Party Politics and Local Democracy:
The ANC in South Africa's Cape Winelands

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Abstract

The post-apartheid government in South Africa has provided increased opportunities for public participation at the local government level. Local party politics tend to bedevil these local participatory processes. This paper discusses ANC party politics and how they impact on public participation. It draws on a case study of five municipalities in the Cape Winelands District of the Western Cape that was conducted through semi-structured interviews and secondary data analysis. Local ANC politics has a huge impact on local government structures and their participatory processes. The ANC is a unitary structure in its policy but there is a lack of uniformity in understanding, commitment, and implementation of participatory policies at different levels of the organisation and government spheres. Some deployed public representatives work to advance themselves and their factions, at the expense of the ANC and the communities they are supposed to be leading. The findings of this study have as much significance for civil society as for the local state and its representatives. They show that it is not always the case that the state is bad and civil society is good as leaders of civil society get involved in clientelist relationships and blatant corruption.

Introduction

Party politics are important and "matters in neighbourhood dynamics, civil society structure and local democracy more broadly" (Bénit-Gbaffou 2015, 178). This paper explores the politics of the African National Congress (ANC) within the biggest district outside Cape Town in the Western Cape province, the Cape Winelands.[1] The Cape Winelands district includes the local municipal areas of Drakenstein (Paarl), Stellenbosch, Breede Valley (Worcester), Witzenberg (Ceres), and Langeberg (Ashton and Robertson).

The ANC has been the governing party in South Africa for more than 27 years and has passed legislation that provides increased opportunities for public participation, especially at the local government level. Current local government legislation, including the Constitution (1996), the White Paper on Local Government (1998), the Municipal Structures Act (1998), the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (2000), and the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) (2000), seeks to entrench this "participatory governance" by South African municipalities that for years have done things differently. In the past, it was the preserve of the councillors and the municipal officials to take decisions without broad consultation. As a result, a majority of South Africans were rendered "passive citizens" and "recipients" but not participants in governance (Mathekga 2006, 89). The Constitution lists one of the objects of local government itself as being that of encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government. This is one of the objects that a municipality must strive, within its financial and administrative capacity, to achieve (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996). Public participation is also encouraged in the White Paper on Local Government (1998) that encourages local government political leaders to, amongst others:

- Build coalitions of common interests and encourage the development of a vibrant civil society so as to enhance the capacity of diverse groups of people to act together around shared goals.
- Create opportunities to be accountable to local communities over and above regular elections.
- Build partnerships with communities and other stakeholders and engage in ongoing dialogue with them (Zantsi 2020).

Two important mechanisms for enabling public participation at local government level are ward committees and the IDP (Integrated Development Planning) process. Ward committees are standing committees that are elected by the ward community to be in office for five years and in that way their term of operation corresponds with that of the

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1   The Cape Winelands District Municipal area used to be called the Boland district/region. While the state has adopted the change to the Cape Winelands district, ANC structures still refer to the area as the Boland region. These two are used interchangeably in this paper. The Boland region is mainly used when referring to ANC documents and the regional structure.

municipal councillors. They are supposed to hold regular meetings with varied agenda items discussed and the most important of these is the IDP. The IDP is a five-year "single, inclusive and strategic plan" for the development of a particular municipality that gets reviewed annually. Some of the plans and strategies that are contained in the IDP are for spatial development, human settlements, local economic development, and those that deal with human and financial resources. The budget of the municipality has to be influenced by the IDP.

> (1) An integrated development plan adopted by the council of a municipality- (a) is the principal strategic planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regard to planning, management and development, in the municipality; (b) binds the municipality in the exercise of its executive authority, except to the extent of any inconsistency between a municipality's integrated development plan and national or provincial legislation, in which case such legislation prevails; and (c) binds all other persons to the extent that those parts of the integrated development plan that impose duties or affect the rights of those persons have been passed as a by-law. (Municipal Systems Act, 2000, Chapter 5. E)

Allocations in the municipality's budget have to rely on the plans that are contained in the IDP. Part of the annual auditing function that is conducted by the office of the Auditor-General is to assess whether the municipality's budget allocations were informed by the priorities and objectives that are contained in the IDP document. The IDP is very important and public participation in its formulation and review has the potential of ensuring that the public influence development within their municipal area. The IDP is put together every five years and gets annually reviewed (Municipal Systems Act of 2000). Municipalities have to show that they met with and have allowed the public to participate before the adoption of the IDP.

However, the government's stated intention of allowing for meaningful broader public participation is not always fulfilled and participatory structures and processes, at times, get politicised at local government level. The ANC is a unitary structure in its policy but there is a lack of uniformity in understanding, commitment, and implementation of participatory policies at different levels of the organisation and government spheres. At times, the actions of some of those the ANC has deployed in local government do not conform to its policy positions.

Some deployed public representatives work to advance themselves and their factions, at the expense of the ANC and the communities they are supposed to be leading. However, the implementation of party and state policies is as important as the policy itself. Therefore, the ANC-led government has a responsibility to ensure that representatives at different levels of government do not do as they please but stick to the letter and intent of the participation legislation. After 21 years in power, the organisation confirmed its conviction about the importance of policy implementation.

