The Nexus between Conflict Management and Coalition Politics in Three Selected Metropolitan Municipalities in South Africa

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Abstract

This article compares the complexities and nuances of coalition politics in three selected metropolitan municipalities in South Africa (SA) during the period between 2016 and 2020. These municipalities are Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The main aim is to propose a conflict management mechanism for dealing with the contradictions among the political parties regarding power-sharing at local government level. The central question the article grapples with is whether conflict management is a workable approach to address the challenges experiences by political parties in coalition partnerships in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. The article outlines a qualitative descriptive investigation, based on a literature review assessment, and employs integrative theory in the light of conflict management. Not much scholarly work has been undertaken with regard to the contribution of conflict management to the functioning of coalitions in South Africa. Thus, this article intends to contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding coalition politics in SA. Conflict should not be viewed as a zero-sum game by political protagonists. The main line of argument

is that political elites have a tendency to form coalitions without developing a conflict management mechanism to address their differences amicably.

Keywords: *Coalition, Power-sharing, Conflict, Conflict Management, Municipalities*

Introduction

This article explores the relationship between electoral systems and party politics in three municipalities in South Africa (SA). The proportional representative system is largely linked to the multi-party system, which in turn gives rise to a need for politics of coalition. Coalition politics has developed in many European countries, but not as frequently in the English-speaking world. Specifically, power-sharing has been associated with countries such as The Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Greece, Bulgaria, Germany, Norway, Scandinavian countries and Belgium (Calland and Law, 2018:4). This is despite the fact that there have been cases of coalitions in post-colonial states. Most of the countries on the African continent that have had power-sharing through coalitions are former British colonies, due to the preparation they had to govern themselves (Oyugi, 2006:56-57). At a theoretical level, the concept of power-sharing in the form of coalition is associated with Arend Lijphart. The theoretical construct of power-sharing is embedded in his consociational model of democracy (Lijphart, 1969:214-216).

SA is, as yet, unused to coalition politics, **even as the country's** proportional electoral system inexorably gives rise to a multitude of political parties. However, it must be noted that in the early 1900s, SA witnessed two coalition governments. The first was in 1924 between General Barry Hertzog (National Party) and Colonel Frederic Creswell (Labour Party), which led to the defeat of the South African Party (General Jan Smuts). The second coalition was in 1933 between the National Party and the South African Party (Welsh, 2009:6-9). During the epoch of Apartheid, the political landscape in SA was dominated by the National Party.

From 1994 until the early 2000s, the African National Congress (ANC) has had hegemony in the SA body-politic, largely because of their liberation credentials. As Clapham (2012:4) argues, the greatest advantage of liberation movements is their collective memory. Effectively, liberation movements have a tendency to use their involvement in the liberation struggle to garner more votes in order to hold on to power.

For many liberation movements governing post-colonial states, electoral performance in villages allows them to maintain a majority.

In urban centres the support base of liberation movements is frequently negatively affected by failure to effectively deliver services. Mamdani (1996) uses the concept of decentralised despotism to explain the electoral performance of liberation movements in rural areas. According to him, decentralised despotism entails undemocratic traditional leaders on the payroll of liberation movements who channel votes to those political parties. Mamdani's bifurcated state concept helps us understand the political cleavages of the electorate in countries where liberation movements still govern.

The recent local government elections in SA have led to a fragmentation of political parties, threatening the hegemony of the ANC. Specifically, the ANC lost three metropolitan municipalities in strategic urban centres, namely Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. Overall, the ANC won 53 percent of local government elections, as opposed to its previous electoral performance of 66 percent at local government level (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016:493). Added to this, Susan Booysen (2015:8) states that the ANC has suffered a national electoral decline since 2009, from 70 percent in 2004 to 66 percent in 2009 to 62 percent in 2014. In the 2019 general elections, the ANC won 58 percent of the national vote (Butler, 2019:81). This shows that coalition politics on a national scale is a future possibility for opposition parties in SA.

The recent political developments at local government have challenged the assumption that the ANC will hold on to power a bit longer in SA's democracy. This assumption is based on the perspective that we have, based on our own context of single-party domination, **and historical familiarity** with the politics of the UK, and the United States. Perhaps even the example of single-partyism in the old Soviet Union, or present-day China, still elicits envy at its ease of doing political business, in the breasts of some of our own politicians.

