

**The Economic Freedom Fighters and the Dynamics of Insurgent Practice in South Africa**

by

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Guided by the insurgent practice theory of social movements, this study examines the dynamics of three major protest events initiated by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) political party in South Africa against the ruling African National Congress (ANC). This study examines how and to what extent third parties unified to support a broader challenge to the ANC in response to the EFF's insurgent actions and the ANC's repressive response. Through a methodology of historical narrative reconstruction of the protest events, the repressive response, and the responses of key third parties to the protest/repression dynamic, I found that the EFF's unique insurgent practice of parliamentary disruption effectively leveraged existing cleavages between the ANC and the official opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) as well as between the ANC and its historic mass base. This sustained the EFF's insurgency in the face of repression and emboldened third parties to engage in more effective tactics of opposition to the ANC alongside the EFF. The evidence of the dynamics of insurgent practice in this case expand the applicability of insurgent practice theory to the Global South, a field in which the theory had not previously been tested, and as such allows for a better understanding of how the dynamics of insurgent protest have affected South African political life, suggesting further applications for the theory in a diverse array of settings.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

On February 18, 2018, South African President Jacob Zuma announced his resignation. Zuma's presidency defined a decade of decline for the African National Congress (ANC), the political party which has ruled South Africa since the first post-apartheid elections were held in 1994. In the Zuma era, the party lost a great deal of electoral support due to a combination of "internal divisions [within the party], publicized scandals, and widespread popular resistance" (Paret 2018:492). In this context, Zuma's resignation constituted a key moment in which the ANC accepted the need for reconstitution. In its internal party election at the December 2017 National Conference, the ANC elected a new party president, Cyril Ramaphosa, to succeed Zuma.

Almost five years earlier, in October 2013, expelled former leaders of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) held a historic event announcing the formation of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The Marikana massacre a year earlier had convinced many that the ANC had betrayed its foundational commitment to the struggle for national liberation. The former ANCYL leaders drew thousands of people to the site of Marikana to participate in launching this new opposition party (Kwanele Sosibo 2013).

The EFF grew out of an earlier split within the ANC directly connected to Jacob Zuma. The radical leadership of the ANCYL, Julius Malema, formed a key and vocal component in the broad coalition which put Zuma in power in 2009. Together, Zuma and his allies represented a militant opposition to former President Mbeki's neoliberal politics (Southall 2009). After coming to power, however, Zuma turned away from the original aims of his coalition, expelling Malema and other radical leaders from the ANC. Following this expulsion, Malema and others founded the EFF as an insurgent left opposition party. They claimed to embody the original vision of the ANC,

contesting the ANC's claim that it continued to advance the liberation struggle. A political party drawing from "Marxist-Leninist... and Fanonian" schools of thought, the EFF proclaimed its determination to pursue true "economic emancipation" for South Africa (Economic Freedom Fighters 2013).

Today, the EFF has become the third-largest party in South Africa in terms of representation in Parliament. EFF has experienced electoral gains in every provincial, municipal, and national election which it has contested to date. Further, the EFF has achieved increasing influence in the Ramaphosa administration, for example co-introducing a bill with Ramaphosa to engage in sweeping land reform, a key tenet of the EFF platform and a radical measure long sought by the South African masses (Mumbere 2018).

Beyond policymaking, the EFF has made highly effective use of the South African Parliament as a site of insurgent action. This action has been particularly directed at Zuma's presidency. Commentators and scholars have credited the EFF's movement practices, especially its use of parliament itself as a highly visible site of protest, as being key to its success as a party (Bond 2015; Calland and Seedat 2016; Nieftagodien 2018). Recently, the EFF has begun to claim responsibility for Zuma's resignation (Whittles 2019). Is this so? It is certain that there were a number of elements which led to the resignation of Zuma and the rearticulation of power in South Africa. How and to what extent did third parties unify to support a broader challenge to the ANC in response to the EFF's insurgent actions and the ANC's repressive response?

In the EFF's defiant parliamentary performances, Zuma was held up as a symbol of the ANC's decline in revolutionary character, representative of neocolonial governance in South Africa. There is no doubt that Zuma's resignation constituted a watershed moment in South African politics, a clear realignment of power in South Africa (Booyesen 2018; Southall 2018). The



rising power and influence of the EFF coincided with the end of the Zuma era. What I want to understand is what role the EFF played in that realignment, particularly through its insurgent practice of parliamentary disruption.

It is certain that there were many other movements, practices, and organizational dynamics at play in both the rise of the EFF and the process of Zuma's fall. Guided by an insurgent practice theory-informed reading of narrative reconstructions of the EFF's insurgent practices and the resultant dynamic, the dynamic process of insurgency is illustrated in the effects of three key EFF insurgent protest actions from August 2014 through February 2015, a key period in which an opposition to Zuma coalesced. This allowed me to conclude that while clearly the EFF is not in itself fully in charge of the forces necessary for Zuma's resignation, it played a *counterfactually necessary* role. In other words, by posing a counterfactual scenario in which the EFF did not engage in those insurgent activities, I concluded that an effective opposition would not built in such short order or in the particular constitution it was found on a parliamentary level.

The EFF's insurgency primarily consisted of a number of disruptive protest actions within the body of South African parliament over time directly targeting Zuma and his administration, of which the aforementioned three key events were assessed for this study. The repression these actions faced drew support, particularly from third parties aiming to draw power from the ANC, which helped to sustain the EFF's actions and drive their insurgency forward in a dynamic fashion. The EFF leveraged multiple cleavages between the ANC and other major third parties in South African politics, most evidently the Democratic Alliance (DA) opposition party and the mass base of the ANC. My study found that the key factor in bringing together an effective opposition to the ANC was the EFF's leveraging of the ANC cleavage with the DA to the point that the DA effectively allied with the EFF in its insurgent actions by the February 2015 protest event and

began taking on some of the characteristics of the party's practice. This ensured the further engagement in protest by the EFF and the promotion of its tactical aims by continuing to publicize and maintain its targeting of the Zuma administration and in doing so contribute to the broader movement to force out the President.