> The implementation of various ANC policies is crucial to realising the broader objectives of building a capable developmental state. The state transformation resolutions are located at the heart of service delivery and are informed by a consistent ANC agenda of a better life for all. (African National Congress 2015, 35)

In this regard, the ANC continues to hold a general council of its members in-between its five-year national conferences for leadership accountability purposes. In the general council, the leadership reports on the implementation of resolutions that were taken in the last conference and the members can interrogate them on that. The remaining years before the next conference are for speeding up the implementation, taking into consideration inputs of the general council participants. This process also takes place in-between the four-year provincial and three-year regional conferences (Zantsi 2020). The 2015 ANC national general council confirmed the weakness in the implementation of public participation and also in the organisation's monitoring of the implementation of its policies. It reported that the implementation of National Conference resolutions on mechanisms to strengthen participatory democracy, community participation and an activist parliament has been lacking. Furthermore, on-going assessments, by ANC structures and government monitoring and evaluation, highlighted difficulties in attaining the objectives of the organisation (African National Congress 2015).

This is an old challenge faced by the organisation as the Western Cape provincial general council also noted as far back as 2000 that there was a disjuncture between the state and the ANC as an organisation at the level of policy and implementation and also that there was a problem concerning the role and responsibilities of its deployed people at different levels of the state. That provincial general council, subsequently, resolved to monitor and support the performance of deployed cadres in governance (African National Congress 2000). This does not seem to have worked well as the 2015 national general council and other reports note. This paper points to some reasons for this situation. It concentrates on a qualitative study of the Cape Winelands district that covers five municipal areas in South Africa. Besides being the biggest district in the Western Cape outside of the Cape Town metropolitan area, it is not that different from other regions in South Africa where settlements are still largely shaped along racial lines, although there are no longer laws that enforce segregation. Nonetheless, the district is multi-racial as the new local government dispensation, after 1994, insisted on areas that are dominated by different racial groups to be part of the same municipality.

Interviews and documentary reviews were used as data collection techniques and were triangulated to increase the validity and the strength of the findings. The study followed a purposeful sampling logic and it solicited views from experts, ANC politicians, government officials, and community representatives through semi-structured interviews. The focus was on participants who could add useful information about the subject of this paper. Note taking was used only as a secondary method of recording. All participants were recorded, and they spoke freely.

Written material relating to the ANC and local participation was sourced and scrutinised. This included official documents like communications and submissions by ANC individuals and structures, public representatives, municipal officials, and civil society participants. The ANC's policies, discussion documents, conference resolutions, and other relevant documents were also sourced and analysed, mainly from the party's website and from party leaders who were in possession of these. The main determinant in selecting these documents was the degree to which they clarified ANC policy and practice with regard to local participatory governance. Some information about the Cape Winelands municipalities was also found on different websites. Reports from government, the ANC, and civil society organisations that deal with the subject of participatory spaces also, proved useful. The data were collected and analysed alongside the data that emanated from the interviews and, in some cases, it provided context for the interviews. It also assisted in comparing what is claimed in the interviews about ANC party-politics and local democracy with what is documented.

The section on local democracy, clientelism, and party politics provides definitions of these concepts and discusses how they interact, positively and negatively, in local development and participatory processes and their relationship with ANC politics at local government level. What follows is a section on how internal ANC dynamics affect public participation structures in the Cape Winelands. One example of this is provided in the following section as being that of the relationship between ANC branch leadership positions and local councillor positions. This might have the potential of blurring local party-political branch and local state positions. The next section discusses how local democracy is also impacted, regardless of the ANC policies' content as there is no uniform understanding of public participation among ANC public representatives. This can influence whether leadership and marching orders can be given, either to consolidate or harm local democracy, and have cadres following them. The following section then proceeds to discuss the interaction between local ANC politics and civic organisations in the Cape Winelands. This is important to local democracy as party politics can influence the balance between confrontational and cooperative strategies adopted by civil society organisations when engaging with the ANC-led state.

Local Democracy, Clientelism, and Party Politics

Local democracy is understood as having two dimensions, decentralisation and participation. In the Global South there is evidence of a character of local democracy that is "messy" and there are often "odd ways in which participation, decentralisation, and clientelism interact" (Bénit-Gbaffou 2011, 454). In the context of people, especially the poor, who have strong dependence on the state it is unrealistic to have an analysis of local democracy that is silent about clientelism. Clientelism can be a conscious political strategy to generate development and means of helping the poor access the state (Anciano 2018b).

Political clientelism is defined as a direct exchange of public goods like housing, jobs and so on (given as favours), between a politician and a voter for political support which

can be a vote or other things. In a clientelistic relationship, the more powerful agent is normally the politician who gets a political advantage and the less powerful agent is the public member or community that gets the material advantage over others although there can be exceptions to this, especially where a community is involved (Anciano 2018a). It has to be noted that party politics lie at the core of clientelism and local democracy might be conducive to it as both are based on "personalization of relationships between citizens and the State, flexibility and adaptability of policies to local contexts" (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2011, 456).

There is an argument that local democracy should not be viewed as, necessarily, a way out of traditional clientelism and patronage (Bénit-Gbaffou 2011; Bénit-Gbaffou and Oldfield 2011). It maintains that in situations of scarce resources, like in African countries, both local democracy and clientelism can serve to offer resident groups opportunities for engaging in urban politics although they both risk sedating all forms of radical movement. This is in a context of scarce resources and the rifeness of poverty that leads to high competition for political jobs and public goods. In such situations, even participatory structures like ward committees and civil society organisations are drawn into these practices.

