Article

The enemy within: factionalism in ANC local structures – the case of Buffalo City (East London)¹

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Abstract
Factionalism became a defining characteristic of African National Congress (ANC) intraparty politics during the lead up to the 2007 Polokwane conference. However, despite regular reference to ANC factionalism, a systematic academic analysis of this phenomenon has been left wanting. This is in line with global trends whereby factionalism is still a relatively understudied phenomenon. Generally, studies that have sought to understand factionalism have focused on parties at a national level and viewed it as driven by party leaders. In South Africa, similarly, scholars have focused on factionalism through analysis of the politics of the tripartite alliance which has been regarded as a partial institutionalisation of factionalism. This paper on the other hand takes a micro level approach and contributes to our understanding of factionalism in ANC sub-national structures. Drawing on a case study of the ANC Buffalo City region in the Eastern Cape, the paper shows that in addition to local party elites, ordinary party members in poor communities also often use factional support to access resources in constrained socio-economic conditions. Material interests therefore inform factionalism but are sometimes masked by ideological interests that draw on party divisions on national scale.

Introduction
Factionalism has become a defining characteristic of African National Congress (ANC) intra-party politics especially during the lead up to and after the 2007 Polokwane national elective conference. This gathering was a turning point in post-apartheid ANC history as the party was sharply divided along factional lines, leading to a vicious contestation for the leadership of the party. In September 2005, Jacob Zuma had been ‘relieved’
of his post as deputy president by president Thabo Mbeki after a Durban High Court judge convicted his financial adviser Schabir Shaik of corruption and fraud. This prompted a coming together of forces which had become increasingly alienated by Mbeki’s leadership. Their dissent stemmed from the ANC’s adoption of neoliberal policies embodied by the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme in 1996 which was perceived as a betrayal of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). Substantial segments of Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) felt this way. The dismissal of Zuma thus facilitated these dissidents unifying ‘behind a single individual who had in their eyes been publicly discarded by Mbeki for political purposes’ (Rossouw 2012: 50). In other words, the battle lines had been drawn and contending factions came to the surface as the SACP and COSATU backed Zuma ahead of the Polokwane conference. However, after Zuma assumed leadership of the party after defeating Mbeki, the events of the Polokwane conference would trickle down to engulf ANC provincial, district and regional structures in purges of Mbeki supporters. Municipalities became one battleground, as evidenced by numerous power struggles between ANC executive committee members, councillors, mayors, municipal managers and other bureaucrats.

Since then, despite regular reference by the media to factionalism in the ANC, there have been few academic studies that have sought to understand the nature of factional politics in the ANC. Those that do, provide an overview focusing on factionalism on a national scale and some, in passing, through analysis of politics of the tripartite alliance which has been regarded as a partial institutionalisation of factionalism (eg Boysen 2011:71, 361, Lodge 2004, Butler 2007). Other studies have looked at factionalism superficially in relation to service delivery protests across South Africa (see Von Holdt et al 2011, Dawson 2014). However, the dynamics of factionalism in ANC sub-national structures such as provinces, districts and regions have largely been ignored despite being key sites of struggles for the control municipalities and the resources they distribute such as tenders and jobs.

The top down perspective of factionalism is indicative of a global trend, with influential scholars now arguing that factionalism is actually misunderstood as much as it is under-studied as a complex phenomenon spanning different levels of a polity (see Boucek 2009: 1-2, Köllner and Basedau 2005: 6). This article, therefore, sets out to understand the drivers of factionalism in the ANC at a local level. It draws on experiences from the
ANC’s Buffalo City region as a case study to show how material interests masquerading in ideological clothing underlie factional politics. The material interests include accumulation of goods and services necessary for upward social mobility and survival. This is all situated within the broader socio-economic context characterised by limited livelihood opportunities.

However, before proceeding, it is important first to establish some conceptual clarity concerning factionalism, by tracing the development and use of the term. This is done in the first section. A historical overview of factionalism within the ANC is then offered to trace the basis and contextualised factionalism in the ANC. As noted earlier, the socio-economic context of the local state is the key factor shaping factional politics from below. Accordingly, the paper provides a description of the political economy of the local state, thereby situating the major determinants of factional politics. In highlighting the competition for local state resources, such as jobs and tenders, the paper draws parallels to Chatterjee’s (2013) notion of the vitality of competition amongst the poor in ‘political society’.

