

The Leadership Contest and the Results of the 53rd African National Congress's (ANC's) National Elective Conference in Mangaung (Bloemfontein), 16-20 December 2012: Democracy Unfolding?

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Abstract

The year 2012 was a historic one for the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. The party started the year by successfully celebrating its 100 years on 8 January 2012 in Mangaung (Bloemfontein) and ended it by hosting the 53rd National Elective Conference in the very same city on 16-20 December 2012 at the University of the Free State (UFS) Bloemfontein Campus. Despite of all the leadership and policy challenges the party was faced with ahead of this conference, in order to bring remarkable changes within itself, its leadership tried to mastermind this national elective conference in a professional way. This study analyses the leadership contest and the results of this conference by highlighting the tensions that existed between the supporters of the two candidates vying for the president's position. Furthermore, it scrutinises the emergence of slates within the party, a phenomenon that divided it into two contesting groups, namely, the Jacob Zuma's camp (which supported his second term as President of the ANC) and the Kgalema Motlanthe's camp (popularly viewed as 'Regime Change' group). The latter campaigned for preventing Zuma from getting a second term. This leadership division and contest within ANC prior and after the Mangaung Conference had both the social and political consequences for the South Africa electorate. Critical issues confronting the ANC, which include among others, the status of the party's post the Mangaung Conference will be discussed.

Keywords: Politics, Politicians, Slates, Lobbying, Factionalism, Patronage, Nominations

1. Introduction

The run-up to the ANC's National Elective Conference in Mangaung had been controversial, untidy and chaotic, with allegations of manipulation of the nomination processes surfacing in most provinces to mirror the factional divisions gnawing at the soul of the party. In the main the conference was relegated into being a leadership contestation platform whereby policy matters took the back-seat of the deliberations. There were arguments that prior and during the conference, leadership positions were pursued attracting tribal, regional and corruption loyalties. Therefore, the ANC hold this conference while its culture and relevant tradition on leadership identification and election had to a certain extent been eroded by a strong culture of factional lobbying, campaign, dispensation of patronage and promises of incentives for those who would rally behind those campaigning. This in itself was organizationally apocalyptic, because it opened space for many organisational ills such as corruption, mediocrity, tribalism, patronage, regionalism, sexism and ageism.

The study looks at the leadership contest during the conference proceedings. Although the leadership race of contest for the presidency of the ANC was viewed as a 'two horse race', namely, between incumbent Zuma and his Deputy Motlanthe, there was more at stake than this. Due to the leadership contests, although sometimes referred to as 'democracy unfolding', one must acknowledge that the party had lost far too much of its shine 20 years into democracy. Its patchy performance in government also risked a withdrawal from politics among the marginalised. Factionalism, corruption and poor leadership often top the long list of what was perceived to be wrong with the ANC. The conference took place on the eve when there were emerging voices on the local and international fronts raising doubts about the state of the nation and its leadership. The stakes were high, not just for South Africans but for the local and international investor communities too. The study concludes by indicating that although leadership contest is part and parcel of the ANC's elective conference, emphasis on that compromised debates of policy issues.

2. Historicizing the Leadership Contests within the ANC

In order to clearly understand the Mangaung Conference of the ANC which took place in December 2012, background information to other conferences of the party is crucial. The conference discussion papers, political and organisational reports have reflected on how ambitions and what they termed 'careerism' have suddenly become the motive for joining and leading the ANC. This is precipitated by the perverse accompaniment of power, money, thus creating problems for jostling for positions within the party. Some members of the ANC believed that it was against ANC traditions to campaign for positions. Contest for leadership within the ANC, to a certain extent repulsed good and high-calibre leaders and hardworking members. This created a situation whereby genuine leaders had either to watch from the margin or recoil, withdrawing completely (Monare 2011: p10).

The ANC has combined the anointing and electing of leaders across its history. For example, Motlanthe was himself 'anointed' ANC Secretary-General at the 1997 Mafikeng Conference, over the heads of branch delegates. At the same conference, Mathews Phosa's name simply failed to appear on the ballot paper, despite his acceptance of a nomination of contest the election for deputy president (Butler 2012: p3). This was an indication of the organisational ills within the party.