There is, therefore, a fine line between clientelism and local democracy and this can and does get crossed as residents attempt to access public resources and survive and they have local representatives of the state, councillors, and local party leaders to deal with. Party politics are central to clientelism and party structures are prominent as an important means of the poor to access the state as invited participatory structures are failing to fulfil their promises (Bénit-Gbaffou 2011). The centrality of party politics and the failing of participatory structures at times lead to clientelist relationships between community leaders and the ruling party politicians, assisted by the ANC's dominance in both state and community through its alliance and influence with civil society organisations (Piper and Von Lieres 2016). This makes it possible for the ANC to "ground itself as leaders of most poor, black settlements across the country, thus further entrenching the dominance of the ruling party over civil society at the most local level" (Piper and Von Lieres 2016, 323).

> Key here are both the ideology of liberation nationalism that privileges the ANC and its allies as the champion of the oppressed black majority, as well as the privileged access granted by the ANC state to its allies in community and civil society formations. The unparalleled organizational reach of the ANC and its allies enables the extension of the clientelistic logic of the party-state to party-society across the country. This fact, plus the demand by the state (and its partnering) for community leaders to legitimate the projects of the developmental state, means that it is common to find networks of ANC aligned local leaders positioning themselves between the state and various development projects in most poor, black residential areas. [...] This shift of emphasis in the role of the state from coercion to well-being points to the growing importance for the poor majority of accessing the state for key resources. Notably, the participation of community leaders in clientelistic politics, and, in some cases, even the demand for it

from below, reinforces the practice of rent seeking off the state at higher levels by coalitions of politicians and businesspeople. (Piper and Von Lieres 2016, 323)

Piper and von Lieres (2016, 323) claim that a lot of conflict for office is based on competition between rival "rent-seeking coalitions" within the ANC, or between rent seekers and "contributors," and this leads to instances of "popular mobilization by community leaders interested in keeping their patrons in office." These political clientelist relationships are then camouflaged as genuine public participation.

Ward committees are also affected by party politics. As a result, they get politicised and this politicisation is done by all South African political parties as they all mobilise for the election of their members to serve in these committees (Piper and Deacon 2009). This focus on political party membership ignores "competency or local network in the area" and "ability to voice people's concerns" (Bénit-Gbaffou 2006, 34).

Internal ANC Dynamics Affect Public Participation Structures

The ANC's dominance in wards that are in low-income areas and the politicisation of structures like ward committees leads to a situation where these structures are affected by ANC internal dynamics as internal conflicts of the ANC spill over to the function of these participatory structures. This politicisation also affects the operation of the ward committee as, at times, it rears its head and affects positions that are taken by members when issues are being discussed as evidenced by the experience of a ward committee member who said that party political allegiances influence discussions in her ward committee as they agree or disagree in discussions based on party allegiances. She made an example of something that seemed not party political but the participants grouped themselves according to political party allegiances. The issue related to transport and it "became apparent that the other members, those from the EFF [Economic Freedom Fighters] and the ones from the ANC could not agree" (interview with Respondent 18, ward committee member, Witzenberg Municipality, 16 April 2018). When asked whether the EFF comes with its own position and the ANC likewise, the ward committee member responded, "That is how it happens." This happened in two meetings, and "our councillor said we should no longer discuss the transport issue as he did not want to appear as being on the side of the ANC and not on the side of the EFF. So, we stopped discussing transport." It is counter-productive to have issues that cannot be discussed in a ward committee meeting, even if they are important, so as to preserve peace. If these ward committee members understood that they were not representing political parties but the entire community they could find ways of reasoning with the community in mind and it would be easier to find each other as they are from the same community. However, the idea of politicisation of community participatory structures like the ward committees is entrenched in South Africa as Piper and Deacon (2009) point out. There are, however, ward councillors who claim to discourage this politicisation in the function of their ward committees. A ward councillor from Stellenbosch agreed that there was a lot of party-political influence in the work of the ward committee and said that she tried to stop it when she noticed it happening. She

said that she handled it by reminding them that when she was still campaigning she would tell them that she was an ANC candidate and now that she was a councillor she was one for all people and not only the ANC. In doing this she also reminded them that in a ward committee they do not "focus on party politics but on service delivery" (interview with Respondent 8, councillor, Stellenbosch Municipality, 17 April 2018).

An ANC PR councillor in Langeberg voiced how she did not see a way out of politicising ward committees.

> Fortunately for me, I believe that a ward committee is something that you cannot separate from politics as it is very difficult to have a ward councillor from one political party and have a ward committee with people who have different political views from that of the councillor because then you have contradicting views where the ward councillor wants to drive progress or service delivery into one direction and the ward committee will fight with the councillor. So, for me, it has to be something that is politicised because, Just to curb infighting between the ward councillor and ward committee members, if you have ward committee members that are affiliated to the same political party that the ward councillor is affiliated to, not just to protect the ward councillor, but those people will assist the ward councillor to drive service delivery to the people that are targeted. (Interview with Respondent 9, Robertson, 19 April 2018)