**Factions and factionalism: a conceptual framework**

The term ‘factionalism’ gives rise to different interpretations, ranging from a neutral assessment of different power blocs within a party or organisation to a value-laden interpretation that associates factions with patronage, self-interest and often self-enrichment (Isandla Institute 2011). Nonetheless, as Belloni and Beller (1978: 13) note, factions are a significant aspect of political competition. A brief etymology of the concept of faction is therefore needed.

Boucek (2009) offers an excellent synthesis of key studies of factionalism in political science since the eighteenth century including definitions. She outlines how the writings of the American founding fathers and other seventeenth and eighteenth century writers and philosophers, such as Bolingbroke, Hume and Burke viewed factions either as an indication of lack of public-spiritedness or as obstacles (albeit inevitable, whether desirable or otherwise) to majority rule. Boucek also notes that ‘before political parties came into being and political leaders were still experimenting with forms of government, the term ‘faction’ was used to describe the main rival groups competing within a polity, such as the Whigs and Tories in eighteenth century England, the Jacobins and Girondins in revolutionary France and the Federalist elites in the early American Republic who followed Hamilton versus those who followed Madison in the House of Representatives’ (Boucek 2009: 460).
As political parties became more established in the mid-twentieth century, scholars came to view factions as intra-party groups although a strong negative bias persisted. For example, ‘VO Key blamed factions for sustaining one-party rule in the deep South of the USA, for encouraging favouritism and graft among elected officials and for squelching competition between the “haves” and “have-nots”’ (Boucek 2009: 460). However, other scholars had now begun to adopt a more neutral view of factionalism such as Duverger (1951) who viewed factions as mere manifestations of diversity within the party.

In the mid-1960s, Richard Rose’s work on the Conservatives and Labour in Britain differentiated factions from tendencies. Rose (1964, in Boucek 2009: 463) defined tendencies as ‘stable sets of attitudes rather than stable groups of politicians’. They were ‘less organised and less permanent than factions’. He concluded that ‘the Conservatives’ electoral party was pre-eminently a party of tendencies’, whereas ‘the Labour electoral party had been since its foundation a party of factions’. He argued that factions persist through time and ‘are self-consciously organized as a body, with a measure of discipline and cohesion’. Therefore the key difference between Rose’s categories seems to be the degree of institutionalisation of intra-party groups within any given party. Hence, factions are ‘strongly institutionalised groups, and tendencies are weakly institutionalised groups’ (Boucek 2009: 463).

Zariski (1960) went further to point out that factions are significant structural features inside parties worthy of academic study. Zariski offered a general definition of factionalism that is still valid today by suggesting that:

[W]e might define a faction as any intra-party combination, clique, or grouping whose members share a sense of common identity and common purpose and are organized to act collectively – as a distinct bloc within the party – to achieve their goals. These goals may include any, several, or all of the following: patronage (control of party and government office by members of the faction), the fulfilment of local, regional, or group interests, influence on party strategy, influence on party and governmental policy, and the promotion of a discrete set of values to which members of the faction subscribe. (Zariski 1960: 33, in Boucek 2009: 468)

Drawing on this definition, a faction is a group within a larger group, in this case a political party such as the ANC, whilst factionalism is the process of partitioning a political party into sub-units that engage in collective action
in order to achieve their members’ objectives (Boucek 2009). This is how the concepts will be used in this paper because these definitions do not express any normative judgements. In addition, ‘the definition does not set arbitrary boundaries between different types of intra-party groups; and, importantly, it incorporates the idea of actors’ motivations which helps in explaining behaviour’ (Boucek 2009:467). With this conceptual understanding, we can now move on to discussing factionalism in the ANC and its basis at the local level.

**Factionalism in the ANC: a historical overview**

The ANC has a long history of factionalism as it was an amalgamation of individuals from different constituencies when it was formed in 1912. ‘From its foundation the ANC appealed to and more infrequently to mobilise a number of distinct and potentially conflictual constituencies. There were, first, the traditional leaders of South Africa – its kings and its chiefs; second, Christian educated black elite – doctors, lawyers, journalists, clergymen and teachers; third, the urban African population; and fourth, the rural populace. Later the youth would be added to this mix’ (Bonner 2012: 2).