This article, overlooks at its own peril, however the entirely more supple nature of politics, which is Europe, however, models a more supple politics, born of necessity in the multi-party context. Multi-partyism did give rise to instability, especially in the French Third and Fourth Republics (Macridis and Burg, 1991:71) and the post-Second World War era, as a procession of coalition governments followed each other into and out of power, particularly in Italy and France. However, as

political leadership developed the skills of living with a degree of uncertainty, they began to become adept at forging deals and reaching creative solutions. In the Nordic countries, coalitions have long been the norm, where they deliver stable and representative governments and outstanding service to their citizens (Ranney, 1996: 217). The conception of power-sharing is about taking consensus decisions without marginalising any group in society (Schneckener, 2002:203).

The differences between the consummate, stylish European negotiators, and the maladroit fumbling of their British counterparts, has been painfully obvious in the negotiations around 'Brexit'. The 27 disparate nations of Europe (familiar with the importance of negotiation and compromise) have been able to develop a common position, in stark contrast to the British politicians' (unfamiliar with bargaining and compromise) inability to come up with a common position of their own. In a sense, the political expectations of Europe are more realistic, based on the premise that progress flows from compromise, and that the needs and opinions of minorities have to be taken into consideration, for they may be able to forge coalitions in the future. Politics therefore becomes a much more careful art, where power flows not simply from numbers at the polls, but also from the bargaining skills of leaders **(Bradshaw and Breakfast, 2019).**

SA coalition politics have been characterised by destructive conflicts preventing service delivery from being rendered to the inhabitancies of the localities involved. This happens at local government level, which is on the frontlines of service delivery as it is closer to the people on the ground. It must be borne in mind that SA is a post-conflict society **(Breakfast, 2013).** Therefore, managing conflict still needs to be internalised and normalised by different social and political institutions in order to foster development for the majority and to make democracy flourish. Thus, this article examines destructive conflicts in local government from 2016 until 2020. The main aim is to propose a conflict management mechanism in order to deal with the contradictions among the political parties with regard to power-sharing at local government level. Not much scholarly work has been undertaken regarding the contribution of conflict management to the functioning of coalitions in SA. Therefore, this article intends to contribute to the on-going debate surrounding coalition politics in SA. The following section provides a theoretical framework of the article.

Theoretical Framework: A Proposed Conflict Management Approach to Coalition Formations

The purpose of this section is to outline a model of negotiation, namely the integrative theory, as the research standpoint of this article, because of how it proposes ways and means of managing conflict. Integrative theory is associated with Ronald Fisher and William Ury (1981) who see negotiation as a win-win situation as opposed to a zero-sum game. This means that parties involved in conflict need to be soft to each other and hard on the problem. They can do this by separating the problem from personalities. Fisher and Ury propose that parties in conflict need to hit the problem hard and be soft on one another and this can happen by developing the best alternative to a negotiated agreement. This implies that conflict can be managed without affecting the relationship negatively. This can only happen if the involved parties do not subscribe to the winner-takes-all mentality, which implies that one party gets everything and leaves the other party with nothing. John Burton reminds us that research in the social sciences indicates that social conflict is normally caused by lack of job opportunities and economical exclusion of minority groups. He goes on to assert that social conflict is created by the structural problems of the economy (1996:1).

To reiterate, the game of conflict management as proposed by Fisher and Ury (1981) is to compromise in order to save the relationship but also to address the differences. The integrative approach takes both soft and hard approaches and clusters them into a comprehensive approach of conflict management. The conflict management mechanism needs to be institutionalised by political parties involved in power-sharing. At local government level, conflict is a symbol of instability, insecurity and absence of peace. This brings us to the connection again between conflict, security and development. Municipalities cannot promote development when there is significant conflict or insecurity. Political parties in coalition formations have a responsibility to internalise the conflict management mechanism in order to bring about stability and thereby create the scope to render services to their constituents. Thus, conflict management is at the heart of any successful coalition partnership.

