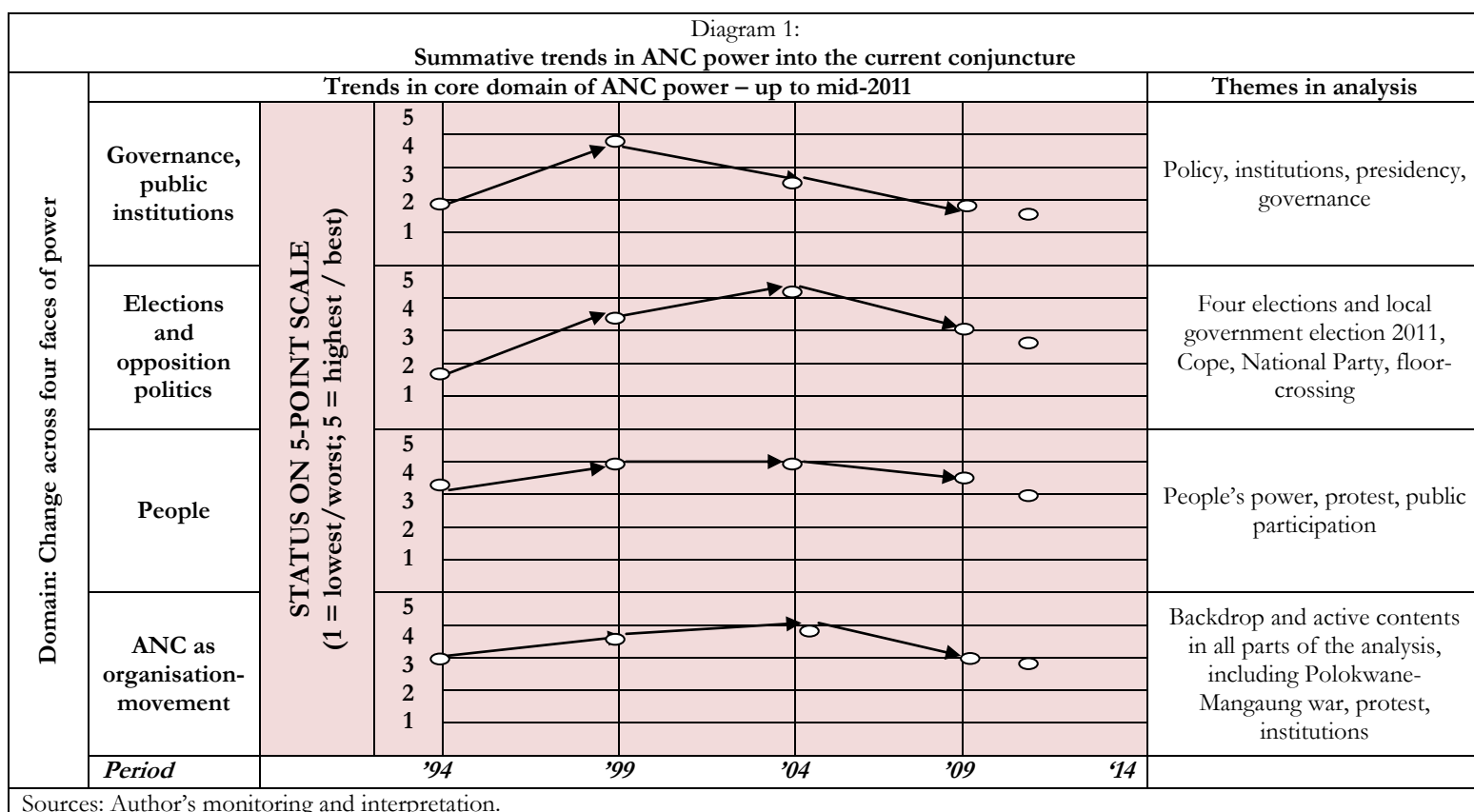
<b>regeneration</b>	<b>isolated (in a different world) from ‘real-life, between-election’ politics, elections are the time for broad base of ANC supporters to unite ranks against party political ‘enemies’.</b>	
<b>ANC in state and government</b>	<p>ANC is widely in control of the state – and this power attracts people into the ANC. Power generates power. ANC through state control is a source of jobs and careers – ‘stay in the good books of ANC’.</p> <p>ANC mobilises and uses state resources to enhance governing party profile, also in election times.</p> <p>ANC-in-government is the dispenser, the patron that ensures social grants and other benefits. This is recognised as the ‘ANC doing good’.</p> <p>ANC and government have multiple plans, statements to end corruption and mismanagement.</p> <p>ANC is working on monitoring and evaluation, Planning to help secure better conversion of policies into realised effects, also through redesign of state institutions.</p>	<p>ANC-in-government is the custodian of high levels of visible corruption, mismanagement, exploitation of state resources for personal benefit. The ‘dubious but legal’ is well tolerated – and emulated. There is little hesitation to pursue business interests through the state.</p> <p>There are serious questions on deployed cadre commitment to serve, and public sector is thoroughly invaded by these appointees.</p> <p>There is volatility as the limits of deployment are increasingly evident, and ANC is quite powerless to act.</p> <p>There is still limited evidence of successful action against perpetrators of corruption, self-enrichment, mismanagement, etc.</p> <p>Public sector suffers from low capacity, this is an ongoing weakness, and turnarounds will take time, even if effectively initiated (which has not yet been done).</p> <p>There is uncertainty if restructuring of state institutions is trading water for time or the start of profound turnaround (evidence is accumulating around the latter).</p>
<b>State of regeneration</b>	<b>ANC is working to clean up, or present an image of it cleaning up the rot in the heart of the state, lack of integrity and lapses in ‘ANC is working in the best interest of the people, to the best of ability’ is a core point of weakness of ANC, along with inability of ANC to successfully implement more of its policies.</b>	