By 1928 the ANC had taken a sharp left turn under the influence of the Communist Party and the leadership of Josiah Gumede. He had toured the Soviet Union and came back declaring he had found the key to freedom in communism after seeing how the Soviet Union had dealt with racism (Holland 1989: 46). His call for the right to self-determination was not well received by the conservative chiefs in the ANC, whose opposition to Gumede culminated in his ousting when in 1930 Pixley ka Isaka Seme was elected as the ANC’s fifth president after campaigning to expel the communists (Holland 1989, Jolobe 2012). This prompted the formation of a breakaway group guided by former party president Josiah Gumede, the Independent ANC (Jolobe 2012).

The ANC was to remain divided into those who insisted on a continuation of moderate methods of resistance and those who pushed for more confrontational mass action. By December 1949, under the influence of the Youth League (ANCYL), the ANC had adopted the ‘Programme of Action’ which abandoned the traditional moderate approach of petitions and deputations in favour of mass action using the tactics of boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience leading to the Defiance Campaign of the 1950s (Lissoni 2008).

In 1958 Robert Sobukwe was the mouthpiece of an Africanist group in the
ANC that was critical of the ANC’s commitment to ending white domination because it worked with whites in the Congress Alliance. The Africanists believed that ‘black Africans had to liberate themselves and not depend on non-blacks to do it for them’. They were sceptical of ANC cooperation with non-blacks and thought that communist influence was so strong that the organisation had substituted class struggle for the all-important aim of achieving African nationalism (Pogrund 1991). This Africanist faction, located in the ANCYL, also rejected the founding principles of the Freedom Charter particularly its reference to white and blacks as brothers (Holland 1989: 118, Jolobe 2012). They regarded the freedom charter as a reformist sell out of black nationalist interests (Louw 2004). Ultimately, in 1959, Sobukwe led a break-away faction to form the Pan African Congress (PAC).

The issue of opening up the ANC to all racial groups continued to haunt the Congress Alliance throughout the 1960s and these rifts threatened to split the organisation. According to Ellis (2013:74), the line of cleavage was largely one of colour as critics of open ANC membership were black South Africans influenced by the Africanist ideas espoused in Tanzania and in many other parts of Africa. At the 1969 Morogoro conference, the most controversial item on the agenda was opening up ANC membership to all racial groups (Ellis 2013: 75). The party hierarchy led by Moses Kotane and JB Marks, supported by Joe Matthews, Ben Turok and others, had advocated the opening up of ANC membership to all races whilst some black and white SACP members, including Brian Bunting and Ray Simons, opposed this view. In addition, they had also urged a radical restructuring of the ANC-SACP alliance, recommending a clean sweep of the old executive (Callinicos 1999: 132).

However, under Tambo’s leadership, which now embraced a wider and more inclusive non-racialism, the ANC-led Congress Alliance persevered and opened its membership. Nonetheless, factional divisions stemming from opening the ANCs membership persisted. An Africanist group known as the ‘Gang of Eight’, which was led by Eastern Cape politician Tennyson Makiwane, took exception to the ANC’s 1969 Morogoro conference decision to open its membership to whites, coloureds and Indians. After six years of speaking behind closed doors about its dissatisfaction, the ‘Gang of Eight’ publicly criticised the ANC at the funeral of Robert Resha, a senior party member, in London in 1975 (Ellis and Sechaba 1992, Mail&Guardian 2011). At a meeting held in Morogoro, Tanzania, the national executive committee (NEC) of the ANC unanimously decided to expel all eight members from the
ranks of the organisation. They were accused of pursuing disruptive factionalist activities in their bid to bring about the exclusion from the ranks of the ANC of some members merely on the grounds of their race or membership of the South African Communist Party (ANC 1976).

In late 1979 and early 1980, ideological divisions led to a small group of socialists to attempt to steer the ANC in a new strategic direction but they were suspended and then expelled from the movement. ‘They then formed themselves into a group which they called the Marxist Workers’ Tendency of the African National Congress, but they failed to make any impact on the strategy of the ANC at the time or to mobilize any support within the movement for their position. Rather, they were chided for their ‘economistic and “workerist” approach’. They were later said to have ‘dismissed the ANC leadership as a right wing faction whose aims ran contrary to the interests of the working class in South Africa’, a judgement which was advanced to explain why the ANC ‘viewed them as arrogant enemies of the ANC-led liberation struggle’ (Friedman 2012: 18).