The central thesis of this article is that political elites have a tendency to form coalitions without developing a conflict management mechanism to address their differences amicably. Coalition failures and a need for conflict management in SA politics is not adequately covered in the

existing literature. Thus, this article is an attempt to make a scholarly contribution to Political Science, Conflict and Peace Studies, Political Sociology and other related fields of social sciences with regard to the symbiotic relationship between coalition formations and conflict management. The next section examines the theorisation of conflict through the lens of the human needs school of thought, because of how the Burtonian perspective of human needs teases out the complexities of social conflict. The work of John Burton is examined critically by articulating both its strengths and weaknesses. From a conflict management standpoint, a great deal of scholarships discussed below is drawn from leading scholars in the field of Conflict Studies, namely: John Burton, Robert Fisher, William Ury, Ronald Fisher, Cathy Costantino, Christiana Merchant, John Galtung and Edward Azar, among others.

A Theoretical Exploration: The Dynamics of Conflict

Conceptualising conflict is complex for several reasons. For instance, conflict is studied in disciplines across the social sciences, including Law, Political Science, Sociology and Psychology. Scholars of Conflict Studies tend to draw from a variety disciplines for greater insight into conflict. Conflict is a natural phenomenon because where there are human beings tensions are bound to emerge. Human beings have different interests and preferences, which tends to lead to conflict. Thus, conflict is seen as inevitable in the domain of Conflict Studies (Costantino & Merchant, 1996:xvi). According to Harris (2009:1) 'conflict refers to an incompatibility of needs or interests between two or more parties (individuals, groups or countries) and is so common as to be regarded as inevitable'.

In this article, a distinction is made between conflict management and conflict resolution, and an argument put forward for management rather than resolution. This is despite the fact that a great deal was drawn from the scholarship of the analytical conflict resolution school of thought and its pioneer, John Burton. On the one hand, conflict resolution is about the permanent elimination of **conflict for some scholars (Snodgrass, 2005).** It seeks to address the root cause of conflict, which takes a bit longer due to the complex nature of deep-rooted conflict. On the other hand, conflict management is about the ways and means of managing conflict through careful modification, mediation or arbitration in order to reach a conflict settlement. The rationale behind conflict management is to de-escalate the magnitude of

the conflict to make sure that conflict does not inflict pain upon the other parties involved (Fisher, 1997:32, Bradshaw, 2007:5).

It is worth noting that there are different types of conflicts, such as religious conflict, conflict between states, conflict in relationships, class struggle, ethnic conflict and conflict between companies. Social conflict is caused by divergence of interests, values and goals (Jeong, 2011:5). Hence, conflict is a result of irreconcilable social/cultural difference (ibid). Lewis Coser (1956:39), in his seminal work titled *The Functions of Social Conflict,* argues that there are two types of conflicts: constructive conflicts and destructive conflicts. Good conflict refers to constructive conflict where the result is a win-win situation. Bad conflict refers to destructive conflict where there is a win-lose situation between parties.

Conflict is seen as negative by other scholars because it leads to violence. Conflict is not necessarily negative, however, because it prevents stagnation by motivating people to come up with solutions. Conflict can benefit both parties if they negotiate without power play or distrust. However, conflict is a problem when it is hurtful to the parties involved (Moore, 1986: ix), such as when it results in violence. John Galtung (2007:18) states that conflict engineered by the material conditions of society is known as structural violence.

Conflict can play out in two ways. Firstly, conflict can intensify and increase in magnitude. This is referred to as conflict escalation and can affect many of those involved negatively. Zartman & Faure (2015:11) write that conflict worsen or can act as a pathway for negotiation. They further argue that conflict escalation can be used as a tactic by one party in order to get what they want. This happens when one party makes the situation unbearable for another party as a route to victory for itself (ibid). Secondly, there is conflict de-escalation, where the magnitude of the conflict decreases and creates a space for conflict to dissipate or become less harmful. This implies that there is room for protagonists to reach a political settlement.