Beyond the implications for the case itself, this study also expands the applicability of insurgent practice theory, as it provides evidence of the dynamics of insurgent practice in the case of the EFF in South Africa much as demonstrated in similar case studies of the Black liberation struggle in the United States. As insurgent practice theory has thus far only been tested in a handful of studies, by testing the theory with a social movement in the Global South, my study expanded the scope of applicability of insurgent practice theory by showing its validity in such a context and sets it up for further testing.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Insurgent Practice Theory**

Sociological understandings of social movements have undergone a marked shift in the past half century, from a social-psychological approach to one which considers more complex relationships between movement actors and broader social structures. One of the most influential modern theoretical frameworks in the field is political process theory, which signified a clear shift towards a politics- and group-centered understanding of how movements operate and relate to state authority and influential third party actors/groups (McAdam 1982). Political opportunity theory posits that insurgent movements are not immediately born but grow as a result of various processes over long periods of time, with mobilization and further growth being facilitated primarily through changes in the overarching political system in which the movement operates. These changes come in different ways, such as events which cause instability within the system as a whole or events which “increase political leverage of a single insurgent group” (McAdam 1982:42). However, political opportunity theory has little to say regarding the role of culture, history, goals, and the interdependence and combination of these on movement agency (Bloom 2014; Bloom 2015; Isaac 2008; Morris 1993; Morris 2000; Steinman 2012).

Indigenous resource mobilization theory, illustrated in Morris’s (1984) classic study of the civil rights movement, provides a strong framework through which to view insurgent movement activity while filling some of the aforementioned gaps in political process theory. This theory argues that the heart of insurgent social movements is found in the indigenous organizations that they form and which sustain their activity through the development of strategic planning, networks,

and overall infrastructure which undergird their activity in a consciously coordinated way. One of the few aspects in which indigenous resource mobilization theory is lacking is in its understanding of the dynamics of movement practice regarding third parties with which insurgent actions interact and in doing so either further or hinder movement capacity for growth and transformation.

Insurgent practice theory provides a greater degree of appreciation for the decisive role of these factors in attempting a sociological explanation of when movements arise and how successful they can be in achieving their goals or otherwise advancing their practical vision. The theory has been developed thus far primarily through studies of the Black freedom struggle in the United States in the post-war period (Bloom 2014; Bloom 2015). Recently, Kay and Evans (2018) expanded the application of insurgent practice theory to a study of movements operating against neoliberal trade policy since the 1990s.

Insurgent practice theory moves beyond the limitations of the political process and indigenous resource mobilization theories in that it takes seriously the character of insurgent movement practice. Insurgent practices are defined by Bloom (2015:395) as “historically particular forms of action and rhetoric that promise transcendence of specified oppressive conditions by challenging an institutionalized authority”. These practices are advanced by movements within a dynamic, targeted process, one which draws upon historic actions and adapts in different conditions to (potentially) *take advantage* of opportunities to advance these transcendent goals. These opportunities come through the insurgency’s interaction with the repressive force of an opposing authority as well as third parties uninvolved in the specific conflict at hand; the insurgent movement is able to succeed so long as it garners enough support from third parties to overpower its opposition (Bloom 2020). Insurgent practice theory-driven studies on the Black freedom struggle highlight the lack of focus on the historically and culturally unique aspects

of practice of Black insurgents in McAdam's political opportunity work, but also account for the dynamics of movement practices in response to broader political opportunities which isn't as present in Morris's framework, and as such provide a fruitful evolution beyond the earlier understandings.

Insurgent practice theory holds exciting possibilities for the study of social movements operating in the post-colonial context. The interconnected history of anti-colonial struggle in the Global South is often drawn upon by succeeding generations of movement actors, motivating the praxis of continued struggle to transcend conditions of neoliberal/neocolonial governance and popular dissatisfaction with formerly revolutionary political institutions. These linkages and practices would not be fully explored under the political opportunity framework. Indeed, given the genesis of post-colonial states in revolutionary insurgent activity, exploring how the dynamics of insurgent practice continue to contest and/or reshape those institutions allows for a better understanding of movement tactics and dynamics operate in a realm contextually quite different than those operating within the heart of, say, the American empire. This theory could prove to be quite important to the longstanding movement debate surrounding the future potential for social transformation in the Global South, illuminating how revolutionary ideology and rhetoric that have not necessarily been borne out in state-led social transformation find new life in insurgent movements contesting the legitimacy of governing parties, seeking to influence more sweeping and lasting transformation.

However, as previously noted, insurgent practice theory has thus far only been tested in empirical research conducted in the United States. While the struggles in which it has been tested had vast international connections to associated movements at various points in time, there are at the least contextual dissimilarities in contending the power of the American empire directly and



contending the power of a ruling party in the post-colonial context. Furthermore, to take the unique historical and cultural character of movement practice seriously requires a greater degree of localized context. This project is a first test of insurgent practice theory on a movement in the Global South.



## **2.2 Post-Apartheid South Africa and Jacob Zuma**

The Freedom Charter, drafted in 1955, operates as the statement of guiding principles by which the ANC operates, calling broadly for democratic governance, democratic ownership of land and the means of production, the universal right to housing and healthcare, and protections for human rights writ large (African National Congress 1955). The Freedom Charter is a defining characteristic of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), a more-precise articulation of how a strategically protracted transition from a post-colonial, post-apartheid popular-nationalist state to a socialist state in South Africa would be undertaken (Slovo 1988). The NDR has become a key point of contention, as the South African Communist Party (SACP) and what remains of the ANC's left-wing justify continued engagement within the party through a pragmatically developmentalist reading of the position, even after decades of neoliberal policy-making on the part of the ANC, and the overall lack of fulfillment of most of its aims towards fulfilling the Freedom Charter (Mosala, Venter, and Bain 2017). Ballard et. al. (2006) argue that this pragmatism originated within the transition from apartheid itself as a negotiated practice, one which of course coincided with the fall of the Soviet bloc and in turn the rise of neoliberal globalization. The late 1990s saw a rise in township protests guided by social movement organizations, railing against “the lack of substantial economic transformation” which begat

evictions and issues with service delivery (such as the cut-off/unavailability of essential utilities) (Paret 2017:7). These movements grew in turn to act on a plethora of issues affecting South Africa, many of which intersected and would seem to find currency within the governing mandate of the Freedom Charter, but none of which coalesced into the organized institutional force of a political party that matched these movements' significance in South African civil society (Ashman, Levinson, and Ngwane 2017; Ballard et. al. 2006; Bond 2015).