In exile, two special consultative conferences of the ANC entrenched a quixotic approach to leadership selection. The 1969 assembly in Morogoro, Tanzania was convened partly in response to complaints that elective democracy had died in the movement, which Morogoro did nothing to change (Ndebele and Niefertagdien 2004: p573-599; Tambo 1969: p16-17). At the second consultative conference in Kabwe, Zambia in 1985, delegates were deeply divided about the wisdom of opening leadership positions to non-Africans (Lodge and Nasson 1991: p181; Magubane 2004: p56-57).

At the 48th national conference of the ANC held in Durban in 1991, the real opportunity arose for the party to choose democracy over elite manipulation. The 2 000 delegates representing 760 000 members drawn from domestic organisations such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the South African Trade Unions (COSATU) as well as from exile. The ANC emerged from this conference united. The most senior available posts, president and national chairperson, were secured without contest by Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo respectively. Chris Hani and Thabo Mbeki, who were viewed as potential future leaders, were persuaded not to engage in a divisive fight for the deputy presidency, the position which was later occupied by Mbeki. The position of secretary-general was ironically fiercely contested by Cyril Ramaphosa and Zuma (Grootes 2012: 3). The position was ultimately won by Ramaphosa.

Succession race within the ANC has come to loom so large politically because, whereas previously in South Africa no limits were imposed upon the tenure of the presidency, a limit of two five year terms was imposed upon incumbents by the democratic constitutions of 1994 and 1996. Before the advent of the camps within the ANC, the delegates at the organisation's national elective conferences would vote for leaders having considered gender, geographic spreading, non-racialism, minority representation and good leadership qualities (Twala 2008: p158-159).

There were other arguments that contest for a leadership within the political parties, particularly the ANC in South Africa is something deemed important and necessary as it show-case democratic maturity of the ruling party. However, the manner in which lobbying for positions within the party is taking place poses a threat to its unity. The tense ideological differences and petty personality clashes amongst the leaders become hostile. Taking leaf from the Polokwane Conference of the ANC December in 2007, the question for leadership contest took the centre stage ahead of all other political and policy issues of the conference. It was during this Polokwane Conference whereby, former President Thabo Mbeki was humiliated and replaced as the party's president by the incumbent President of the Republic of South Africa Jacob Zuma. The scuttles started shaking the party's inner core and changing its character (Twala 2008: p156-176; Fikeni 2009: p3-34; Gordin 2008: p234-253; Friedman 2010: p163-186; Southall 2009: p1-22; Butler 2010: p164-183). This humiliation by Zuma set precedence for the upcoming provincial and national conferences of the ANC. The Mangaung Conference of the ANC in December 2012 could not escape this fierce contest.

According to Friedman (2011: p17), the Polokwane Conference of the ANC heralded the growth of competition for posts in the organization. Before Polokwane, competition for office was usually discouraged. It was considered divisive and selfish to run for ANC office. This was not always enough to prevent election contests but it was certainly reduced both their number and their intensity. After Polokwane, competition for posts became pervasive; every structure of the ANC had seen intense contests for positions (Twala 2012: p213-231).

The above was an indication that the current ambivalence about internal party democracy ahead of the Mangaung 2012 Conference was therefore not new to the ANC and neither was it unique to this organization. Mass parties everywhere confront similar dilemmas. It was clear also with the ANC that no matter how large the organization becomes, power and information are always concentrated in the hands of a relatively small elite.

It was interesting to note that the Mangaung 2012 Conference of the ANC attracted large interest locally and international from academics, journalist and political analysts. The hype towards the conference date rose as stakeholders analysed the chances of the two candidates contesting for leadership of the organization to be elected in the president's position. Initially, both leaders did not want to openly reveal their visions and intentions to lead the organization. Although this was the case, succession debates by their supporters continued behind the scenes whereby they engaged in dirty plots and smear campaigns.