SA is a case in point of a post-conflict society because of its history of colonisation and apartheid, which was underpinned by brutality and coupled with land dispossession. In the literature of Conflict Studies, scholars like William Zartman (1989:5) and Edward Azar (1990:9) characterise SA as dealing with a deep-rooted conflict. SA has a protracted conflict because of the failure (of the governments of the past and present) to deal with the human needs of its people (Zartman, 1989:5, Azar, 1990:9). This line of thinking is associated with the scholarly work of John Burton. His main line of argument is that social

conflict is caused by a failure to meet human needs substantively (Burton, 1996:30). Burton's work (1996) was theoretically influenced by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Paradoxically, Burton's (1996:30) theoretical posture is that all human needs are the same and there is no classification or hierarchy. The human needs theory is sometimes referred to by other scholars as an analytical conflict resolution paradigm (Anstey, 2004:15).

According to Azar (1990:18), a protracted social conflict has a historical context, which is the fundamental denial of human needs. The failure to deal with human needs affects the stability of society and thus affects social delivery negatively This kind of social conflict is the epitome of a destructive conflict because it leads to the breakdown of a country (Breakfast, 2018:30-31).

Destructive conflict also implies that there is a direct link between security and development. This means that no country can foster development if it is bedevilled by insecurity caused by social conflict. Again, omitting conflict management skills in the discourse of coalition formations in SA will be a fundamental error. For instance, addressing social contradictions through conflict management enables a country to create stability and the foundation on which to address its challenges. According to Fisher (1997:30), the concept of deep-rooted conflict helps us to analyse and understand the deep emotions embedded in social conflict due to not attending to human needs.

Government's failures to address human needs contribute to conflict escalation. There is some overlap between the human needs theory and the frustration and aggression model because they are both concerned with human needs (Jeong, 2008:52). Galtung (2007:18) argues that aggression because of frustration is highly probable as a result of basic human needs being ignored.

Burton (1986:52) blames mediation as a traditional approach of conflict management for conflict escalation. According to him, mediators tend to take sides during conflict management and propose what he calls 'track two diplomacy'. For Burton, 'track two diplomacy' means that parties in conflict need to find ways and means of resolving their conflict without the involvement of a third party. This conflict management mechanism can be instituted during the pre-negotiation period via 'problem-solving workshops' (Burton, 1986:52). The traditional approach of conflict management, including mediation and arbitration, is perceived by the Burtonian school of thought as superficial, due to its failure to provide an in-depth-analysis of human needs (Fisher, 1997:32). The

traditional method of conflict management is not an effective approach for managing a deep-rooted conflict (Bradshaw, 2007:3). However, the Burton's workon human needs conflict should be examined through a critical lens, because it is not without its weaknesses. For instance, the human needs theory of conflict does not address the power relations embedded in the structure of the economy. This arrangement of social power relations lies at the heart of underdevelopment in society, as unravelled by Marxists. Burton's ideas on conflict tend to address psychological needs as opposed to societal needs because his work does not offer an in-depth analysis of the economy and society, which explains why the poorest of the poor are subjected to poverty and other social ills. However, with these limitations in mind, the Burtonian school of thought still provides an intellectual framework that is helpful in understanding conflict(s) in society.

The application of the 'problem-solving workshops' was evident in the wholesale meetings that took place between 1985 and 1987 (Dakar Senegal meeting) of the leaders of the ANC and Afrikaner intellectuals, business leaders and journalists (Azar, 1990:19, Bradshaw, 2008:152). The internalisation of the 'problem-solving workshops' was clearly visible during SA's political transition to democracy. The entire democratisation process was influenced by Burton's view of 'track two diplomacy'. Though there were pockets of violence and misgivings in the build-up to SA's democracy, it is still seen around the world as a peaceful transition. At the same time, some of the compromises the ANC made with the National Party, such as the land question, the structure of the economy and the sunset clause, have created scope for social conflict. Against this background, SA's democracy is extremely fragile because of power relations between the haves and the have-nots. Paradoxically, Achille Mbembe (2019:16) asserts that democracies have tended to bring physical violence under control. According to him, this is due to the monopolisation of control by state organs (such as the security structures) to control people's struggles.