However, it is not always the case that the local party structures, the party councillor, and party members who are in a ward committee always agree even if they are from the same political party as intraparty factional divisions can intervene. A ward committee member explained how ANC internal differences affected the functioning of their ward committee although they are all ANC supporters. He pointed out that "a certain ANC faction does not accept us as a ward committee, up until today they challenge us when we call community meetings and ask who we are and disrupt the meetings" (interview with Respondent 18 on 16 April 2018). This happened in a ward where two factions of the ANC are fighting, and the local branch leadership of the ANC is not happy with the elected ANC ward councillor. Such occurrences are not uncommon in the Cape Winelands and this particular conflict raises possibilities of electoral process manipulation (African National Congress 2018). The councillor, who was initially part of the ANC Branch Executive Committee (BEC) where a deal was allegedly made to hoodwink voters, explained that this was planned to have a discredited branch leader and councillor continuing in that position but there were concerns that the community would be against this. Another member of the BEC was asked to stand as an ANC candidate as the ward community still supported the ANC as an organisation but not the previous councillor. The plan was that the stand-in person would then resign shortly "before the closing date of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) candidate registration process" (interview with Respondent 16, councillor, Witzenberg Municipality, 16 April 2018). This would leave the ANC without a candidate and the BEC would register the unpopular former councillor as there would be no time to reconvene a community meeting. Unfortunately for the scheming BEC their stand-in

candidate also had ambitions to be a councillor so she "did not resign and that is what caused the conflict" (Respondent 16).

This was one of the cases that the national leadership of the ANC investigated in the Cape Winelands. The NEC Task Team found that the candidates' selection process in that ward was "manipulated and deviated from the requirements of the ANC guidelines to the Candidates Selection Process" (African National Congress 2018, 4). It ruled that the entire candidate selection process must be redone according to the ANC guidelines for the candidate selection process.

> In a case where a new Candidate emerges other than the one who is the current councillor if she stands for nomination, the ANC will have to declare a vacancy in the ward leading to a by-election where we will field a new candidate. If the current councillor Cde [Respondent 16: Councillor, Witzenberg Municipality] emerges as the candidate the status quo will remain, and no vacancy will be declared. (African National Congress 2018, 4)

This is but one case where there were conflicts about being a councillor and the resultant negative impact on public participation. There can be no discussion of a ward committee that completely ignores the ward councillor as the legislation has made the ward councillor the chairperson of a ward. These councillors come with their political baggage that relates, among others, to their election into those councillor positions. One cannot completely ignore electoral politics when discussing participatory governance. At times, it also happens that the public itself and the spaces of participation are used to fight ANC political and factional battles.

> Community participation has also been mobilised for the wrong reasons. For example, a person stands in a ward, let's say from an ANC branch, he or she does not get nominated for council elections, elections take place and you spend a lot of your time, even using council structures, even the ward committees to mobilise against the councillor, to undermine him or her so that you can take over the position, and often you know its power struggles within the ANC and alliance that get reflected in the issues around, more often, more than it should happen, you get a situation where the fights within the regional executive committee (REC) or the branch executive committee or provincial executive committee become reflected in conflicts between the municipality, the councillor sometimes and the ward committee leaders. (Interview with Yunus Carrim, Cape Town, 21 April 2018)

The infighting for positions within ANC structures and against the local state is driven by the high levels of unemployment and the fact that people easily find themselves parachuted into a lower-middle-class economic status when they become councillors. This is fuelled by "extreme inequalities of class, gender, education, and health [that] severely reduce the ability of ordinary South Africans to survive and flourish [and this] draws political entrepreneurs and their followers towards private patron client networks attached to the ANC as a means to exploit access to public authority in an effort to navigate poverty and inequality" (Beresford 2015, 230). The only currency they need to

attain a better socio-economic status is to be popular in their wards and become ward councillors. For others, all it takes is to hold a leadership position in the local ANC political structures as this makes it easier to be deployed into the proportional representation list of the party. The electoral system in South Africa is not constituency-based at the national and provincial level but is based on a political party representation list. People vote for the party and not for an individual. The ANC handles the process by holding what it calls list conferences where members state their preferences for who will be the party's public representatives. However, the leadership has the right to make a final decision after the list conferences.

There is a different process at local government level where 50 per cent of the councillors are elected through the political party list and the other 50 per cent is voted for directly by ward voters and is thus constituency-based. At the local government level, it is not that easy for party leaders to do as they wish when it comes to ward councillors, but local and regional party leaders have the final say on the party representational list. Even being elected by a ward constituency as a ward councillor does not entirely protect a councillor from the control of party leaders. The system makes it impossible for a councillor who initially stood on a political party ticket to resign or lose his party membership without losing the seat. In such a situation party bosses can just end the councillor's party membership and they cannot continue as a councillor. This is easily done in wards that a political party considers as "safe" in that it can easily win when there are by-elections.

In this process, local democratic processes can be manipulated and perverted. An investigation report of the ANC National Executive Committee into the Boland region (Cape Winelands) election processes for the 2016 local government elections paints a situation where local leaders undermined community preferences in the final selection of both ward candidates and those who were meant to represent the party in the proportional representation list. These fights for councillor positions make it difficult for local participatory structures to operate.