Within this context, it is extremely important to note that Jacob Zuma initially ascended to leadership within the ANC in 2009 as part of a “rebellion from below” against the preceding ANC leadership helmed by Thabo Mbeki, involving multiple institutions within the Tripartite Alliance which saw Zuma as an alternative that would restore the radical and transformative promise of the Freedom Charter and the NDR (Hart 2014:196; Southall 2014). Instead, the Zuma era marked a new low for the appeal of the ANC to the South African public. The Marikana massacre, which set off a significant split from the Tripartite Alliance, that of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), mobilized additional protests and criticisms both throughout South Africa and around the world, and would form the key point of contention which the EFF would organize itself around in the coming years: that of the ANC's seemingly irrevocable turn away from revolutionary nationalism (Alexander 2013; Shivambu 2014; Hart 2014). Paret (2018:494) argues that exit survey data from the 2014 national and 2016 municipal elections in South Africa demonstrated a decline of ANC support amongst its historic base in the past decade, one which has resulted in an ANC rapidly attempting to reorganize through processes which include internally forcing the resignation of President Zuma.

### **2.3 The Economic Freedom Fighters**

Forde's (2012) account of the rise of EFF founding President and Commander-in-Chief Julius Malema illustrates a loose yet illuminating historical narrative surrounding his singular popularity, which has been the bedrock of the EFF's early success in drawing support. However, beyond the author's position regarding Malema's politics and the journalistic, overtly unscientific tone and level of analysis, it offers a limited perception of the movement behind Malema. Instead, Forde opts for a cynic's view of elite intra-party politics within which movement processes and mass support are merely instrumentalized. They do importantly situate Malema's rise within the context of Zuma's coming to power within the ANC as part of the same wave - that of reclamation following the decidedly non-transformative Mbeki years.

Malema is taken to be the symbol of a generation of young Black militants from the townships, the poor, historically segregated Black communities at the heart of historic South African rebellion which have still not seen much in the way of transformation since the end of apartheid. Marais (2011:426) notes the power of Malema's "lurid political performances" as part and parcel of the "lumpen radicalism" that draws such support. This is a somewhat-dismissive conception of a materially driven form of political practice, one which would both cause Malema's expulsion from the ANC but would carry with it the cache and support to build the EFF (Forde 2012; Hart 2014). Tracing the formation of the EFF in the ANCYL faction led by Malema, and its constituent role in the rise of Zuma, could help to solidify an understanding of both Zuma's decline and the EFF's rise as intertwined. Furthermore, the insurgency indicated by the disruptions of parliament is potentially far more potent than mere political theater.

Studies of the EFF beyond these roots are illuminating yet somewhat limited. This can be attributed to the party's recent emergence as well as the fact that they are a deeply polarizing



organization, which tends to color the focus of analysis in particular ways. Its insurgent practices and its leadership have been derisively characterized as populist or even as fascist by members of South African civil society, the press, and some academics, from the party's roots in a radical faction of the ANC Youth League through the present day (Calland and Seedat 2016; Forde 2012; Hart 2014; Marais 2011; Satgar 2019).

However, it is impossible to study the emergence and growth of the party without grasping that it is “deeply rooted in the townships”; Ashman, Levinson, and Ngwane (2017) argue that this mass character marks its viability as the key political force to bring transformative leftward change to South Africa. Nieftagodien (2018:26) describes the EFF as “the first significant left split from the ANC since 1994... [promoting] an explicitly anti-capitalist programme, with radical policies on land, the economy, support for decent wages, opposition to xenophobia, endorsement of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) rights and a pan-Africanist outlook”, drawing broad support from South Africa's young, impoverished Black masses. Further, Hart (2014:204) notes, for example, Malema and the EFF's use of Marikana to demonstrate the “truth of their re-articulation of nationalism”, connecting it directly with the lack of the material implementation of a politics of popular nationalism with support for the rights of South Africa's dispossessed Black majority against the control of multinational extractive enterprises governed by a neocolonial nexus of white capitalists and Black compradors.

Furthermore, the EFF's politics are undeniably connected to the historic current of social movements to which much of the existing literature on South Africa speaks. A key example is in their focus on land reform – more specifically on land expropriation without compensation from South Africa's white minority for redistribution to the Black majority, a proposal which has historically been supported by the insurgent Landless Peoples' Movement (LPM) having sought

inspiration from the example of Zimbabwe in the early 2000s (Greenberg 2006). In fact, it was Malema and his ANCYL comrades' visitation of Zimbabwe and public praise for its land reform policies which proved to be a key reason behind the rift in the coalition which led Zuma to power (Forde 2011:209). The result of this, in turn, was the split that led to the EFF.

A limited focus on Malema does not do justice to the potential of this program or the collective work of the party in attempting to carry it out on various terrains, or, for that matter, how the party could hold broad appeal to marginalized groups beyond the young men who are conceived of in the same way as Malema. Essop (2015), in one of the few empirical works dedicated to the party, engages in a highly fruitful study of the EFF's day-to-day practice at the branch level. They note a high degree of organizational democracy at the local level, and the involvement of women, older people, union members and the intersections thereof within the observed branch. While a limited study, these contradictions bear mentioning considering the extreme, polemic negativity that some characterizations of the EFF maintain.

## **2.4 The EFF, Insurgent Practice, and Zuma**

There is a unique role here which Booysen (2015:181) critically points out: the unique character of the EFF as both an insurgency and an institutionalized party; "destroy(ing)... barriers between the system and the socioeconomic world outside the polity". The EFF is able to wed the institutional policy-making ability and intra-state placement of a political party with the insurgent activity of a social movement - particularly, its parliamentary protest tactics. Following Booysen (2015), Calland and Seedat (2016), and Nieftagodien (2017) in particular, I propose focusing on the unique character of the EFF's parliamentary protest performance as deserving a certain level

of scholarly attention. These practices have been seen to revitalize the character of government procedure which invites more active engagement by the South African masses, deeply aiding a practice-centered understanding of movement contention.