Fragility and vulnerability were hovering, but the ANC’s weaknesses did not amount to ‘crisis’. The ANC remained relatively hegemonic. Weakening, however, was evident in issues of government, leadership, public ethics, policy and institutional renewal and innovation, along with intra-alliance problems and ANC mother body-ANCYL fallout being transposed into the state. Table 5 summarises the arguments that inform the conclusion of the ANC on a scale position of ‘in decline but dominant’. The trend lines in Diagram 1 offer an interpretation of how the ANC’s project of building and sustaining power had been unfolding across the four domains that the book has mapped. The trends are based on the qualitative interpretation of the information and analyses that were presented in the preceding sections, and which are summarised in Table 5.

Taken compositely across the domains, the trend lines show that ANC power in the four domains has by all indications considered in this paper moved beyond the peaks that were experienced in the years prior to the Mbeki exit. Mbeki’s departure – which at the time had been widely experienced as a rejuvenating development – possibly arrived too late for reinvigoration to take hold firmly. The divide between the electoral and the non-electoral was widening. The Zuma administration brought insufficiently-new plans to address policy conversion, government delivery, and ethics in government. The suggestions that the Zuma ANC was to usher in a new time of caring and connection with the people were strong on assertion, yet weak on implementation and realised evidence. This was not for a lack of caring and concern on the side of many in the ANC. Nor was it for a lack of sincere intentions and honourable names in the ANC and government. The relative lapses, assessed halfway into the 2009–14 ANC-Zuma administrative term, came amidst competition between personal and intra-ANC group interests to top the agendas of daily government and

state operations. The ANC's Polokwane war was being matched by the Mangaung 2012 war that increasingly surfaced.



Processes of intra-Alliance and ANC-Youth League contests for centrality in power and control over succession often prevented the ANC-in-government from operating to best capacity, or achieving a dedicated focus on governance and delivery. There were many efforts to improve and advance aspects of policy and the institutions of government. Institutional redesign, often in effect denying its anchors in the Mbeki era, was in the forefront. The power relations between the institutions were attended to post-fallout. Redesign was paired with greater emphasis on the coordination and integration of government services. Improved implementation and accountability, amongst others leveraged by monitoring and evaluation, were stressed as priorities. Roughly halfway into the Zuma administration much of the early momentum had dissipated. New plans and strategies were slow in taking effect. Some reports suggested that 'nothing was happening' in the Presidency of South Africa, given preoccupation with Mangaung.

The ANC wars on what constituted corruption, and what was legitimate and legal enrichment, directly affected governance. The battles were equally linked to mobilisation for the ANC's 2012 Mangaung elective conference. The wars were not going to go away, even if they were likely to metamorphose continuously as the event approached. They gelled to form a destructive crust around the ANC's governance project. Candidacies-and-corruption was an emerging sub-theme that was set to inform both availability and alliances.

The unevenness of local-level delivery and socio-economic transformation also led to the potential for increased movement *away from* ‘protest combined with continuous ANC electoral support’. The 2009–11 protests – both before and after the 2011 municipal elections – ranged from violent and angry to peaceful, passive and comradely. They demonstrated growing impatience. Frequently, the participants were unemployed young people, likely to be without full secondary school qualifications, and increasingly unlikely to find employment any time soon.<sup>46</sup> Their presence constituted a renewed call for improved policies and more effective policy conversion – demonstrating the shortfall on the most crucial aspect of ANC regeneration of political power.