ANC Branch Leadership Positions as Springboards to Local Councillor Positions

Leadership positions in the ANC are used as springboards to get into government positions and the local ANC party representation list in South African local government elections ends up full of local party leaders. Besides the party representation list, about half the seats in local government are directly elected as ward councillors. The ANC developed a system where its candidates for ward councillor positions are first voted for by the majority of its members in a ward. An ANC ward conference is convened where all members in good standing are allowed to participate (these are people whose membership has not lapsed). Potential ward candidates are then nominated and when there is more than one candidate the ward conference vote for who will be the ward candidate for the ANC in that ward. People do not publicly volunteer themselves but

they wait to be voted for by the members, although there is secret lobbying for positions. The situation used to be that the name was submitted to the regional structure of the ANC and an election campaign was designed and implemented around that particular candidate. In 2016, the ANC introduced a further step in this process. It now calls for the ANC ward conference to choose a maximum of three ANC members and present them to the entire ward community at a mass meeting. These candidates then have the responsibility of trying to convince the community to pick a candidate for that ward. A candidate who is finally chosen by community members, who include non-ANC people in what resembles a primary system, would then be a candidate for the ANC. The whole ANC election machinery is then galvanised to get that candidate elected as a ward councillor. This is meant to get the public endorsing an ANC candidate even before the elections. So, the ANC candidate becomes the community ward candidate as the community was involved in the selection (African National Congress 2016). When that councillor is elected, he then reports to the ANC and the community. They report to the ANC through its chief whip in that council and they report to the community by convening at least one community meeting every three months as required in the Municipal Structures Act of 1998.

This system can be undermined, however, by people who get elected as local ANC branch leaders who mobilise members against their ward councillor as they want to be the one elected in the next elections. In the township of Mbekweni, in the Drakenstein Municipality, two-thirds of ANC branch chairpersons are currently ward councillors. A former ANC regional secretary said that this becomes a campaign of branch chairpersons to make the life of the ward councillor difficult while they set themselves up as the alternative in preparation for the next local government elections. In such a situation the councillor cannot work well and at times is put at loggerheads with the community. The ANC, which was once the vehicle for many who wanted to fight apartheid, is being used, in this process, as a vehicle for accessing state positions and wealth. A former ANC mayor in the Cape Winelands recalls how after they were elected to the municipal council, the focus shifted from the "better life for all" promise to money and "there was a silent war on who could take up which position" (interview with Respondent 4, former mayor, local municipality, 3 May 2018). There developed a situation of secret caucuses that sat and lies were spread about perceived rivals within the party to the extent of turning the community against such people (Respondent 4).

The ANC has found that the fight for positions and its effect on structures of governance affect several leadership levels in the organisation. In the organisational reports that are delivered by the secretary-general in its conferences this issue keeps on being raised as a concern. In 2002 the secretary-general again noted this.

> We found that the issues dividing the leadership of some of our provinces are not of a political nature, but have mainly revolved around access to resources, positioning themselves or others to access resources, dispensing patronage and in the process using organisational structures to further these goals. This often lies at the heart of conflicts between constitutional and governance structures, especially at the local level and is

reflected in contestations around lists, deployment and internal elections process of the movement. (Motlanthe 2002)

Ten years later, in 2012, a different secretary-general pointed to similar problems and singled out the Western Cape as one of three provinces that were worse in this regard as in the main, the most serious problem was that the majority of ANC branches have little or no political life. He said that branches get revived when the ANC is heading for conferences and elections and therefore, these branches are driven by the need to either nominate delegates or candidates for local government elections in the main. The secretary-general viewed this as being at the centre of a membership that is not politically conscious and therefore susceptible to manipulation. An effect is that these branches have no "capacity to lead campaigns in their respective wards, creating space for other formations to lead these campaigns that end up being violent protests that reinforce the theme that nothing is happening. This has killed the culture of activism at the branch level, making the ANC almost absent in community activities" (Mantashe 2012). The ANC also realises that there is limited or at-least variable capacity at different levels of the organisation to deal with some of its challenges (Zantsi 2020).

No Uniform Understanding of Public Participation Among ANC Public Representatives

One of this paper's considerations is about the understanding of ANC politicians and officials in all spheres of government about the necessity and scope of public participation in local government and what accounts for discrepancy in that understanding between ANC policy documents, its politicians and officials. What is clear is that there is a lack of uniform understanding regarding the need and process of participation between ANC public representatives in local government and at different spheres of government.

> Those of us who've been in parliament since 1994 and especially people like myself who helped prepare the model, we pass the policies, the green papers, white papers, and the bills into law, we obviously understand the system and what was intended, as I give you the example of a ward committee system. So, we had intentions that are not necessarily fulfilled by councillors on the ground, and maybe even the South African Local Government Association. This is not to be critical of them, it's understandable, If I was in their position my vantage point would be from a point of view of the councillors, the councillors' needs and interest, the constituencies we represent where that's appropriately internalised by us as public representatives in the local government sphere but the point is as a councillor you have different impulses, different imperatives, different needs from a national assembly MP. (Interview with Yunus Carrim, Cape Town, 21 April 2018)