### 3.0 Methodology

Drawing on this literature and guided by insurgent practice theory, I hypothesized that the EFF's parliamentary disruptions played a defining role in unifying opposition to Zuma's administration through the insurgent practice dynamic. This dynamic played out as follows: the EFF engaged in **insurgent practices** against the Zuma-led ANC which drew support from **third parties** who would otherwise not necessarily be amenable to allying with the EFF. These were made markedly clear in the context of certain key conjunctures noted in the secondary literature on the ANC's decline and Zuma's downfall in the 2010s. Following the general process which insurgent practice theory posits, the dynamic effect of these practices and the ways that they can leverage these cleavages helped the movement resist repression by the state and provided support which advanced the EFF as a singular entity while simultaneously pushing forward the broader opposition to the Zuma-led ANC. It was my contention that these processes were inextricably linked. I broke down this general hypothesis into 3 specific hypotheses linked to the interactions of the EFF's insurgent actions with third parties, as each of these represent a cleavage which disruptive practice took advantage of, and which were illustrated within key conjunctures in the unification of the opposition.

Based in a reading of the secondary literature, three key insurgent protest events were identified in the months following the EFF's ascension to elected office. These were August 23rd, 2014 (the first parliamentary protest by the EFF), November 13th, 2014, and February 12th, 2015.

The study proceeded methodologically from a narrative reconstruction of these events as historical events and as key conjunctures in insurgent practice dynamic. The insurgent practice dynamic was assessed through the construction of a historical narrative of each of these events.

This narrative reconstruction was triangulated from various sources of data: initial descriptions and understandings were sourced from official video documentation of each parliamentary session posted on YouTube by the Parliament of South Africa account, and from the official transcripts of parliamentary proceedings (Hansard) uploaded to the official website of the South African Parliament. These were enriched and buttressed by national and international news coverage of each protest event, and social media postings (including text, video, and photographic data) from relevant parties with access to the proceedings, including reporters and members of Parliament themselves.

The illustration of more long-term effects of repression, and of the interactions between third parties, were triangulated through national and international news coverage as well as social media postings (primarily on Twitter) which illustrated the dynamics at hand on both macro- and micro-interactive scales. For example, while it would be impossible to assess the full scope of third party response to the EFF through social media alone, I found that it demonstrated certain trends in perception broadly shared by third party actors which were backed up through the variety of news coverage surveyed, and furthermore in some cases directly implicated high-level leadership in third party groupings in furthering the dynamics of contention through their posting.

The constructed narrative involves the progression of the day's events, as well as the cascading fallout in the form of repressive response and third party reaction to these events (this being outside of which occurred the day of). These are the three hypothetical propositions, guided by insurgent practice theory and preliminary readings of primary and secondary sources, that has framed the study thus far:

- **Hypothesis #1: The EFF's insurgent actions provided a means for the main opposition party, the DA, to discredit the ANC and reposition itself politically. Additional support from an institutionalized ally in the DA made the EFF harder to repress and proved an additional threat to the ANC.**

The DA has operated as the official opposition to the ANC, the descendant of a variety of liberal to center-right parties which have existed since apartheid, experiencing steady growth through the 2009 municipal elections primarily through drawing away voters from other lesser opposition parties without drawing any substantial support away from the ANC's base (Jolobe 2010). It is seen as a white-dominated party by this base, despite efforts to rid itself of such an image (Paret and Runciman 2016:311). I posited that through tentatively allying with the EFF on the basis of their anti-Zuma/anti-ANC practice, the DA was attempting to take advantage of their mobilizing power and visibility as a movement engaged in a highly visible insurgency with a large and active mass base. In doing so, the DA was able to advance their own interest in degrading the institutional power of their main political rival, portraying itself as a pragmatic force against corruption instead of as a white settler-colonial remnant. In turn, I posited that the EFF utilized this cleavage to its own ends in holding an unlikely ally with the institutional backing to support it in multiple ways as the longstanding official opposition to the ANC. I suspected that this support would be advantageous for the EFF both within the context of the insurgency itself as well as in the larger electoral sphere.

- **Hypothesis #2: The EFF's insurgent actions presented a party with characteristics of a movement that outpaced the ANC in speaking to the material interests and discontents of its base, disrupting on terrain previously inaccessible to other social**

**movements. This widened the growing cleavage between the ANC and its base, compounding the effect of outlying social movement action against the Zuma-led administration and furthering broader popular animus towards Zuma and the ANC under his leadership. This overall growth in popularity amongst the ANC's base made the EFF harder to repress directly.**

A key faction within the “Zunami”, as it has been referred to, was that of the leadership of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), helmed by Julius Malema. Malema grew up in Soweto, one of the poorest and most explosively revolutionary neighborhoods in Johannesburg through the township rebellions of the 1980s and early 1990s (Forde 2012). His early and lifelong involvement as part of a group of young ANC cadre, much more radical than some of the more established legacy figures due to the conditions of their upbringing, made them key to Zuma's success. They were part of the communities most angered by the post-apartheid state, those who engaged in the diffuse and constant protests the failure of service provision and economic security particularly evident from the mid-2000s onward (Paret 2017:7). Demographic information of EFF supporters is extremely illustrative in this context. According to a November 2013 Ipsos poll, party supporters were 99% Black, 73% were between the ages of 18-34, and a significant plurality were unemployed (45%) (Harris 2013). While more recent polling data does not include employment information, it does detail that the party's base remains overwhelmingly Black and Coloured (97% and 3%, respectively) and young (70% between the ages 18-34) (Head 2018).

Malema comes from the same conditions that have wrought such a large degree of protest, and the EFF has drawn much of its support from the same communities which had previously fought on behalf of the ANC. As mentioned previously, this is further illustrated in that the radical

youth movement within the ANCYL which marshalled the force to bring Zuma to power was especially characteristic of the ANC's historic base in terms of social composition.