## Conclusion

Each of the four declining trend lines posed interconnected ‘power questions’ to the ANC.

The first was whether the line of ANC electoral support would decline *further*. The ANC in both election 2009 and local election 2011 suffered relatively mild setbacks, first largely courtesy of the breakaway Cope and then due to DA encroachment and modest turnout by ANC supporters. While Cope itself entered a track of apparently mortal decline, its support confirmed the existence of a reservoir of voter alienation, a substantial proportion of which could equally be switched to another opposition party. The ANC’s KwaZulu-Natal support, which grew to the level of support the ANC had been enjoying in other provinces, rescued the ANC from being pushed down to a 60 per cent level of national support in 2009 and 2011. On 66 per cent national support (and 62 per cent nationally calculated on a proportional basis for the 2011 local elections), the ANC retained a solid national standing, yet with vulnerability.

A connected big question at the time, pertaining to the ANC organisationally, was whether the ANC would be able to resuscitate its grassroots branch organisation (away from politically manipulated, opportunistic structures that were often fiefdoms for local power mongers), and esteemed community standings, in order to further deflect the conversion of community discontent into protest ... Or, to prove that the DA could not break the racial ceiling and in piecemeal manner capture a bigger protest vote in places where both ANC and government structures were exposed as fallible.

South Africa’s curse of seriously flawed governance was substantially precipitated by ANC processes of internal warfare, growing disregard of ‘the ANC as a disciplined movement of the left’, indiscriminate appointments of cadres to poorly-matched positions, and reluctant or slow (sometimes no) action against corruptees in the government and public sector. Extension of the organisational battles into trenches of state organisations frequently happened through cadre deployment and the ANC’s capture of state institutions for movement warfare. There was evidence of the battles having become endemic. Substantial amounts of governance and delivery happened *despite* these ANC processes in the heart of government. The ANC’s party political future was increasingly tied to the organisation pulling itself out of the prevailing quagmire of low-intensity and multi-fronted ‘crisis’.

The paper highlighted critical dimensions of the ANC in relation to the people, in elections and party political combat, in intra-alliance contests, and in its operations of state and government. The mappings showed persistent but potentially volatile popular trust in government. There were policy limitations that delivered protests. The protests were known as ‘local’ and were linked to ‘service delivery’, but their scope was much broader. The reservoir of potential protestors was large. There were transitional leadership questions. The

times of 2008–11 created expectations that the incoming ANC leadership would rise to the occasion. The indications were unleashed that, instead, the ANC was declining in electoral power, and was not bringing in sufficient new policies and institutional-process initiatives to elevate governance onto higher plains. Top leadership was strong in ANC mobilisation, but weak in asserting directions for the country. Much was happening, but more was needed to bring higher performance in substantive delivery and definitive turnarounds.

Simultaneously, there were few signs of imminent electoral collapse. The ANC's welfarist government policies and projects brought the status of caregiver that was a worthy successor to liberator. The ANC top leadership might have been suffering credibility deficits, and the state institutions and the representatives and officials were frequently faltering. Yet the ANC-controlled state delivered on many fronts, and the people of South Africa at the time continued relating to and trusting the ANC far more than any other party. The convergence of the four power lines in a concerted co-decline would constitute the bridgehead to crack the ANC as electoral fortress. This was not happening, although five to ten years earlier the answer would have been far more emphatic that the juggernaut was standing strong. The simultaneous flaws in leadership in government, weaknesses in ANC leadership, continuous contests and paralysis along with capacity failures in state institutions, insufficient policy determination and conversion, and an organisational status that required continuous concerted work, raised questions of whether this would be too heavy a burden on ANC shoulders.

These paradoxes mean that there are only complex answers to questions of 'how long will the ANC remain in power'? The ANC had lost some of its power. But the ANC was still at a point where it could self-correct. Even if it did not, or did so ineffectively, it still stood some chance to retain power for some time to come.

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<sup>1</sup> The 'three institutional faces of a political party', in the conceptualisation of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), are the functions of representation, governance and mobilisation. See IDEA, 2007, *Political parties in Africa: challenges for sustained multi-party democracy*. Stockholm, IDEA.