This difference in understanding and, to a certain extent, commitment to public participation is apparent in most of the interviews held with current and former ANC public representatives. They all purport to understand and support the need for public participation but many local councillors and ANC leaders below the national level

advocate and behave in a way that limits its space. When a direct question is asked as to their understanding and commitment to public participation almost all of them purport to accept the need for such participation and they claim to support it. It is when questions relating to certain scenarios and local experiences are posed that one gets responses that start to negate what is in the ANC policy and the country's legislation. This situation of the different understandings of ANC policy on participation can also be attributed to a lack of regular mutually beneficial contact and working relationships between ANC public representatives at different spheres. This is said to be the case even if there are MPs and Members of Provincial Legislatures (MPL) who reside within these municipal boundaries. African National Congress councillors complain that their comrades who serve in national and provincial legislatures do not get involved and assist councillors as they do not view those areas as their constituencies. An ANC ward councillor in Stellenbosch expressed this as part of her frustration. She stated that there is no working relationship with their ANC colleagues who are MPLs. She emphasised that there is "none at all" as she does not even know who serves on what provincial legislature committee. She said that she sometimes wondered whom she could contact at that level when there was a community need that a provincial parliamentarian could assist with. This lack of a working relationship between ANC public representatives at different spheres of government led her to emphasise that her provincial legislature colleagues "work on their own and they behave as if they are superior and better than councillors but it is us, councillors who are closest to the people and work very hard and painful without resources, I can say that. They have an outreach budget that we cannot access in serving our communities" (interview with Respondent 7, councillor, Stellenbosch Municipality, 17 April 2018).

> So, what I am saying is that our organisation is not being fair to us somehow as we can't even access the MPLs' outreach fund. After the January 8th, ANC birthday celebrations, we normally convene as Western Cape public representatives in one room but we don't discuss the working relationship, it just becomes politics. We do not get an opportunity to raise this frustration with the organisation's leadership. I think it is one of the things on which the organisation is failing here in the Western Cape because it is the opposition, and our MPLs are too stuck up, they find it impossible to come to the ground, they cannot come to the ground, so if you are councillor you have to sort yourself out and see how you are going to handle your community or at times ask that one national minister that you can access and he or she might assist [with funding community projects] if they have funds. (Interview with Respondent 7, councillor, Stellenbosch Municipality, 17 April 2018)

This situation contributes to the gap in knowledge as members of national and provincial legislatures have a lot of training opportunities than councillors and there does not seem to be a situation of working together and sharing ideas. Political education and grasp of policy are therefore uneven.

Reports by ANC secretary generals have been calling for increased political education and awareness about the organisation's policies for both ANC members and public

representatives. The organisation argues that being a party of government has attracted all sorts of characters and not everyone is committed to what the organisation stands for. It refers to this as "sins of incumbency" and its former deputy president and post-apartheid South Africa's third state president, Kgalema Motlanthe, explained that these are dangers that are attendant to accession to power, and they are reflected in the misuse and abuse of power. He said that sins of incumbency are "invariably marked by a betrayal of the ideals of freedom, where a former liberation movement turns into a monster that devours the very principles of freedom that sustained it over the ages, and that it is supposed to uphold" (Motlanthe 2011). He admitted that the post-1994 period threw up such challenges for the governing ANC.

> Such challenges manifested themselves in the emergent strains on the values, culture and character of the national liberation movement. Among some of these challenges are issues such as the social distance between the governors and the governed; bureaucratic elitism; the arrogance of power, careerism; venality and corruption; moral and ideological degeneration among rank and file; and use of state institutions to fight inner-party battles. (Motlanthe 2011)

Having said that, there does not seem to be an appetite within the ANC to call its councillors to order for not displaying a commitment to public participation in the business of local government. Some leaders who are not living the values of the organisation and are not displaying its claimed commitment to participation are allowed to continue because of being close to a dominant faction in that area. A local community tasked its leaders to engage the ANC as a political organisation about its councillor that was not serving them well. One of the community leaders recalls their efforts in getting the ANC's assistance as they wrote to the ANC regional office. The regional secretary set a date for the meeting but never honoured it and they stayed at the regional office in Worcester until about 7 PM (interview with Respondent 10, public activist, Paarl, 18 April 2018).

The ANC provincial office was also not helpful as the community leader reports of their meeting that was in an office located about 60 km from where they stay. They approached the ANC provincial office to intervene as the ward councillor was their deployee and the ANC called them into a meeting. After explaining that they were not happy about how they were being treated by the councillor, the ANC promised to call them back into another meeting with the councillor present and "they never called us back" (Respondent 10, 18 April 2018).

This is a strange situation as the ANC conceded as far back as the 2000 local government elections that voters had problems with the behaviour of some of its councillors and it promised to intervene on the side of the public. Reporting to the 2002 conference of the organisation, its then secretary-general, Kgalema Motlanthe, reported that they approached the 2000 local government elections with widespread concerns from their support base about the performance of local councillors. He mentioned that the nation-wide audit of all ANC local councillors also pointed to several challenges the party

faced in this sphere of government. The ANC's key message in the 2000 elections campaign was, therefore, "speeding up change at the local level, ensuring accountability and local participation, and a commitment that the ANC will monitor councillors and remove anyone not in keeping with the organisation's values of service to the people" (Motlanthe 2002).

He repeated such concerns in an ANC local government strategy workshop where he noted the "competition for positions within structures" and how it played itself out through the abuse of other members and had a result of weakening ANC branches and causing tensions within the alliance (Motlanthe 2005, 1). The Cape Winelands district / Boland region was also not immune from such problems.