Additionally, I suspect that there were interaction effects between actions of the EFF and of other South African social movements, these being primarily constituted by dispossessed or otherwise working-class Black South Africans. While Nieftagodien (2017) argues that the EFF was tailing a broader youth constituency in the latter, I felt that this assertion demanded a more rigorous examination. I suspected that the involvement of the EFF and its insurgent actions rather added to the mass pressure and goal attainment of even unaffiliated youth participants; for example, in that the EFF coordinated a parliamentary disruption in support of the third-party #FeesMustFall student movement for educational decolonization and universally-funded higher education. This would add to their disruptive power and force, for example, Zuma's personally mandated concessions to the protestors. This itself would interact to deepen the intra-Tripartite Alliance conflict (Cele 2016).

- **Hypothesis #3: The dynamics of the EFF's insurgent practice widened an existing cleavage within the ANC/Tripartite Alliance and threatened its ability to maintain power by further delegitimizing its ability to function as a liberatory force. Tensions within the ANC and Tripartite Alliance bore out in a number of splits and internal conflicts regarding policies targeted by the EFF and its allies.**

The ANC, as previously stated, has its roots in a revolutionary nationalist agenda, driven in large part by the historic involvement of members of the SACP in its leadership and the overall progressive nationalist character of most Third World movements in the 20th century as they interacted with anti-imperialist, socialist, pan-African, and other heterodox political frameworks.



Having appealed to these roots and instrumentalized them in his ascendance, Zuma failed to live up to his promised agenda of a leftward course correction from the neoliberal development policies of the ANC's governance. Booysen (2018) offers a Gramscian analysis of the broader hegemonic shift of the ANC in forcing Zuma's resignation in this context. She argues that contention between factions within the party attempting to respond to a crisis in its dominance of post-colonial politics in South Africa resulted in the anti-Zuma faction winning out and forcing Zuma's resignation. However, while she articulates a specific role of the EFF in this crisis and in the ANC's desire to re-subsume the EFF, the party is conceptualized primarily as a split faction in the study's focus on the ANC. Rather, while guided by this understanding, I suspected a more central role of the EFF's insurgent practices in widening this cleavage with the result of helping to induce Zuma's resignation. I suspect that this cleavage is evident within each component of the alliance: the ANC, the SACP, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Both the NUMSA split and the resultant high-profile internal conflict within COSATU, including the expulsion of radical General Secretary Zwelenzima Vavi, were themselves influential in building a broader left movement against the ANC, clearly demarcating the cleavage within the Tripartite Alliance between establishment and left opposition blocs in the aftermath of Marikana (Bond 2015; Nieftagodien 2017; Paret 2017). Connections between these labor movement elements of the Tripartite Alliance cleavage and the EFF are not well-characterized in the literature. I suspected, however, that the EFF was able to make use of this element of the cleavage in drawing continued attention the ANC-led state's repressive labor policy under Zuma.

I suspected that the cleavages within the Tripartite Alliance and between the ANC and its base were utilized in an interrelated fashion; a survey of the primary and secondary sources thus far illustrates at certain points the ways that individuals within the Tripartite Alliance desperately

attempted to reconcile their growing distance from this base, the policy program which they had committed themselves to, and the ongoing saga with Zuma in which he would occasionally act unilaterally, as in his decision to accede to the #FeesMustFall protests (Nhlabathi and Stone 2017).

These hypotheses were tested against the constructed narrative of the protest events and resultant insurgent dynamic, assessed through counterfactual analysis. Counterfactual analysis involves the construction of what-if scenarios, limited to “small and easily imagined changes from the real world”, to precisely determine the effect of actual events (Levy 2015:378). As such, in the case of each protest event narrative, the counterfactual question was: what if the EFF did not disrupt parliament on this date? A precise determination was made on this basis for what would have happened with regard to the broader relation of political forces germane to the opposition to Zuma had the insurgent actions of the EFF not been present. In other words, to what degree were these actions counterfactually necessary to further consolidation of an effective opposition to Zuma?

## **4.0 Narrative Reconstructions and Analysis**

### **4.1 August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014**

#### **4.1.1 Description of Events**

During a meeting of the National Assembly of the South African Parliament on August 21, 2014, the EFF engaged in its first significant insurgent action in the electoral body. The very presence of the EFF in Parliament implied a form of insurgent force, as members remained unified in their dress of red workers' coveralls and hard-hats or, for women, red domestic workers' dresses. Such physical manifestations of the EFF have always been key symbolic aspects of their activity, denoting the party's effort to assert that it is the forceful voice of the Black working class and a Marxist-Leninist-Fanonian, or decolonial communist, position. While they dressed in such attire since their establishment, to watch a video of the EFF following their election into Parliament is usually to see this collective standing out and apart from the rest of the South African Parliament by the very nature of their clothing choices. It immediately highlights any EFF member and their responses when participating in Parliamentary proceedings. Such forms of visible collectivity implies at the very least a constant threat of insurgency.

At this meeting of Parliament, President Jacob Zuma was being asked questions by members of the body.<sup>1</sup> He had been asked several unremarkable questions by members of Parliament on topics such as the country's national development plan – his prepared statement in response to the first question lasted a monotonous eight minutes, and there were some minor technical and procedural issues which drew laughter from parliamentary members and the President himself.<sup>2</sup> Proceedings took a mildly confrontational turn when Leader of the Opposition, Mmusi Maimane, asked about Zuma's power to appoint the South African Prosecutor, noting that Zuma previously faced 781 corruption-related charges in 2009. Maimane asked if the President could conceive of a conflict of interest in having authority over appointment of a prosecutor. Zuma responded that as the charges were dropped, there was no conflict of interest, silencing Maimane's line of questioning. This exchange highlighted the ability of the President to evade legitimated forms of confrontation in Parliament and prefaced the insurgent action to come.

Immediately following Zuma's response to a minor follow-up question, EFF member Floyd Shivambu politely attempted to call attention EFF leader Julius Malema's desire to ask a question of the President. Speaker of the House Balaka Mbete attempted to deny him, stating that as a point of procedure, only a limited amount of follow-up questions could be asked. Malema interjected, positing that the method of introducing questions (pressing a button to indicate desire

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2014a. "Proceedings of the National Assembly." Hansard Record of Parliamentary Proceedings, August 21. [https://www.parliament.gov.za/hansard?sorts\[date\]=-1&queries\[search\]=2014-08-21](https://www.parliament.gov.za/hansard?sorts[date]=-1&queries[search]=2014-08-21).