3. Literature Review

Due to the contemporary nature of the study, little has been documented about the Mangaung 2012 Conference. In the main, newspaper clippings shed much information whereby analysis and opinion pieces were provided. Therefore, this study is one of the academic contributions on the topic. Despite this shortcoming, there were academic papers and articles generated on the events leading to the Mangaung Conference of the ANC (Twala 2012: p213-231). Although the above became handy for this study, however, these sources never highlighted in depth the leadership contest of within the ANC and the subsequent results after the elections of the leaders.

Booyesen (2012: p316) wrote that 'the ANC in its centenary year (2012) remains close to hegemonic and this societal presence tends to self-sustain. The dominant ANC propels itself into continuous public focus, holds ample resources and investments and its campaigns and resources attract people to it... Until 2012, it had survived serious leadership struggles and used them for organizational renewal. It uses its NGC and policy conferences to induct new generations of cadres and has used its centenary celebrations to keep memories of struggle and oppression alive, along with its role in bringing victory over the ancient regime' (Booyesen 2012: p316). The succession race within the ANC has been documented in many newspaper articles.

4. Research Methodology

The article provides new insight into the leadership challenges experienced by the ANC prior and during the Mangaung 2012 Conference. More importantly, it includes the current debates about the general contest of leadership within the ANC. Due to the contemporary nature of the study, qualitative and quantitative methods of research were utilized. GK Huysamen (1997: p2) argues that the use of both a qualitative and quantitative research methods is beneficial, as qualitative method generally supports research that is qualitative in nature and vice versa. The information collected via the mentioned methodologies was supported by comprehensive literature survey incorporation chapters in books, books, journal articles, dissertations, newspaper articles and to a certain extent magazines and electronic sources. The information from these sources proved to be of value.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Jacob Zuma's second term presidential ambitions

Zuma's ambitions to be at the helm of the organization's leadership as President for the second time triggered discontent from some members of the ANC who had thought that he was to serve only one term. He was quoted by *Sunday Independent* of the 27 July 2008 indicating: 'I would prefer to leave after one term. Even if it is not one term, I think in the second term I should be able to begin the process of winding down. I would allow open debate, not make people guess what is going to happen in terms of succession. This would allow the organization to indicate what it wants. But if it was me deciding, if the ANC had made me President of the country, I would prefer one term' (Monare 2012: p1). It was clear from the above statement that Zuma needed another term in order to leave a legacy of what he had started as President of the ANC as well as that of the organization.

Without doubt, Zuma's second term ambitions created other intra-ANC lines of division which stretched throughout the alliance partners. In view of the above, there were early initiatives to infuse and construct branches with the cadres that would take forward the task. Zuma's second term ambitions, in one way or the other instigated the start of the new round of succession campaigning within the ANC. This happened despite Zuma's 'ruling' in late September 2009, that it was premature to start such campaigns. The 2010 National General Council (NGC) meeting, a year later, continued to confirm the moratorium on succession campaigning for leadership positions within the party. In this way, Booyesen opines that 'the ANC was attempting to limit the destructive and distracting campaigns that had preceded Polokwane. The bans

potentially served to entrench incumbent leaders, leaving them with good chances to affect the outcomes once they legitimized the commencement of the campaign. Despite these bans (still holding, under pressure, in mid-September 2011) clandestine and proxy campaigning continued. For example, a draft top-six slate compiled by the ANCYL was out in the open by August 2011' (Booyesen 2011: p71).

5.2 *The role of the branches in the nomination process for leadership*

The branches of the ANC played a significant role in the nomination process for leaders of the organization. In both slates of the contesting leaders for the presidency of the ANC, ahead of the conference there were allegations from each slate that the branches were manipulated to support these different groupings. These differences led to some sidelining activities of some delegates, depending on who was supported by them. Interestingly, during the lobbying period, leaders were imposed on hapless members through factional slates. It was after the Polokwane Conference when the ANC Deputy President Motlanthe who was also on the Zuma's slate during that conference stated that the organization would investigate the cartels behind the slates (Monare 2012: p10). Up until the 2012 conference that problem had not been resolved. Therefore, it was not surprising that this conference was contested around the slates and ironically Motlanthe led on slate.