One finds that discipline of local government representatives is not, always, strictly enforced and can also be traced to, among others, a "tendency to resolve internal problems through internal political processes" (Nzo 2016, 111). In the case of regions like Boland, the problem could also lie in the lack of leadership capacity and factionalism. A former ANC chief whip at Drakenstein municipality complained that while he was responsible for ANC councillors' discipline in the municipality he got no joy from the regional office when he reported the untoward behaviour of some of these councillors.

> The region is useless. At some point, I reported a local ANC councillor and he confessed to the transgression. I went to the regional office in Worcester as they called me. They admitted that it was wrong to insist on my attendance as the councillor had not disputed what I was reporting about him. I do not know whether they were scared of him or what. Those people are stupid in that regional office. They are a bunch of fools. Every time I wrote to the region, I would copy Skhwatsha [ANC provincial secretary] in the province. I knew that the regional office will just file the communication and not involve the province. They did not do anything about that councillor. (Interview with Respondent 25, Paarl, 16 April 2018)

It should also be noted that the ANC has admitted that it is a highly factionalised organisation and this gets worse when one deals with lower structures (ANC 2002) and intervention in cases of discipline by local representatives could also be influenced by considerations of whom the offending party is aligned to. Dominant factions would not deal decisively with an offence if it was committed by one of their members and this local councillor, shortly thereafter, rose to become the Western Cape deputy chairperson of the ANC, backed by the Boland regional leadership. This makes clear that he was earmarked for provincial leadership by a faction that the local chief whip was not part of, and this influenced the blasé response to assisting him in addressing the councillor's misdemeanour. The public then finds itself a victim of these ANC factions' internal power battles. A former ANC regional secretary confirmed this as he said in his case what led to the collapse of a programme they had of getting councillors to fully account to the ANC regional office was factionalism within the ANC. He mentioned that if he asked for a report from a councillor who was not in his faction he would never get that

report and "there is nothing I could do about it because the regions have no powers to suspend or dismiss a councillor but can recommend to the provincial structure and you would get much frustrated if the provincial leadership is not aligned to your faction." He made mention of a time when the province was led by people from a different faction from the regional leadership and "there were factional matters. I could do nothing as I would submit a report and it would just be ignored at the provincial level. That was the challenge. That's what collapsed the process of holding councillors accountable" (interview with Respondent 34, ANC leader, Boland, 22 April 2018). These ANC challenges affect the performance of councillors, municipalities, and local public participation institutions, especially in areas where the organisation is very dominant.

Local ANC Politics and Civic Organisations in the Cape Winelands

Party politics are important in shaping the balance between confrontational and cooperative strategies adopted by civil society organisations when engaging with the state and the ANC which is strongly embedded in civil society in urban low-income areas (Bénit-Gbaffou 2012). This is the case as South Africa has a history of dynamic and progressive organs of civil society who were actively opposed apartheid. After 1994 many in these organisations believed that there was now an opportunity to influence a democratic state and further the causes they had been fighting for "during a period of racist authoritarianism when progressive state politics was impossible" (Leonard 2014, 380). Among those who reasoned this way are many local civic associations' activists. Working with and within the ANC had its implications for civic associations in low-income areas.

> When the organisations were unbanned, the civic organisation became SANCO [South African National Civics Organisation]. I became its local chairperson and at some point its secretary. At some point, SANCO started not to function well when the ANC took over. This is the case although SANCO, the Western Cape Civic Association then, was formed because our political leaders were in prison and banned. We formed this structure and said it was non-political to be able to engage with local government structures and the special branch of the police then. It enabled us to deal with local government issues like rent increases and refuse removal and such. (Interview with Respondent 5, former councillor, Breede Valley Municipality, 3 May 2018)

What is now becoming clear is that these structures no longer exist in some areas and even in areas where they can be found they are no longer strong and dynamic. Many of its leaders have become part of the government. A former SANCO leader believes that another thing that "killed" SANCO, from his point of view, is that there are people who came to SANCO because they wanted to benefit and it did not have the same resources as the ANC and then "you would find that meetings are not called and that kills the organisation" (interview with Respondent 5, former councillor, Breede Valley Municipality).

This led to SANCO being used to get certain people deployment in the local list of political parties like the ANC. At the local government level, they seem to exist to serve the interests of people who want to be councillors. A regional leader of the ANC and their mayoral candidate in the last election in one local municipality believes that SANCO is not active.

> There are members but it has not launched [There are only individuals who call themselves SANCO but there is no formal structure]. There are only members who when they do not get space in the ANC, although they know that it is the same thing, others don't that, they then say they are SANCO. They think that SANCO is countering the ANC and don't know that people can have a dual membership for SANCO and the ANC. Many people do not know that. There is no SANCO. One exists when there are people who feel hurt after elections or just before the elections when they do not make it into the ANC candidates list. (Interview with Respondent 14, Ceres, 16 April 2018)

This seems to have been the situation even in Mbekweni as some ANC supporters formed "SANCO squatters" and said they represent people who are in the informal settlements. That structure was dissolved when its leadership was absorbed into the ANC electoral list. Some of its prominent leaders became ANC councillors. These structures were said to be formed to represent the interests of these particular social groups. However, those who formed them immediately lost sight of this objective when they were promised the possibility of being ANC councillors.