The ANC has therefore been marred by periodic factional struggles from its formation. Throughout its struggle years during apartheid, ideological differences largely informed factionalism. With the onset of democracy, it is pertinent to ask whether factionalism is still as prevalent and what its character is.

**Factionalism after 1994**

Post-apartheid, the ANC has continued to be marked by factionalism. From as early as 1996, less than 24 months after the new government assumed power, a neoliberal economic policy was introduced, which in essence replaced the initial Reconstruction and Development Programme and was seen by the SACP and COSATU as a departure from the National Democratic Revolution, and as fuelling factional fissures within the ANC and the alliance (Bond 2000). This was because the Mbeki led ANC had pushed this policy past its allies without consultation (Marais 2011). As was later to be remarked by Zwelenzima Vavi, general secretary of COSATU, ‘[a]fter just over a year in power, in 1995 the ANC government unilaterally announced GEAR. Practically, this meant the announcement of a neoliberal programme of privatisation of major state enterprises, the adoption of conservative policies on exchange control and inflation and a rapid reduction of protective trade tariffs to below even what the World Trade Organisation was demanding at the time’.
This strained the relationship between the ruling ANC and the other two members of its tripartite alliance, threatening to lead to its breakup in 2002 (Pillay 2006: 167). The simmering tensions that were evident during the Mandela presidency worsened under Mbeki’s leadership.

The rapid implementation of market-friendly policies under the Mbeki administration essentially cast Mbeki’s leadership style as centrist, non-responsive, technocratic and illiberal (Mathekga 2008). In addition, ‘Mbeki’s presidency inaugurated a new type of leadership compared to what was seen under Mandela. It was characterised by the consolidation of various government administrative departments into a few administrative committees that were centrally co-ordinated and controlled from the president’s office’ (Mathekga 2008: 132). The firing of Zuma as deputy president in 2005 triggered a groundswell of ANC members who wanted to unseat Mbeki. Nicoll (2011) adds that because Mbeki’s detractors lacked anyone with major stature to challenge him, they rallied behind Zuma – for all his highly visible flaws – as the best candidate available to head a planned takeover of the party.

Cosatu and the SACP, themselves initially divided along the same factional lines, ultimately purged dissenters and threw their considerable weight behind Zuma ahead of the Polokwane elective conference. They were driven by both intense dislike of and alienation from Mbeki, and were determined to gain control over issues of policy within the ANC (Booysen 2011: 71). The ANC then became fragmented into two identifiable groups/factions commonly referred to by the media as the ‘communist’ and ‘nationalist’ factions, with Zuma associated with the former and Mbeki the latter.4

After Zuma’s victory at Polokwane, officials not associated with his faction were purged. Mbeki himself was ousted from the presidency in September 2008, six months before his term was to end. This further polarised the party promoting the formation of a breakaway pro-Mbeki party called Congress of the People (COPE) in December 2008, although many, including Mbeki himself, remained within the ANC. Ten ministers resigned in solidarity, among them the country’s deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and stalwart Ronnie Kasrils, whilst respected intellectual and policymaker Joel Netshitenzhe similarly became less influential (Nicoll 2011).

At the party’s 53rd national conference in Mangaung in December 2012, Gwede Mantashe in his organizational report highlighted under section 2.1.10 that one the biggest challenges that confronted the NEC was
factionalism that had become institutionalised. He added that ‘we are seeing more boldness in the provinces, where factions even give themselves formal names’ (ANC 2012). Academics too have reached similar conclusions. For instance, Booysen has focussed attention on ANC factions at the national level describing the fragmentation of the party at this level as characterised by two identifiable factions referred to as the ‘nationalist’ and ‘communist/socialist’ factions which have relatively different policy and ideological positions (Booysen 2011: 38, 71, 361). However, the picture we are presented with always revolves around factionalism at the general national level. In contrast, it will be argued below that factionalism at the local level revolves less around national than around local socio-economic issues.