According to Booyesen, the ANC branches are often weak, phantom or parallel to those of faction groups (Booyesen 2012: p316). Like in the past conferences, for the 2012 Mangaung Conference, the branches were manipulated for leadership elections. Underneath are the statistics for delegates as per the provinces of South Africa who were destined to vote during the Mangaung Conference for the leaders of the organization. These allocated delegates figures include the 20 members of the Provincial Executive Committees (PECs) in each province.

Branch delegates decided Zuma's fate. The heart of the problem was that Zuma enjoyed almost unqualified support within KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) ANC branches. The Secretary-General's Report to 2011 National General Council (NGC) noted that membership in the province had doubled from around 100 000 in 2007 to almost 200 000 in 2011. This meant that the province would have by far the biggest delegation at the Mangaung Conference (Butler 2011: p11). The ANC delegates to Mangaung were a fraction of those registered at the country's branches nationwide and also just a fraction of those who voted in the ANC in the national and provincial elections. They acted as representatives of those branches and carried a mandate from them.

Much excitement was caused by the ANC's fractious provincial nomination conferences. But the provincial nominations hardly mattered, because the ANC leaders were elected by branches, not provinces. Provincial nominations were held because no one could stand for ANC office unless they were nominated by the province or by 25% of the delegates at its national conference. Therefore, both Zuma and Motlanthe were nominated by the provinces. Once candidates were nominated, the election was done by branches. According to the ANC constitution, at least 90% of voting delegates at a conference must be chosen by branches. In Mangaung, just over 91%, or 4 100 out of 4 500 were chosen. The rest represented the three ANC leagues, namely, women's, youth and veterans (Mkokeli 2012: p3; Marrian 2012: p3; Stone 2012: p3; Grootes 2012: p3).

Despite the growth of membership and branches in provinces such as the KZN, some members of the organization were critical of it. In a report commissioned by the ANC's National Executive Council after the 2011 local government elections, a task team chaired by the then Minister of Home Affairs Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, was appointed to examine allegations of irregularities in the list process for determining candidates. The ANC was aware that such acts could possibly be repeated in determining the delegates who were to attend the Mangaung Conference in 2012. Among many other shortcomings, the task team found rampant manipulation of membership lists, either at the point of recruitment or by manipulating membership administration. For example, instances of 'bulk membership' or 'gate-keeping' were a common feature of the complaints investigated by the task team. Bulk membership involves creating a large group of fictitious members and voting on their behalf, while gate-keeping involves declining to register the membership applications of foes. The intention of this process is to establish a kickback system for preferred candidates (Mahlangu 2012: p4).

The following were the statistics by province as aligned to the nomination process: Eastern Cape there were 696 allocated delegates with Zuma getting 392 (56.3%) against Motlanthe's 211 (30.3%) and 13.4% did not vote. The Free State had 344 delegates, Zuma got 324 (94.2%), Motlanthe 0 (0.0%) and 5.8% did not vote. Gauteng had 520 delegates, Zuma 173 (33.3%) and Motlanthe 238 (45.8%) with 109 (21.0%) who did not vote. KwaZulu-Natal had 994 delegates with 849 (85.4%) supporting Zuma, 5 (0.5%) in favour of Motlanthe and 140 (14.1%) did not vote. Limpopo had 594 delegates, Zuma got 7 (1.2%), Motlanthe 268 (45.1%) and 319 (53.7%) did not vote. Mpumalanga had 487 delegates,

Zuma got 427 (87.7%), Motlanthe 17 (3.5%) and 43 (8.8%) did not vote. Northern Cape had 196 delegates and Zuma got 169 (86.2%), Motlanthe 25 (12.8%) and 2 (1.0%) did not vote. North West had 254 delegates, Zuma had 162 (63.8%) votes, Motlanthe 14 (5.5%) and 78 (30.7%) did not vote. Western Cape had 198 delegates, Zuma 90 (45.5%), Motlanthe 99 (50.0%) and 9 (4.5%) did not vote.