<sup>2</sup> Foremost amongst these is Tom Lodge, 1983, *Black politics in South Africa since 1945*, London / New York: Longman. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter's first four volumes in their series *From protest to challenge: a documentary history of African politics in South Africa, 1882-1964* were published between 1972 and 1977 by the Hoover Institution Press. The series chronicled the liberation struggle through the conclusion of the Rivonia Trial of 1964. Luli Callinicos, 2004, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains*, Cape Town, David Philip, offers a personalised, in-depth and wide-ranging analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Booysen, 2011, op. cit.; also see Susan Booysen, 2007, 'With the ballot and the brick ... The politics of service delivery in South Africa', *Progress in Development Studies*, 7:1, 21-32; Susan Booysen, 2009, 'Beyond the "Ballot and the Brick": Continuous dual repertoires in the politics of attaining service delivery in South Africa?' In Anne McLennan and Barry Munslow (eds.), *The Politics of Service Delivery in South Africa*, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press.

<sup>4</sup> This paper is based on the author's in-print book, Susan Booysen, 2011, *The African National Congress and the Regeneration of Political Power*, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press.

<sup>5</sup> In April 2011 Zuma remarked: "When you vote for the ANC you are voting for Qamata (God), Qamata is the midst of the ANC. We are the mother of democracy, no other party deserves to be voted for other than the ANC. There's always the presence of God where we are. When you vote for the ANC even your hand gets blessed." In February 2011 he told a crowd in Mthatha that a vote for the opposition is a vote for the devil. In May 2011 he told a meeting in Delareyville that those who turn their backs on the ANC will have to explain themselves to their ancestors when they die. Earlier he had said that the 'ANC will rule until Jesus comes again' and 'only those with ANC membership will go to heaven'. See, for example, Sabelo Ndlanguisa, 2011, 'Vote ANC, vote for God', *City Press*, 10 April 2011, p. 1; ANC, 2011, 'President

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Jacob Zuma's figurative expression amounts to no blasphemy', media statement, Johannesburg, 6 February 2011; Mandy Wiener, 2011, 'Politics, the 2011 polls & the afterlife', <http://www.ewn.co.za/articleprog.aspx?id=65718> (accessed 13 May 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Booysen, 2011, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Informal communication, 2011, IEC Elections Centre, Tshwane, 19 May 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Many of these changes are fleetingly recorded and mapped in personality-centred manners. See, for example, the range of political biographies and autobiographies on/of top leaders Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa. See Nelson Mandela, 1994, *Long walk to freedom*, London, Little, Brown and Company; Mark Gevisser, 2007, *The dream deferred – Thabo Mbeki*, Johannesburg and Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers; William Mervyn Gumede, 2005, *Thabo Mbeki and the battle for the soul of the ANC*, Cape Town, Zebra Press; Jeremy Gordon, 2008, *Zuma*, Johannesburg and Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers; Anthony Butler, 2007, *Cyril Ramaphosa*, Johannesburg, Jacana, and Oxford, James Currey.

<sup>9</sup> Patrick Chabal, 1992, *Power in Africa: An essay in political interpretation*, London, Macmillan, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> See Steven Lukes, 2005, *Power: A radical view*, Second edition, London and New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> See Chabal, op. cit. pp. 258-59.

<sup>13</sup> For a pertinent conceptualisation of power, see Lukes, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> These themes are explored in the rest of the book. Pallo Jordan, for example, has argued that the ANC's contemporary problems are anchored in its past failure to have sufficiently dealt with issues of public morality. See Pallo Jordan, 2008, 'A letter to Comrade Mtungwa, an old comrade and dear friend', address to the Platform for Public Deliberation, University of Johannesburg, 14 November 2008. In the 2009-11 period the SACP and Cosatu were outspoken about the tender-rich ANC elites. See, for example, Booysen, op. cit., chapter 2.

<sup>15</sup> Xolani Xundu, 2009, 'Crush patronage, says Nzimande', *Sunday Times*, 22 October 2009, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Njabulo Ndebele, 2010, 'Toxic politics: Diary of a bad year', *Mail & Guardian Online*, 23 December 2010, <http://mg.co.za/article/2010-12-23-toxic-politics-diary-of-a-bad-year> (accessed 28 May 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Susan Booysen, 2010, 'The ANC and the Alliance: Political futures in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', Skenjana Roji seminar series, iKwezi Institute for Research and Development, Johannesburg, 29 January 2010.

<sup>18</sup> See Booysen, 2011, op. cit., chapter 2.

<sup>19</sup> To illustrate, see George Matlala, 2010, 'Malema blames Cosatu for succession battle', *City Press*, 7 February 2010, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Booysen, 2011, op. cit., chapter 2.

<sup>21</sup> Gwede Mantashe, 2010, 'State of organisation report', ANC NGC meeting, Durban, 20-24 September 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Booysen, 2011, op. cit., chapter 3 offers a wide range of survey findings, across survey agencies and questions that testify to this – even if some findings are counter-intuitive, given continuous suffering and discontent with government.