<sup>2</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2014b. "Questions to the President: National Assembly, 21 August 2014." August 21st. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq857qey06I>.

to speak or ask a question) skewed the conversation towards the discretion of the Speaker, as she had the capacity to choose which members of Parliament would be able to speak. He specifically raised the notion of the EFF “being excluded” from the process. This itself was dismissed, but raised an underlying tension within the session, drawing attention for the first time towards a specter of conflict between the Speaker and members of the EFF.

Zuma responded to a prepared, but unstated question asking about the money spent on upgrades at his homestead in Nkandla. This had famously become a scandal in South Africa, as money earmarked for security upgrades was instead spent on improvements such as a swimming pool and a cattle enclosure.<sup>3</sup> South African Public Protector Thuli Madonsela eventually reached the decision that Zuma would have to pay back at least a portion of the government funds that were allocated for improvements at his estate. The EFF, in particular, began initiating protest actions surrounding the Nkandla affair prior to their election into government. Such actions notably included building and giving away a home to a Nkandla family, located only 300 meters from Zuma’s estate. This action drew violent retaliation from ANC supporters.<sup>4</sup>

After Zuma’s statement, Malema was allowed to speak. He stated that the question was insufficiently answered by Zuma. In Malema’s view, Zuma saying that he had already responded was not actually an answer to the question of whether he would follow the South African Public Protector’s recommendation to pay back the money spent on upgrading security at the President’s estate in Nkandla. Malema then said, “the question we are asking today, *and we are not going to*

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<sup>3</sup> “Malema and EFF MPs suspended for heckling South African leader.” 2014. *BBC*, November 28. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30244414>.

<sup>4</sup> *eNCA*. 2014. “EFF and ANC clash at Nkandla.” January 11. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTOAPSqYtIU>.

*leave here until we get an answer*, is when are you paying the money? Because the Public Protector has instructed you that you must pay the money, and we want the date of when you are paying the money.” When Malema indicated the EFF members would not leave until being answered, President Zuma laughed, setting off a flurry of noise from the parliamentary floor. Before Malema finished speaking, Zuma interrupted with an attempted point of order. “These things of ‘point of order’ are the things you are hiding behind,” Malema replied forcefully, shaking his finger at Zuma. “You are very good at that, because every time reports are brought here it is ‘point of order, point of order’ – we are here to ask questions and we need answers. Please.” Scattered applause followed. This is the first expression of the EFF directly challenging how parliamentary rules are used to protect the president from any criticism, leading to stonewalling such as that of Maimane earlier in the Parliamentary session.

Speaker Mbete then responded saying that the President could answer the question; he again reiterated that he had “responded appropriately” before, and that he didn’t want the session to become a debate regarding the issue. An audible negative response can be heard from the parliamentary floor. ANC member Zephroma Sizani Dlamini-Dubazana, grasping a parliamentary rulebook, gave a point of order stating that anyone who had the floor was not to be interrupted, alluding to the murmurings coming from the EFF members in response to Zuma’s statement. EFF members seized on the moment and responded in a negative fashion, while the Speaker attempted to maintain control. “We have dealt with issues of rules, we have that book as well – we know these things... (can) we continue with the business of asking questions?” asked Shivambu. EFF member Nthako Sam Matias stood and asked “Can we please be provided with answers? Not hiding behind parliamentary proceedings here?” This continues the point of protest in which the EFF members are questioning the legitimacy of the proceedings, as rules of decorum prevent the

actual purpose of the session from being undertaken; that is, asking questions of the President and receiving answers.

The Speaker, fed up, stated at this point to Matias “honorable member, please take your seat! Take your seat!” Shivambu then stands and attempts to interject, to which the Speaker begins angrily pointing at the member and stating again “Honorable member, take your seat! Take your seat! I have not recognized you... I will throw you out of the house.” This is the point at which the tension which undergirded the majority of the session began to boil over, with the overt threat of a repressive response to the EFF’s growing insubordination and voicing of protest to the proceedings.


In response to the Speaker’s attempts at control, the EFF began to collectively participate in asking questions or making statements, as one at a time the members began to interject while the Speaker continued to order the members to take their seats, soon threatening to have the sergeant-at-arms “remove the members in this house *who are not serious about this sitting* to take their leave”. This was a heightening of the threat of repression at the EFF’s growing insurgent action in real time, as the warning was further specified, and marked a further claim by the ANC that the EFF’s actions warrant repression. In particular, this highlights a means by which the ANC had and would continue to justify repressing the EFF, as though they weren’t an equal force within the context of being elected members of the same governing body, but were an unserious group of insurgents whose very presence should be forced out of the halls of power.

In response to this ultimatum, the EFF members began to rise en masse. Banging hard hats on the table, taking command of each of their microphones – statements such as “we want the money, we want the money,” “pay back our money,” “the money must be paid,” “you won’t remove us, we are not going anywhere,” “date and time,” can be heard. Following a brief period

of this raucous protest, to which Speaker Mbete demanded repeatedly of the EFF to “leave the house” and during which Malema argued off-mic with the sergeant-at-arms, EFF member and Spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlosi looked around at his comrades, began slapping his hand, and chanting “pay back the money! Pay back the money,” coalescing the EFF members’ protests into a unified chant which was thereafter unceasing.

From here on, the audio feed of the primary source video begins cutting in and out with the video skipping a short period of time. When both audio and video restart, an EFF member could be heard saying “we don’t want police; we want the money to be paid back”, suggesting that the Speaker had begun calling for the police to come and eject the EFF from Parliament. The video and audio feed cuts in and out again and Speaker Mbete then states that “our security is asking us to vacate the house in order for us to deal with this issue”, officially suspending Parliament. While the EFF had ceased chanting at this point, they appeared to have stayed in their seats while other members began to leave.