The local context: Buffalo City’s socio-economic environment
Located in the south-east of South Africa, Buffalo City is the second biggest metropolitan area in the Eastern Cape. Buffalo City integrates East London as the primary economic area, whilst the area around King Williams Town and Bisho is the secondary area that also serves as the administrative centre of the Eastern Cape. According to the 2011-2016 Integrated Development Plan (IDP), its township of Mdantsane is South Africa’s second largest after Soweto (IDP 2011-2016). Textile and motor industries dominate the local economy and the city hosts one of South Africa’s industrial development zones which has notable investment from Mercedes Benz and its subcontractors. The total population of Buffalo City is estimated to be 755,200 and approximately ‘70 per cent of households in the City earn an income of less than R1,500 per month, with 28 per cent of all households indicating no income at all whilst unemployment is estimated to be about 24 per cent’ (IDP 2011-2016: 11). In terms of service provision, Buffalo City has done reasonably well in terms of water and electricity supply. However, the city has been unable to make significant strides in the eradication of slums or upgrading of informal settlements. At 24.4 per cent, Buffalo City has the highest percentage of households living in informal settlements in the Eastern Cape.

We cannot understand local government only in local terms as it is situated in broader socio-economic and political frameworks. The backdrop to Buffalo City’s political economy is that South Africa is faced by what Hart (2013:5) has identified as an economic, social and political crisis that is compounded even by a moral crisis of the ANC. Hart argues that ‘the transition to democracy, the ANC’s conservative policies and the opening up to the global economy in the mid-1990s combined to generate pressures
that contributed to these crises and contradictions’. The crises are evidenced by the proliferating expressions of discontent, such as over ‘service delivery’ or ‘salary increments’, over the decade of the 2000s. Local government has thus become the key site in which contradictions of the neo-liberal post-apartheid era are visible. Hart (2013: 5) adds that ‘local government has become the impossible terrain of official efforts to manage poverty and deprivation in a racially inflected capitalist society marked by massive inequalities and increasingly precarious livelihoods for the large majority of the population’.

In addition, local government has to deal on one hand with tensions between fierce austerity and the commodification of basic services whilst on the other hand dealing with increased new responsibilities including invocations of local participation, social justice and democracy (Hart, 2013:97). The local state is therefore a key site for the realisation of social, political and economic needs. Importantly for this discussion, the decline in industry in Buffalo City has left the local state as an important employer of people in formal jobs. The local state has thus become a vital agent for social mobility and redistribution through direct and indirect employment and through state procurement and tenders. However, political parties, notably the ANC, are important to access these opportunities. As Butler (2005:278) remarks, ‘parties are primarily instruments for securing state power’. Therefore competition to access state resources is fuelling the fragmentation of the party as local political elites coalesce into groups that wrestle to control the state apparatus and the patronage networks associated with them. However, ordinary party members from the poor townships of Buffalo City are not passive party supporters but rather they evaluate and offer political support based on the possibility of receiving goods and services to enhance their livelihoods.

**The basis of factional politics**

As highlighted in the preceding section, there are limited opportunities to secure livelihoods in private sector formal employment in Buffalo City. Goods and services such as jobs, grants, food parcels and tenders that the local state provides are therefore paramount to people’s survival especially for the uneducated and unskilled who cannot get work in the city’s motor, manufacturing and financial sectors. Access to the local state is guaranteed by the dominant political party that controls and determines the direction of the municipality through councillors and the appointment of municipal...
managers, the mayor and other senior officials. Therefore the de facto space where competition for local resources takes place is the ANC. While local politicians offer goods and services for political support, ordinary party members often expect these goods and services in exchange for their support. Poor people in Buffalo City townships make calculated decisions about who to support by considering the best opportunities to secure livelihoods.

The political and administrative interface of municipalities offers hundreds of salaried positions. Buffalo City’s council alone has 100 councillors and a nine member mayoral committee excluding the mayor, speaker of council, council chief whip and their deputies. In 2011, councillors earnt R17,719 and an additional monthly cell-phone allowance of R933 whilst members of the mayoral committee earnt R44,297 inclusive of a car allowance. The mayor’s monthly salary was R59,063, this including a R14,265 car allowance and an additional R1,496 cell-phone allowance (Daily Dispatch, July 7, 2011). In addition to these direct jobs, there are numerous other employment opportunities available for distribution by political office bearers such as their support staff like secretaries and assistants.