From the moment the Mangaung succession battle began, Motlanthe's willingness and ability to stand against Zuma had been a big conundrum for the ANC as well as South Africa. As ANC structures announced their preferences for the organisation's leadership, some in the faction supporting Zuma's second term issued ultimatums against Motlanthe. They warned that if Motlanthe dares to contest the ANC presidency, they would not support him for any position in the top six. However, these delegates overlooked that the ANC's constitution did not preclude candidates from contesting more than one position.

The above statistics clearly indicates that Motlanthe was not openly supported. He only mustered 863 out of 3 384, or just more than 25%, of the provincial nomination votes for president, with Zuma getting the rest. He was nominated by Gauteng, Limpopo and Western Cape. The above figures does not necessary mean that all delegates will vote for the candidates as nominated by the provinces or branches. However, dissident votes will not drastically change the overall outcome of the conference results.

According to the Ipsos Markinor Survey published on Friday 7 December 2012 showed Motlanthe's support under the general public and within the ANC growing. In May, his leadership got a rating of 5.2 out of 10, and in November 2012 this went up to 5.8, and among ANC supporters the rating 5.7 in May and 6.4, in November 2012. In contrast, Zuma's rating among ANC supporters went slightly down, from 7.1 to 7. It was indicated by the pro-Zuma camp that Motlanthe had been disadvantaged by supporting the ANCYL, therefore, if elected President, he would review Malema's case.

Although the above statistics shows an overwhelming support for Zuma ahead of the Mangaung Conference in as far as the number of delegates is concerned, in some provinces the outcomes of the provincial conferences were questionable. For the first time since the ANC was unbanned, the party's nomination conferences in some provinces were marred by chaos and violence that kept Luthuli House (ANC Headquarters in Johannesburg) on its toes as it tried to dampen raging internal infighting (Nhlabathi 2012: p4). As early as December 2012, few days before the Mangaung Conference, the ANC's NEC allowed the Western Cape and Limpopo provinces to convene their conferences on 5 December 2012. The two provinces could not hold their gatherings due to violence and logistical delays. The provinces were both divided over the two candidates contesting the presidency of the ANC. At the same time, it appeared that the North West approached that party's top brass to complain about alleged vote-rigging. North West had been wracked by infighting ahead of the Mangaung Conference (Butler 2012: p3). The chaotic situation in the above mentioned provinces suggested that the ANC was to a certain extent failing to manage the contest.

5.3 *The two slates contesting the leadership of the ANC*

From Zuma side it was as follows: Zuma (President); Cyril Ramaphosa (Deputy President); Baleka Mbethe (Chairperson); Gwede Mantashe (Secretary-General); Jessie Duarte (Deputy Secretary-General) and Zweli Mkhize (Treasurer-General). Motlanthe's slate was as follows: Kgalema Motlanthe (President); Mathews Phosa and Tokyo Sexwale (Deputy President); Thandi Modise (Chairperson); Fikile Mbalula (Secretary-General); Thandi Modise who later withdrew (Deputy Secretary-General) and Paul Mashatile (Treasurer-General).

As initially indicated, prior to the Mangaung Conference, the ANC had already been divided into two camps and the question that has to be answered is which of the two camps is in fact the 'real ANC trying to pursue the organisation's strategy, policies, programmes and culture'. Indications were clear that no one from either camp would abandon the ANC. Like it happened after the Polokwane Conference of 2007, the winner in Limpopo would have to make a compromise by also making use of some members of the organization who were perceived to belong to either camp. From the two slates as provided above, the Zuma's one was viewed by political analysts and journalists to stronger than the Motlanthe's one. One advantage for the Zuma's was the fact that he (Zuma) pronounced earlier his willingness to serve for the second term as president of the ANC. Although there were indications that Motlanthe might challenge Zuma for the presidency, he did not have enough time to campaign for this position. Motlanthe downfall was the fact that he played his cards close to his chest and refused to state whether he would accept nomination by party branches that wanted him to challenge Zuma. On 3 December 2012, he spoke to the BBC and *The Times* that he would respect the ANC nominations processes before deciding on whether to accept the nomination to challenge for the top post. In this interview, Motlanthe stated the following: 'As soon as the electoral commission approaches me with that question, I will

give an answer. I will not accept deals to secure a leadership position at the ANC conference next week' (Mahlangu 2012: p4).