While the EFF protest was occurring within the assembly chamber, a large group of people identified by eNCA as ANC staffers attempted to force their way in to confront and physically remove the EFF from the chamber as formal parliamentary police were yet to arrive.<sup>5</sup>

 At this point, the Hansard transcript of parliamentary proceedings cuts off as parliament is suspended. According to SABC News journalist Nonkululeko Hlophe, the EFF remained in Parliament at this point as the remainder of the representatives left the chamber; she tweeted a

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<sup>5</sup> eNCA. 2014. “ANC blames EFF for chaos in Parliament.” August 22. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EENS0kNzTi0>.



photo of the EFF membership in what appeared to be an otherwise-empty room.<sup>6</sup> The South Africa Press Association posted a similar photo.<sup>7</sup>

Police began clearing the lobby in anticipation of finally forcibly removing the EFF contingent.<sup>8</sup> As SWAT-style police forces gathered at the parliamentary building, the EFF finally left Parliament through a side entrance.<sup>9</sup> The EFF danced and sang as they marched down the street; the police entered and exited the building through the main entrance, then came to confront the EFF members, forming a barricade between them and ANC members who had come outside to confront the EFF. The EFF then tried entering a separate office building, at which point the police continued to scuffle with the members, trying to prevent them from entering the building.

The EFF began guiding the narrative surrounding the parliamentary protest the same day. A press release, promoted on social media platforms such as Twitter, announced “EFF’s Protest in Parliament is in Defence of the Constitution and the Rule of Law” along with the hashtag “#PayBackTheMoney.”<sup>10</sup> The press release gave the EFF’s version of events, alongside the party’s justification for the protest action and disruption of normal parliamentary procedure.<sup>11</sup> The EFF

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<sup>6</sup> Nonkululeko Hlophe’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/Leko3/status/502442489555329024?s=20>.

<sup>7</sup> SA Press Association’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/SapaNews/status/502454288119906304?s=20>.

<sup>8</sup> Ivon Cronje’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/Ivoncronje/status/502457594695651328?s=20>.

<sup>9</sup> *News24*. 2014. “EFF clash with police, ANC after leaving parliament.” August 21. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRaiMBivfL0>.

<sup>10</sup> EFF’s official Twitter, <https://twitter.com/EFFSouthAfrica/status/502524706688602112>.

<sup>11</sup> EFF. 2014. “EFF’s protest in parliament is in defence of the constitution and rule of law.” August 21. Archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20150316191544/http://efffighters.org.za/effs-protest-in-parliament-is-in-defence-of-the-constitution-and-rule-of-law/>.

held a press conference further stating that their protest was, again, a defense of the constitution to “hold the executive to account” in light of tactics on the part of Zuma’s administration intended at making the public forget about its transgressions through the lack of direct and consistent confrontation. Malema in particular was not conciliatory, stating that “we are fighting [the ANC]... this is just the beginning,” pledging a further five years of struggle from the EFF within the context of their capacity as now-elected officials with a foothold for that confrontation to take place.<sup>12</sup> He, however, was quick to situate the EFF’s tactics as being essentially democratic and part of a broader South African tradition: “we did not break any laws... this country is what it is today because of protest.”<sup>13</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Response from the ANC/State**

While somewhat speculative, that the audio feed cut out of the official Parliament video feed once the unified chant was begun, followed by video cutting in and out could have itself been a form of repressive response. This is only supported by later attempts at suppressing independent onsite coverage of the EFF’s parliamentary protests by third parties and speculations of censorship in the official record from nonstate sources, as will be discussed.

In the immediate aftermath of the protest action, the official ANC account tweeted in response to the actions of the day calling for popular condemnation of EFF actions, albeit

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<sup>12</sup> *SABC News*. 2014a. “Mixed reactions on EFF’s behaviour in Parliament.” August 21. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qm4f1SQQcVA>.

<sup>13</sup> Madisa, Kgothatso. 2014. “Malema justifies EFF’s behaviour in Parliament.” *Sowetan Live*, August 21. <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2014-08-21-malema-justifies-effs-behaviour-in-parliament/>.

indirectly: “We call on our people to isolate these elements who have no regard for democracy, civility and regard for respectable behavior.”<sup>14</sup> The ANC accused the EFF of promoting “anarchy and general disrespect.”<sup>15</sup> This was followed by official, direct condemnation of the EFF and its actions by the early evening, with party spokesman Zizi Kodwa decrying “the EFF [having a] ‘violent nature’ which could take the country backwards.”<sup>16</sup> This denotes an implicit threat of further repression towards the party, as it is immediately framed and targeted as a violent insurgent force that is a threat to the state. In a statement broadcast on SABC, Speaker Mbete referred to the EFF as “a group of people” with “no respect for Parliament as an institution.”<sup>17</sup>

In the week thereafter, the ANC began transporting supporters in to “defend Parliament” from the EFF.<sup>18</sup> Beyond this tactic, Parliamentary leadership began disciplinary hearings against the 20 EFF MPs who engaged in the insurgent action on August 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>19</sup> EFF Spokesperson Ndlozi accused the officers who served notice of the disciplinary charges of doing so in an

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<sup>14</sup> ANC’s official Twitter, <https://twitter.com/MYANC/status/502476045808054272>.

<sup>15</sup> “ANC, DA react to EFF National Assembly outburst.” 2014. *eNCA*, August 21. <https://www.enca.com/anc-da-react-eff-national-assembly-outburst>.

<sup>16</sup> Kodwa, Zizi. 2014. “EFF’s conduct in parliament appalling – ANC.” *PoliticsWeb*, August 22. <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/politics/effs-conduct-in-parliament-appalling--anc>.

<sup>17</sup> *SABC News* 2014a.

<sup>18</sup> City Press’s Twitter, [https://twitter.com/City\\_Press/status/504595265287127042](https://twitter.com/City_Press/status/504595265287127042).