For many residents of Buffalo City, political office is closely associated with the nexus of power, status and money. Previously unemployed individuals who successfully secure political office such as being a local councillor or various party leadership positions have had their material fortunes improve radically. With access to salaried jobs, tenders and the capability to distribute jobs, they have made very visible improvements in their quality of life. This display of wealth develops the conception that access to the state is guaranteed through the party and its leaders. The perceived powers to distribute jobs in the municipality drive some community members to support a party and specific individuals within the party in exchange for jobs. A councillor in Mdantsane confessed that the promise of jobs acted as political currency used to garner support during his election.

Some of the people are very clear that they will support you only if you assure them of a job once elected. Usually you just pick the most active ones when the opportunity arises because you cannot give jobs to everyone. (Interview with Siwe, June 4, 2012)

An ANC branch executive member in Ilitha township confirmed this trend and pointed out that there is usually more than one person seeking support before an election. Therefore, pressed with a decision to choose a candidate, Vuyo noted that ‘our people make demands and they will only support you..."
if you give them something concrete’. Vuyo added that councillors occasionally have the opportunity to submit names from their wards for temporary jobs with the municipality such as during clean up campaigns or infrastructural development projects. Their constituency thus already expects the distribution of these jobs amongst party loyalists.

With no formal qualifications required, seeking political office is one of the only available options that many have for upward social mobility. This was the case for Siwe who completed matric but could not qualify for any further tertiary training. He was an active ANC activist in Duncan Village, East London when he pointed out that:

…my target is to work in the municipality so I am going to contest in my branch elections to be in the executive so that I can be more visible to work in the municipality…I am close with the chairwoman Zukisa Faku … she has my CV and my hopes are on her. (Interview with Siwe, July 7, 2011)

For Siwe, being active politically or seeking political office is an important step towards securing employment in the local state. Importantly, he has to identify with a prominent figure in local politics and by extension the faction associated with that politician to increase his chances of securing employment with the municipality. Without such political muscle behind him or these political networks, it would be difficult because he has very little formal education and no particular skill. Considering that there are many more individuals like Siwe, the competition over scarce job opportunities is very high.

The experience of Luyanda who is currently a DA councillor underlines this reality of excessive competition in the ANC. When he was unemployed and living in a shack, Luyanda was active in community development projects. As one of the leaders of one of the projects, he decided to use the popularity he gained to compete to become local councillor for his community. He acknowledged that his first option was to contest as an ANC candidate but he soon realised that there was stiff competition within the ANC and he was unlikely to make it on the party list. Luyanda then learnt that if he signed up 100 DA members in his community, he could open a branch and become the number one contender to be a councillor (Interview with Luyanda March 1, 2011). He lost in the 2011 local government elections to an ANC rival in a ward contest but with the number of votes the DA obtained, he still managed to be appointed as the DA proportional representation councillor for the same community. Luyanda demonstrates the same urge to join a
faction although he took it even further and joined another party altogether. In addition to salaried jobs, the power to allocate the distribution of state contracts and tenders also fuels material interest based factionalism. Ayanda, a COSATU provincial official, suggested that:

the contestation is not about people wanting to deliver, but people wanting to position themselves to get lucrative tenders. It’s not about delivery ... the reason why people are fighting is because of these tenders, that’s all. People want their persons to be in strategic positions so that tenders should go down to where they are. (Interview with Ayanda May 30, 2012)

The Municipal Structures Act (1998) allows council to appoint the municipal managers as the administrative head of the municipality and also oversees the recruitment of directorate heads that fall under the municipal manager. This therefore means that politicians also have by extension an influence in the areas a municipal manager is responsible for, most importantly in the allocation of tenders. Buffalo City had four acting municipal managers in the three years between 2008 and 2011 and this was linked to opposing factions who could not agree on a suitable candidate. The current municipal manager was permanently appointed in February 2012 after he had been acting in this position since November 2010.

The limited nature of the resources found in the local state ensures stiff competition that takes the form of factionalism in the ANC. This is in line with Chatterjee’s observation that struggles in political society are competitive because resources are finite. Political society thus pits groups against each other as they vie for state attention and entitlements. However, what are the resultant political implications?