<sup>23</sup> Claudio Katz, 2007, 'Socialist Strategies in Latin America', *Monthly Review*, 59:4, Academic Research Library, p. 25. Also see Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, 2005, 'People Power Primed', *Harvard International Review*, 27,2, pp. 41-47.

<sup>24</sup> See Kurt Schock, 2005, *Unarmed insurrections: People power movement in nondemocracies*, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press; Greg Houston, 1999, *The National Liberation Struggle in South Africa: A case study of the United Democratic Front, 1983-1987*, Brookfield, USA, Singapore and Sydney, Ashgate; Jeremy Seekings, 2000, *The UDF: A history of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991*, Cape Town, David Philip / Oxford, James Currey; Ineke van Kessel, 2000, *Beyond our wildest dreams: The United Democratic Front and the transformation of South Africa*, Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia; Anthea Jeffery, 2009, *People's war: new light on the struggle for South Africa*, Johannesburg and Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Roman, 1999, *People's power: Cuba's experience with representative government*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, p. 208.

<sup>26</sup> Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, 1999, *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument*, Oxford, James Currey in association with the International African Institute, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, offer pertinent insights into patronage and its contribution to political process in Africa. These perspectives, however, do not capture the full picture of the South African system.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Booysen, 2011, 'Disillusionment, determination helped change party picture', *Sunday Tribune*, 22 May 2011, p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> Susan Booysen, 2011, 'New shapes bound to emerge', *The Star*, 19 April 2011, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> See Booysen, 2011, op. cit., chapter 4 for a further analysis.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Susan Booysen, 2011, 'A generation to watch', *The Star*, 5 September 2011, p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 5, explores the wide range of mechanisms for participation, along with the extent of popular uptake.

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<sup>33</sup> In a 1997 research project, a young man from Soweto remarked: ‘You expect the father to go out and get food. If he comes with it, you eat and sleep. But if he returns without food, we stop getting along’. See Susan Booysen, 1997, ‘Life in the new democracy’, commissioned research project and report, Matla Trust ‘Democracy and citizen education project’, Johannesburg.

<sup>34</sup> See Booysen, 2011, *The ANC and the regeneration ...*, chapter 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 9.

<sup>36</sup> The words of a Free State protestor, reported by Willem van der Berg, 2011, ‘Polisie brand los’, *Volksblad*, 19 July 2011, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Independent Electoral Commission, 1994, *Report on South Africa’s 1994 Elections*, Pretoria, IEC; *Electoral Commission of South Africa: National and Provincial Elections, 2 June 1999*; Electoral Commission, 2004, ‘National Election – Result’ in *National and Provincial Elections 2004*, [http://www.elections.org.za/Elections2004\\_Static.asp?radResult=45](http://www.elections.org.za/Elections2004_Static.asp?radResult=45), accessed 30 October 2007; Electoral Commission 2009, Results announcement, 25 April 2009, Results Centre, Tshwane.

<sup>38</sup> Local politics was fuelling protest, said Shiceka, adding: ‘people are positioning themselves for 2012. That’s what you find in a number of municipalities ...’; see ‘Power struggle breeds discontent’, *The Sunday Independent*, 14 February 2010, p. 6; also see Zukile Majova, 2010, ‘Zuma will visit hot spots’, *Sowetan*, 25 March 2010, p. 4. Zuma argued in the online Letter from the President that it was necessary for leaders to visit the protest-affected areas to ascertain whether the protests were delivery-oriented or caused by infighting.

<sup>39</sup> In mid-2011 the ANC took several steps to protect its councillors from community wrath. Measures included offering ANC constituency offices as work bases to ANC councillors, and in a few instances body guards. See SA Local Government Research Centre, 2011, *The SA local government briefing (supplementary)*, July, p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> Details are presented in Booysen, 2011, *op. cit.*, chapter 10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 12.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, chapters 10 and 11.

<sup>43</sup> For example, Pravin Gordhan, 2010, in question and answer interview with Siyabulela Qoza, ‘The business of finance’, *City Press Business*, 21 February 2010, p. 1, noted that corruption is widespread.

<sup>44</sup> See Booysen, 2011, *op. cit.*, chapter 10.

<sup>45</sup> See Collins Chabane, 2011, ‘Cleaning up service delivery’, *Sowetan*, 1 September 2011, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> See Carol Paton, 2010, ‘Time Bomb’, *Financial Mail*, 26 March 2010, pp. 32–36. 50 per cent of South Africa’s employment-age youth in 2011 was estimated to be unemployed. Protests often had a predominance of young participants. The trends became even more pronounced in 2011. See Liphert Chilwane, 2011, ‘Growth plans under spotlight’, *The New Age*, 31 August 2011, p. 17.