Costantino and Merchant (1996:227) argue for a conflict management system in order to regulate or de-escalate conflict. A conflict management system is of paramount importance in light of coalition failures in SA municipalities. Galtung (2007:14) proposes what he calls a medical model of conflict. This means that conflict/violence should be examined in the same way as a medical condition. This model of conflict gives scholars some tools of analysis through which conflict can be understood. According to Galtung (2007:14), the first step in our

endeavour to understand conflict/violence is to understand the phenomenon through diagnosis. He goes on to say that an analysis of conflict should be followed by prognosis and end with therapeutic advice (which will prevent the negative consequences of conflict). This means that proper therapy for social conditions can only happen when there is a thorough diagnosis. Therefore, it is important to have the tools of analysis for conflict management in the quest to address social conflict. In addition, omitting the medical model of conflict analysis will create scope for failure to address social conflict. Thus, the field of Conflict Management is central when providing an examination of the weaknesses of coalition formations.

There are two extremely important concepts when discussing conflict management, namely soft-liners and hard-liners. Fisher and Ury (1981: xii) point out that both the soft-liners and hard-liners form part of negotiations. These two approaches have the ability to break or make a deal during deliberations. They are at the heart of any political outcome of a stalemate. The concepts regarding conflict and negotiation in this **article** are examined in light of the weaknesses of coalition politics within municipalities in SA. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1989:15-16) argue that soft-liners and hard-liners form part of any democratic setup or democratisation process. The conflict management system is a key ingredient for managing social contradictions as opposed to sharpening them. Costantino and Merchant (1996:26) follow the same line of thinking when they state that the conflict management system requires an analysis of the conflict via information gathering in order to evaluate the situation and share information with other parties involved in a conflict.

With the culture of violence and conflict in SA, as demonstrated by violent service delivery protests, gender-based violence, femicide, protests in institutions of higher learning, strikes, violence amongst learners at schools, political killings and the killing of children, there is a need for institutionalisation and internalisation of conflict management skills. Conflict management needs to be embedded in society, as there is currently a lack of capabilities in some sections of society for managing conflict and preventing it from escalating. However, this does not suggest that conflict can be permanently eliminated to the extent that there will never be social contradictions or personal differences. A conflict management systems approach provides an understanding of conflict and ways and means of managing it in an institutional context, also in the light of organisational theory and practice as it relates to issues

of intervention for change, learning, an action-oriented approach and building relationships (Bradshaw, 2008:116).

In the domain of conflict management, when different parties in conflict hold different views due to different values or interests, it is of paramount importance to bring in a neutral party to mediate the situation. This is particularly important in coalition politics at local government level (Bradshaw and Breakfast, 2019:123). However, as advocated by Burton, the mediator is not the traditional one that enforces the rules or agreements, or dictates what needs to be done by parties in conflict. The third-party in question needs only to clarify positions taken by different parties and lay out the rules of the game before the different arguments are presented. From a Burtonian standpoint, the involvement of any party in a conflict, except the ones affected, should be to control communication (Fisher, 1997:27).

In order to make coalition formations work in SA, particularly at local government level, it is extremely important to put national interests above the power struggles of political parties. The main aim of joining forces through coalition partners should not be for trade-offs or personal accumulation at the expense of prioritisation of the needs of citizens. SA government coalitions are of paramount importance because they embed themselves in municipalities. Local government is central with regard to service delivery because it is closer to the people on the ground. Effectively, the failure of coalition formations will have a negative impact on service delivery. Again, the success of coalition politics through conflict management skills feeds into good governance and accountability, and promotes development and consolidation of democracy. The way political parties speak to each other in public is key as conflict is frequently caused by poor communication. Therefore, information exchange needs to be done properly (Moore, 1986:28). The next section examines a comparative analysis of three metropolitan municipalities, namely: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality (NMMM) comprises Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Despatch. It was established in 2000 due to the restructuring of local government that started in 1995 and was consolidated in 1998 by the White Paper on Local Government. The

NMMM has always been the lifeblood of the ANC and was where strategic programmes of the ANC were launched and piloted. In the early 1990s, several ANC comrades who were involved in the liberation struggle were deployed to Bhisho (the Provincial legislature of the Eastern Cape) and others to the National Assembly. This paved a way for the then Regional Executive Chairperson (REC) of the ANC to be the only senior member while also being the mayor of the NMMM. Political scientist Mcebisi Ndletyana (2020:11) argues that some of the senior ANC members in the NMMM returned from the provincial parliament to the city and started contesting for political power. According to him, this created a conflict amongst the political elite and affected the function of the municipality.