**Emergent forms of factionalism**

Bettcher, drawing on the Japanese and Italian experiences, argues that ‘factions can perform an integrative function whereby they permit a diversity of interests or beliefs to coexist within a party without fragmenting’ (2005: 343). However, this is contingent upon whether factions represent any social interests other than their own self-interest.

There are three forms of factionalism in the literature which are assessed in relation to the ANC in Buffalo city: cooperative, competitive, and degenerative factionalism (Bettcher 2005, Boucek 2009 ). Cooperative factionalism depends on the provision of a structure of cooperation between separate intra-party groups. This is done such that factions articulate opinions and preferences of separate societal groups and mobilise separate
memberships and communities of interests within a single organization. In this way, factions can diversify party appeals and can play a constructive role in building integrated parties (Boucek 2009: 15). However, key to this form of factionalism is political elites and followers with convergent preferences and attitudes. In Buffalo City, as noted above, competition for scarce resources ensures that there are limited chances for convergent preferences or cooperation.

Competitive factionalism denotes factions that are opposed as a result of divergent preferences rather than simply separate. They become opposed usually because of deep-seated issues that are difficult to integrate within party ideology such as the introduction of market forces in the provision of public services, as has proved so divisive amongst the British Labour Party and the Germany’s Social Democrats. There is limited evidence in Buffalo City for this form of factionalism.

Lastly, Boucek (2009) points out that degenerative factionalism stems from institutionalising factions within a party as recognising them can lead to excessive fragmentation, privatised incentives and faction embeddedness. Excessive fragmentation undermines the stability of the party and its decision making ability. Privatised incentives stem from focusing attention away from the party towards the narrow interests of faction leaders through patron client relationships. In South Africa, it is exacerbated by contexts such as in Buffalo City whereby the state is the largest provider of economic opportunities. This observation was made by Thando, an opposition party provincial organiser who noted that,

> the salaries that these guys get, they will never earn them anywhere in their lives, even after they finish serving in the municipality, that’s why they will fight and scramble at every opportunity in municipal governance. (Interview with Thando, June 7, 2013)

Faction embeddedness occurs when faction leaders search for the personal votes. This creates an exchange vote which in turn creates a myriad of vertical networks of political patronage in local communities (Boucek, 2009: 23-24). The case of Siwe and the regional chair, highlighted above, illustrates this.

Factionalism in Buffalo City is closer to the degenerative form of factional politics. However, unlike in Boucek’s analogy whereby this is a result of excessive institutionalisation, ANC factions do not have a structure under which they operate. Rather it is material interests coupled with a total lack of any factional structures that have led to excessive fragmentation and
privatised incentives, thereby denoting a degenerative form of factionalism. The degenerative aspects of ANC factionalism have led to the proliferation of undemocratic internal political practices such as party list manipulation and vote buying.

Conclusion
Driven by the socio-economic conditions, factions in Buffalo city are based on material interest and use ideological reasons only for instrumental purposes. They coalesce around individual personalities and preferences resulting in personalistic relationships or patron-client relationships. This combined with the absence of any regulatory, control and institutional mechanism in the party, has meant that the material interest based factionalism is increasingly becoming degenerative as they primarily become entrenched in self-interest. As a result, they are likely to have dysfunctional effects in the party and on governance.

As Bettcher notes, factions can have functional or dysfunctional effects on the party and on governance depending on how they are organised. Patronage-oriented factions based on material interests are less likely to respond to social concerns since they are driven by individual concerns and networks (Bettcher 2005). For the party, the degenerative aspects of ANC factionalism have led to the proliferation of undemocratic internal political practices such as party list manipulation and vote buying. As for the dysfunctional effects on governance, material interest based factions which are also patronage-oriented such as the ones evident in Buffalo City are less likely to respond to social concerns the same way that ideological factions might because they represent their own self-interest thus contributing to the service delivery crisis being faced by local government.

Notes
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4. An example of such media reports, see Patrick Laurence (undated) and Mandy Rossouw (2005).
References


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**Interviews**

Interview with Siwe, July 7, 2011 at Duncan Village, East London.

Interview with Ayanda May 30, 2012 at Southernwood, East London.

Interview with Luyanda, March 1, 2011 at Buffalo City.

Interview with Thando, June 7, 2013 at Vincent, East London.