It was until some few days before the conference that Motlanthe availed himself for the post of president. This happened despite negotiations to convince him to opt for the deputy president post. If Motlanthe opted for the latter, Zuma was going to be left unchallenged. Motlanthe believed in an old-fashioned tradition the ANC of not campaigning for leadership positions in the organization, but to be nominated by the branches. In his utterances indicating the refusal of this offer, Motlanthe stated: 'I would not be part of such arrangements as the branches' must not be interfered with. I don't want to lead an organization where I have no sense of what the members think of me, and by arrangement. I would never do that. Once it's interfered with, if I offer them sweeteners or jobs, I would never actually know whether they have confidence in me or not' (Marrian 2012: p3).

5.4 *The weakness of contesting leadership through slates*

Now of late, competing for posts is something taken seriously within the ANC. The ANC office is now directly linked to the prospect of personal wealth. Many of the contests are about people's personal futures, not really about a programme for governing, appeals to loyalty to the ANC and its traditions become of little value. The ANC becomes the site of intense competition for posts, much of it motivated by personal economic interests, and its history as an underground or represented organization has not given it the sort of customs and rules which would enable it to manage the problem (Friedman 2011: p18).

Furthermore, Friedman contends that in principle competition for office should strengthen the ANC by making leaders more accountable to the organization because they know that if they are not, they could lose their positions. However, there is no assurance from the delegates voting for leadership in the conferences that the 'losers' would accept the results, and the 'winners' accept that the 'losers' will continue to play a role in the organization. In most of the leadership contests within the ANC, the above created serious challenges. In most cases, the 'losers' are unsettled and sort to be excluded from all positions and influence within the organization (Friedman 2011: p17).

During the run-up to the Mangaung Conference, smear campaigns were used to discredit each side of the slates. This ranged from claims that office-holders were not governing competently to leaks to the media claiming that particular politicians were guilty of financial or sexual indiscretions (Twala 2012: p219-225). Booysen stated in *Sunday Independent* of 2 December 2012 that 'the continuity Zuma's camp calls of protect our leader and he deserves a second term highlighted the absence of considered stocktaking to help the ANC match the current critical moment in its existence with the right person to lead. In the Change corner, the subdued Motlanthe camp tried to nurture organizational opprobrium, while suspecting that the leadership deficit and re-ascendance of a Zuma grouping might lethally wound the ANC' (Brown 2012: p14).

5.5 *The Mangaung Conference and the results thereof*

Prior to the Mangaung Conference, Zuma had already beaten Motlanthe in the presidential nomination contest. This was after he had been nominated by six provinces, the ANCYL, ANCWL and the veterans' league. It was interesting to note that when the provincial delegates arrived at the University of the Free State (UFS) and the Central University of Technology (CUT) for the Mangaung Conference on 15 December 2007, just a day before the start of the conference, they were singing songs about their preferred candidates. On one hand, the majority of the delegates 'proudly' wore the ANC T-shirts bearing Zuma's face on them. Such T-shirts had slogans such as 'Zuma for second term'; '*Phinda Mosholoz!*' (Do it again Zuma); '100% for Zumantashe'. Popular songs in favour of Zuma included the one entitled: *UZuma lo abamaziyo abakaze bambone* (Those who claim to know Zuma have never seen him in action) (Olifant 2012: p10). In some cases, Zuma's supporters held up a 'two finger sign' which was an indication of two terms for Zuma. On the other Motlanthe's supporters had a sign of 'rolling hands' indicating the need for a change in the organizations leadership. His supporters wore T-shirts of the Forces of Change. Although these signs and songs were irritating to either group, there was a level of embarrassments by the delegates and no acts of infighting and finger-pointing were reported.