In 1998, the NMMM implemented a cost-recovery mechanism and certain ANC branches refused to participate in the elections in the NMMM in 1999. This was the first disgruntlement of the ANC members. The former Member of the Executive Council (MEC) responsible for Local Government and Traditional Affairs, Sicelo Ggobana, appointed an audit firm called Kabuso to examine allegations of corruption in the city (from 2000 until 2010) (Kabuso Report, 2011:1-5, Ndletyana and Nomarwayi, 2016:578).

According to the Kabuso Report (2011:1-47), key development projects in the NMMM via the economic strategy of Public-Private Partnerships benefited senior ANC leaders with strong political capital as opposed to the downtrodden. The report stated that the Municipal Finance Management Act of 1999 was disregarded in this municipality during the awarding of tenders, and recommended that legal charges be brought against Nceba Faku who allegedly flouted the Municipal Finance Management Act of 1999 while in power. Effectively, the behaviour in question was tantamount to fruitless and wasteful expenditure (Breakfast, 2013:288). This was the beginning of the characterisation of institutional corruption, and showcased a total disregard for the internal quality control system meant to create checks and balances.

Nceba Faku was elected to the position of chairperson of the ANC in 2008 with Zamuxolo Wayile as his deputy chairperson. In addition, Wayile replaced Nondumiso Maphazi as mayor in 2008. This was a factional arrangement, as the two leaders belonged to different factions. Wayile and Faku were strong Jacob Zuma supporters and Maphazi wanted Thabo Mbeki to be granted a third term in the 2007 national elective conference of the ANC. Wayile's period as mayor was epitomised by political instability (both in the ANC and at local

government level). The public officials and politicians who supported Mbeki were removed from their positions, which affected service delivery and agitated the locals. In 2013, the Vusi Pikoli Report unveiled corrupt activities in the NMMM with regard to the Integrated Public Transport System as well (Olver, 2017:56-80).

In the 2016 local government elections, the ANC paid the price for factionalism and poor governance by receiving 40.92 percent of the vote, while the Democratic Alliance (DA) received 46.71 percent (IEC, 2016:1). Various smaller parties received the rest of the vote. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) received 5.12 percent, the United Democratic Movement (UDM) received 1.91 per cent, the Congress of the People (COPE) received 0.94 per cent, the Patriotic Alliance (PA) received 0.27 per cent and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) received 0.36 per cent (IEC, 2016:1). This gave rise to a coalition government led by the DA. This was short-lived (2016-2018) as its mayor, Athol Trollip, was replaced by Mongameli Bobani of the UDM. Interestingly, Bobani was voted out by the majority of the council members in 2019. At the time of the writing of this article, the NMMB was without a mayor due to the political instability in the council because of conflict amongst political parties. Thus, this article argues for a conflict management mechanism to address the political differences amongst members of the council. The next discussion examines the political dynamics in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality since the democratic outcome of the 2016 local government elections.

City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

Johannesburg is regarded as the economic hub of SA. It has been a main source of economic growth and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the past years, largely because of various economic activities. It is one of the largest metropolitan municipalities in SA and on the African continent and, as a result, it has become a hotly contested political terrain. Since the dawn of SA's democracy, this municipality has been under the control of the ANC. However, in the 2016 local government elections, the ANC received 44.5 percent of the vote for the first time in post-apartheid SA (IEC, 2016:1-2). The DA received 38.41 percent while the EFF received 11.09 percent (IEC, 2016:1-2, Schulz-Herzenberg, 2016).

In the build-up to the elections, the DA had used Herman Mashaba (a businessman) as a mayoral candidate. The message of the opposition

parties, mainly the DA, was that they would fight against corruption created by the ANC. Interestingly, the EFF rose to prominence after the 2016 elections as kingmakers. This was against the background of the fallout between the EFF leaders, such as Julius Malema and Floyd Shivambu, and the ANC national leadership led by Jacob Zuma. The other negative factor that had received media coverage against the ANC was the Nkandla judgment by the Constitutional Court in 2016 (just before the local government elections), which found then President Zuma to have broken his oath of office.

