

Intra and inter political parties democracy: the upholding of democracy pillars within political parties:- By Hon. S. Mazosiwe Chair of Chairs and Acting Deputy Clerk of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature (south Africa)

Causes and effects of internal conflicts and effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanism.
Term of office of political office bearers and leadership succession plans.

Introduction

- Back ground on the formation of political parties in South Africa
- Pillars and democracy
- Challenges
- Conflict resolution mechanism
- Current issues – 2007 ANC Conference in Polokwane, arms deal & scorpions
- Inter-political issues

Topic/issues raised in this debate cannot be exhausted today. It requires in depth look at systems and traditions influencing or shaping of political parties. It session meant to share ideas and impose any specific theory or system. Political parties the world over are dynamic in nature but based on the will of the people therefore what is critical in any political parties or liberation movement is its value system and code of conduct.

Intra-party democracy

In South Africa the majority of political parties prior to 1994 were formed based on racial lines. However my focus today would be based on the history of the African National Congress whose foundation in 1912 was non-racialism and the championing of democratic ideals based on democratic principles and universal franchise. It is a peaceful organization whose primary aim was to liberate South Africa of all racial forms in society in particular liberate the African majority against racial oppression. Among the strategies adopted at the time was to send petitions and deputation to London (Crown) calling for the inclusion of the African majority in the running of the country particularly the right to vote. The position of struggle through peaceful means continued until the early 60's where Umkhonto Wesizwe was born to strengthen the resolve to liberate the country. The ANC further strengthened its fight against racism by forming Alliances with organized labour, Indian Congress and Communist Party(since early 1920's).

Congress of the people

Any political formation must have its own Constitution where vision, mission, structures, powers and functions, membership, membership rights and the code of conduct are outlined clearly so that it is understood by any member joining. The ANC endeavored to involve the people in the struggle against apartheid since its inception. The adoption of the freedom charter in 1955 in Kliptown highlights this point. The Charter highlighted among other things issues related to land reform, better and equal education system, houses for all, redistribution of wealth and the respect of human rights for all. It promotes the democratic ideals through holding regular

elections at all levels i.e. branch, region, province and national. It also ensures the establishment of sub-committees at all level according to portfolios. This has resulted in the promotion of the culture of debate of issues of governance at all level. The recognition of the role of women is high on the agenda of the ANC and its alias. As we speak 50% of councilors nominated by the ANC in all the municipalities are women. The level of participation of women has sharply increased and women issues are put high on the agenda. The ANC is a highly organized force and has organized the masses of South Africans in boycotts, marches and stay aways since the 1980's. During the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 and the subsequent elections of 1999 and 2004 the ANC has managed to pull the majority of South Africans behind it. It now commands almost 2/3 majority in parliament.

Challenges

Reconfiguration of party structures post 1994

- branches aligned with wards
- capacity to organize a wider area (logistical problems)
- many branches became in active
- individualism developed
- challenges posed by incapacity at local level because of deployment of Cadres to government positions. (local, provincial and National)
- unintended consequences of democratization of state (exposure to tenders and staff deployment)
- Scarce resource allocations created tensions in communities (service delivery challenges)
- role of organization vs state became blurred :
 - a strong organization outside government is necessary in order to create checks and balances
 - party structures should influence policy in a meaningful way /mandating procedure (oversight)
 - party deployees should always carry mandated positions (party line)
 - there is very little flexibility on available options for the party members.
 - South Africa: party line takes precedence e.g. same sex marriage ; termination of pregnancy

Conflict resolution mechanisms

- Continued dialogue/ engagement by all to resolve misunderstanding or disagreements.

- If party policies are breached disciplinary proceedings kick in (suspended sentence of expulsion)

Current issues

The ANC Polokwane national conference in December 2007 highlighted the following:

- Consolidation of the transformation agenda by the organization
- Clear distinctive role of the ANC as a party as against those of government
- The reinforcement of the notion that party policies should inform those of government

Arms deal: (matter before courts)

It is very difficult to comment on the matter because it is before courts in South Africa but I would like to highlight the following:

- sensitive issues of security of state raised
- motive around issues raised on arms deal curious
- lack of consistency in dealing with cases
- Information sometime is based on rumours and speculation (media driven exercise)
- had a huge impact in weakening of dividing the ANC
- a major weakness in the investigations is that it is taking too long to complete (8 yrs or more)
- role of Scorpions came under spotlight (modus operandi)
- new information emerging

Disbanding Scorpions

The key issue is the strengthening of the whole justice system in order to fight organized crime and lawlessness.

Inter-political parties democracy

Through out the world political parties have one way or the other formed alliances or coalitions in order to fulfill a particular strategy. The Israel government has been governed by coalitions for many decades. The same could be said of Italy etc etc. South Africa has not escape this route as it was shown in 1994 during the first democratic elections where the ANC invited other minority parties to form government. It was a coalition that worked for few years but broke up because of other differences. Currently there are alliance formed by various political party in the country e.g. the city of Cape Town governed by a coalition of minority parties living out the ANC which has the slender in the council. The same scenario obtains in the various local councils where parties have come together to form coalitions. At other levels parties continue to engage in dialogue in order to address issues of neutral concerns. The ANC continues to be strong because of its alliance strategic partners.

Challenges

Alliances at inter political party level are faced with many challenges as a result some coalitions do not last for long because of the different cultures that these political parties may pursue

Thank you