During the voting process, firstly the question asked by political analysts was whether the outcome of the conference would be accepted by the 'losers' or not and whether the 'winners' would have credibility? Secondly, if indeed there was a contest, would the winning group be prepared to work with the 'losers'? It was interesting to note that the provinces did not vote in blocs but delegates were meant to vote the way their branches wanted them to, not the way the majority in the province wished them to. The branches did not only choose the delegates, but they also nominated

candidates for whom the delegates were meant to vote. The fact that the ballots were secret, it was difficult to determine as to whether the delegates voted according to the branches' choice. In most cases, branches were likely to make sure that they send to the conference people whose sympathies meant they would endorse the branch's choice.

The Zuma slate became victorious at the Mangaung Conference. The results for the top six positions in the ANC's NEC were as follows: Zuma 2 983 votes against Motlanthe's 991; Cyril Ramaphosa 3 018 against split votes of Phosa 470 and Sexwale 463; Mbethe 3 010 against Modise's 939; Mantashe 3 058 and Mbalula 901; Duarte (uncontested); and Mkhize 2 988 against Mashatile's 961 (Olifant 2012: p10).

The above win by Zuma's camps could be interpreted as a 'winners take all' victory because all candidates from his side gained the majority votes. With Zuma's win in Mangaung, it was clear that the entire organization felt into the hands of one group that might partially exclude their opponents from power. His election as the ANC's President came as no surprise because the results of the elections were in line with the provincial nomination votes. The win came amidst the court cases by some of the Free State Province ANC members on the legitimacy of the provincial delegations from the branches who were destined to attend the conference and hopefully to vote for Zuma. Consequently the Constitutional Court barred only the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) of the Free State from participating in the conference but the entire delegates from the province took part.

In his impromptu address after the announcement of the results, Zuma ascended the podium and delivered a conciliatory speech. He appealed to his supporters and those who were defeated to work together in building a stronger ANC. Like he did after winning the succession race in Polokwane, his theme in Mangaung throughout his speech was that the unity of the organization was paramount and that all divisions had to be healed. Many political analysts welcomed Zuma's speech but the different positions pronouncements on leadership of the ANC ahead of the conference were likely to have an impact on relationships within the organization. The situation could ignite more tensions with the potential of the emergence of two centres of power, recalling of certain employees and a lot of disgruntlement among members. The Zuma's administration would have to deal with customary rolling of hands as a symbol of a call for change. During the post-Mangaung period, the ANC should try and cleanse itself from what is described as 'camp politics' of the ANC. The management of the leadership crisis within the ANC depends on the newly elected NEC. The NEC should be wary of the post-Mangaung period of ushering in the further polarisation of the organization with factions taking a semi-permanent form (Mkhwanazi 2012: p4).

6. Conclusion

From the above discussion it can be deduced that the conferences of the ANC comes with fundamental changes both for the organization as well as South Africa as a whole. The constant questioning and striving to find better leadership within the ANC must continue. This is necessary against the background of leadership contests within the organization. Against the backdrop of pivotal conferences of the ANC and noting the evolution of its leadership, this study discussed the never-ending search for efficient, effective and relevant leadership. In particular, it has, through the above discussion, attempted to examine how leadership contest can divide the organization, especially when there is no group showing its preparedness to compromise. The discussion concludes that while this conference was vibrant in deliberations and commissions of innovative processes on organizational matters such as policy issues, and while discourse at such conferences is mindful of organizational issues, the leadership contest took precedence of everything. The study wraps up with notes of caution to the ANC's leadership about the dangers of contesting the leadership using slates. There were arguments by some political analysts after the Mangaung Conference that in this conference open electoral struggles within ethnically and linguistically divided societies like the South African one can encourage mobilization around ethnicity or race. This has the potential to destabilize not only the organization but also the society. Public leadership is often concerned with promoting collective adaptation to social transformations and is one of the abilities that successful public figures in political spheres might want to possess.

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