Subsequently, the ANC did not take a decision to recall the then President and thereby created an impression that it tolerates corruption in its ranks. In the final analysis, the EFF joined forces with the DA to form a coalition government. However, the EFF still refutes the fact that it is in a coalition government with the DA. The EFF claims that it is voting with the DA in the council on an issue-to-issue basis. Though the EFF participated in removing Athol Trollip in the NMMM, it was not prepared to vote against the DA mayor Mashaba, because they claim that he was doing a better job than the previous ANC administration in Johannesburg. However, Mashaba resigned in 2019 due to a falling out with senior leaders of the DA regarding the return of Helen Zille as the party's chairperson. Currently, the municipality in question is led by the ANC under the leadership of Geoffrey Makhubo *(Bradshaw and Breakfast, 2019).*

City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality

In the build-up to the 2016 local government elections, the City of Tshwane presented an interesting political phenomenon. A conflict broke out within the ANC around their choice for the mayoral candidate of Tshwane. Mostly, the Tshwane ANC branches and their REC preferred the former mayor, Kgosientso Ramokgopa, as mayoral contender for the city. However, the ANC national leadership imposed the former Minister of Agriculture, Thoko Didiza, as their candidate. This led to a series of violent protests in black townships where young people burnt public properties. The South African Police Service (SAPS) tried for days to de-escalate the conflict, but were unsuccessful, as the stalemate continued until both Thoko Didiza and Kgosientso Ramokgopa joined forces in campaigning on behalf of the ANC.
Didiza remained mayoral candidate and the decision of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC did not resonate with locals of

the City of Tshwane. Some ANC supporters indicated before the local government elections that they would not vote for Didiza, because they perceived her not to be from the Gauteng province. In the final analysis, the ANC received 41.25 percent of the vote while the DA got 43.15 percent. The EFF came in with the third-highest numbers at 11.63 percent (IEC, 2016:1-2). Eventually, a DA coalition government was established with the support of small political parties such as COPE, ACDP and the Vryheidsfront Plus.

New DA mayor, Solly Msimanga, was criticised by the ANC, as well as the EFF and other opposition parties, for appointing a person with no academic qualifications as Chief of Staff. A motion of no confidence was proposed by the ANC against Msimanga, but it was unsuccessful. Eventually, the DA removed Msimanga to avoid receiving further bad media coverage. These three scenarios highlight the tensions and difficulties faced by coalitions at the local level, demanding improved conflict management for political parties in coalition politics in SA. Msimanga was replaced by Stevens Mokgalapa who was embroiled in a sex scandal in 2019 with one of the councillors and resigned in 2020. At the time of the writing of this article, Tshwane municipality has been placed under administration by the Provincial government because of a plethora of conflicts in the council. The entire political landscape of coalition formations post-2016 elections has been an expression of conflict and instability. Power-sharing in the local space has not contributed to the promotion of service delivery, good governance and democratic consolidation.

Conclusion

Certainly, the hegemony of the ANC has been threatened since the 2016 local government elections, given the fact that the ruling party in SA performed badly. The electoral decline of the ANC has created scope for negotiations for power-sharing in the form of coalition. The NMMM, City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality have been characterised by political instability, conflicts and poor conflict management skills. Thus, this article was an attempt to contribute to the debate in theory and practice with regard to the operationalisation of power-sharing at local government level. Coalition formation has become part of the SA body-politic. However, the gap that needs to be filled is how to institutionalise and internalise conflict management skills in relation to coalition partnerships.

This article proposed a model of negotiation, namely the integrative theory, drawing from the scholarship of Ronald Fisher and William Ury (1981), who see negotiation as a win-win situation as opposed to being a zero-sum game. This means that parties involved in conflict need to be soft on each other and hard on the problem, which can happen when the problem is separated from personalities*. **This article*** proposes that parties in conflict need to hit the problem hard and be soft on one another and this can happen by developing the best alternative to a negotiated agreement. This implies that conflict can be managed without harming or affecting the relationship negatively. This can only happen if parties involved do not subscribe to the winner-takes-all mentality; meaning that one party gets everything but leave the other party with nothing. Again, the game of conflict management as proposed by both Fisher and Ury (1981) is to compromise in order to save the relationship but to still address the differences. Arguably, this model of conflict management can contribute to the fostering of development and rendering of services to constituents.

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