Another reason that is advanced for the weakening of SANCO is that it failed to adapt to changing conditions and it could not adapt to the rearrangements in communities and boundary changes. A trade union leader who served on the ANC REC confirmed that the problem arose when communities started being organised according to wards and as there was a realignment of ANC according to wards but there was no such for the civics. They remained a structure for the whole township and found it difficult to engage at the ward level. He stated that the civics failed because "they don't realign according to wards and they could have subdivided but they say their policy does not allow them to do that" (interview with Respondent 26, Paarl, 18 April 2018).

Some members of civil society structures use their community-given power to create clientelist, and even corrupt relationships that abuse poor communities. This is especially so when it comes to housing and employment opportunities. Being leaders of some of these structures gives some people leverage in dealing with local municipalities and this is used to either create loyal followership or to corruptly fleece poor communities.

> Even those who lead us do not fight for us, they continue to exploit us, especially when they see that one does not know much or is elderly. Instead of bringing light to the people they bring darkness. There are shacks on the other side that are not legal as people were given that land by the likes of Mr [Chairperson of housing project beneficiary committee] and he is collecting rent money from them. (Sighs) It is just corruption. This

was when he was part of the Ncedolethu committee. [This was a committee that was chosen by the housing beneficiary community to represent it in dealing with the municipality in the process of new houses being built by the government for them]. I was also part of that committee. I always fight corruption. I disagreed when they said people must buy their own material. I told them that the government's houses are free and they said I am misleading people. They took people's monies and built big houses for themselves. There it is his wife stays in it. They robbed people. (Interview with Respondent 10, public activist, 18 April 2018)

What this demonstrates is that not everything that is done by those who are elected to represent communities is good. It is not only being in government structures and wielding state power that can corrupt but having the influence to get things done can also corrupt. This happens even when that influence is derived from being a legitimate representative of the community outside of state structures. It is ironic that the committee that Respondent 10 mentions is called Ncedolethu which means, in Xhosa, "that or those who exist to help us." The local community believed that they had a voice and representation from their own against the state but the allegations that are made by respondent 10, who was part of that committee, paints a different picture. This proved to be not an isolated case as one former ANC ward councillor in Langeberg related how her ward committee members used the power they gained by being community representatives to benefit themselves and those close to them. She mentioned that companies and contractors from outside the community would be appointed by the government to build houses or roads. In such instances, they would meet with the ward councillor and her ward committee to discuss how they were going to work and that they would need local labourers. Her ward committee members would make private deals with the contractors and promise to provide the labourers for them without following a process that would try to assist everyone in the community that had a major unemployment rate. The councillor says she "later heard that my ward committee members were heavily involved in the project and some were site managers and others doing other functions and their friends were also given positions in the project" (interview with Respondent 20, former councillor, Langeberg Municipality,17 April 2018). Members of this ward committee "wanted everything to be done by them, especially things that relate to construction as they wanted to control these by being leading people or appointing their friends" (Respondent 20).

Community leaders are known to sometimes strike deals with councillors to either benefit their communities or themselves as individuals. In this clientelist relationship, these community leaders promise the continued support of their constituency to that politician, in many cases a ward councillor. The example that is cited above is one in which the community leader takes advantage of the distance between government structures and the community by providing land for some individuals to put up residential structures and appropriating the rental fees. In such a case the leader remains "the man of the people" and continues to lead community struggles against local government structures while looking after their own interests. The popularity or power

gained in these civil society structures is at times used as leverage to get onto ANC election lists.

Conclusion

The findings that are presented in this paper confirm that there is politicisation of participatory structures like ward committees, as claimed in the literature (Bénit-Gbaffou 2006; Piper and Deacon 2009). Local ANC politics have a huge impact on local government structures and their participatory processes to the extent that ANC factional fights affect these spaces and structures of public participation. This is more so in the largely black residential areas where the ANC dominates even local communities. This happens in the context where contests to get onto ANC political leadership are actually about access and control of local government positions and, to some extent, this starts to blur the divide between the party and the local state. The manipulation of local democratic processes in the process is also a serious problem (Mantashe 2017; Motlanthe 2002, 2005, 2011).

By and large, ANC councillors seem to have learnt the language of emphasising the importance of public participation in local governance, except for one councillor who is accused of not even pretending to believe in it as he blatantly limits the space for participation. Findings point to a factionalised ANC at the regional and local level that is not acting to stop such behaviour. To the ANC's credit is its realisation that local and regional factional fights cannot resolve themselves nor lead to fair outcomes in matters of discipline and the strengthening of local democracy. Its national structures intervene to investigate claims of subversion of democratic processes. A regional leader who was interviewed for this study was subsequently removed by the ANC National Executive Committee Task Team from his position as a local councillor and chief whip. The Boland Regional Executive Committee was also disbanded. Although this can have the effect of further strengthening the political centre against agency of local level structures, it is needed where the local structures have fallen to gatekeeper politics like in the Cape Winelands district. Beresford is correct that gatekeeper politics are driven by "spoils consumption (the use of control over public resources for private ends); and crony capitalism (the use of connections to public authority to facilitate private capital accumulation)" and this fight to secure "access to public authority through ANC channels provokes intense factional struggles for positions of influence and power within the party" (Beresford 2015, 230).

The data presented in this paper has as much significance for civil society as it does for the local state and its representatives. It shows that it is not always the case that the state is bad and civil society is good. There are instances of clientelism and blatant corruption that involve leaders of civil society. Furthermore, individual members of the public, not necessarily on behalf of communities, have also allowed themselves to be pawns in political games as long as they get personal benefits.

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