<sup>19</sup> SAPA. 2014a. “Court denies interdict to grant EFF order to stop disciplinary hearing.” *TimesLive*, September 30. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2014-09-30-court-denies-interdict-to-grant-eff-order-to-stop-disciplinary-hearing/>.

intimidating fashion constituting harassment, such as arriving at EFF members' homes in the middle of the night and confronting them in front of their families in such a setting.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4.1.3 Analysis of August 21<sup>st</sup> Event**

Generally speaking, following the insurgent action and the initial repressive response, individuals and groups on social media immediately began offering support to the EFF's actions and picking up on the slogan on a variety of platforms where the insurgent action was discussed. Commenters on the edit of the parliamentary proceedings video posted by the SABC to YouTube seemed overwhelmingly approving of the EFF's tactics, with commenters noting that this seemed to be the beginning of an effective and "honorable" resistance to Zuma's administration from within Parliament.<sup>21</sup> Commenters, even those slightly more critical of the EFF's tactics or the party as a whole, repeated the "pay back the money" slogan in their comments. One user on YouTube stated "I have never liked the EFF but this time I can't even fault them. If anything I have to applaud them for asking the question that everybody else is too scared to ask, 'When is Zuma paying back that money'?"

Beyond more general positive reactions in the immediate wake of the August 21<sup>st</sup> protest, particular reactions can be seen in specific third-party groups important to the overall political scene in South Africa – the media, opposition parties and their supporters, and the ANC's mass

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<sup>20</sup> *eNCA*. 2014. "EFF members remain confident their leader will be cleared." September 30. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pudjz95w474>.

<sup>21</sup> *SABC News*. 2014b. "EFF disrupts parliament." August 21. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIW0EjaX7hQ>.

base. These groups tended to defend the EFF's actions, and when they did not were met with criticism (on social media in particular). In response to further repressive action on the part of the ANC and the state, and interactions between the third-party responses themselves, these third-parties began to shift their stances more in line with a defense of the EFF, particularly those which were in even strident opposition to the party before the initial insurgent action had taken place.

The responses of users on Twitter shows the immediate advantageous effect of the insurgent protest for the EFF on the overlapping cleavages between the ANC and the DA and the ANC and its base. In turn, the refusal to play by the rules is actually the simple decision to bring insurgent protest tactics into Parliament. This comes as a significant by-product of the party's roots with and in mass movement and protest spaces; it is no coincidence that the only other party of any note which embarked upon this strategy in South Africa was the ANC itself.

Repression from the ANC and in turn the state was swift and proceeded forcefully to bar any more instances of parliamentary protest action from taking place after August 21<sup>st</sup>. This included the immediate threat of violent force to remove the EFF, violence from supporters, and the longer-term procession of disciplinary action aimed at suspending EFF MPs from Parliament. In response to this repression as well as negative response to initial actions (or lack thereof), third parties involved began to support the EFF, and cracks began to show in the power base of Zuma's ANC.

#### **4.1.3.1 Hypothesis #1: Opposition Political Parties and Supporters**

If the EFF had not engaged in the insurgent action, the DA would most likely have continued to engage in the normative critique of the ANC that it had been engaging in for most of Zuma's tenure thus far. This was one that was, as previously noted, widely seen as ineffective, and in the parliamentary meeting itself it was demonstrated by Maimane's toothless attempt at taking

Zuma to task. In fact, they did not even directly confront Zuma on the issue of Nkandla; this would go unstated otherwise if the other proceedings were an indication.

In turn, had the action not occurred, the DA would not have had the chance to go on record as disapproving of such tactics against Zuma in Parliament. They also did have a chance to condemn the ANC as well in terms of their response to the EFF's action and the ANC repression, though it was couched in a condemnation of both sides. DA refused to lend support or defense to the EFF, saying they violated parliamentary proceedings. Mmusi Maimane specifically referred to the EFF's protest as "theatrics" which distracted from receiving answers through normative means, such as the line of questioning he pursued in Parliament just prior to the EFF's interjection.<sup>22</sup> Helen Zille, another leader in the DA, attempted to use the moment to accuse Julius Malema of corruption, and in turn, hypocrisy.<sup>23</sup>

The DA's official responses from leadership were, as previously noted, negatively received by social media users amidst a contrasting positive appraisal of the EFF's actions, even by some DA supporters or even members such as Brett Herron.<sup>24</sup> Herron, at the time a counselor for the DA, responded to the ANC account's tweet with an image of an ANC councilor-led protest action in the Cape Town Council, stating that the EFF's actions were "no different" in method, lending the actions a rare instance of (if tacit) support from a figure in the DA.<sup>25</sup> Responses on Twitter from supporters were quite critical of the DA's conduct during the protest and their post-facto

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<sup>22</sup> DA's official Twitter, [https://twitter.com/Our\\_DA/status/502485008935047168](https://twitter.com/Our_DA/status/502485008935047168).

<sup>23</sup> Helen Zille's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/helenzille/status/502559166163349507?s=20>.

<sup>24</sup> Herron, interestingly, is currently the Secretary-General for the social-democratic Good party in South Africa, formed by breakaway members of the DA.

<sup>25</sup> Brett Herron's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/bretherron/status/502490493641846784>.

handling of the situation. Pointedly, one user stated that the EFF was “flanking” the DA on the issue of corruption and opposing Zuma.<sup>26</sup> The DA appeared “shellshocked” wrote another user, while a response to that tweet referred to the DA as the “model C class” who “know nothing of revolution”.<sup>27</sup> Another user responded that the DA “[had] no results to show by being diplomatic,” suggesting that acting out of accord with parliamentary decorum was exactly what was needed to demand accountability from Zuma.<sup>28</sup> “Blah blah blah...I am no Juju Fan but I stand by what he did. It’s about time the president felt the wrath” dismissively tweeted another user in response to Maimane’s statement.<sup>29</sup>

Maimane drew particular ire for his handling of the situation, particularly given the timing of his interjection within the same parliamentary session only minutes before the EFF’s protest. One user wrote “#eff is just offering free lecture to the toothless #DA about opposition politics... Learn Mmusi Learn. #Asijiki #Paybackthemoney #ANC #Zuma.”<sup>30</sup> Maimane also attempted to use the situation to state that the ANC and EFF were the “same coin... one breaking down the constitution of the country and the other institutions of democracy.”<sup>31</sup> For the most part, this

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<sup>26</sup> Thabang Phetla’s Twitter, [https://twitter.com/Che\\_Motswana/status/502487872256348160](https://twitter.com/Che_Motswana/status/502487872256348160).

<sup>27</sup> Eusebius McKaiser’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/Eusebius/status/502502797980741632>; “Model C” refers to schools which were formerly whites-only under apartheid, which still serve primarily white and/or affluent students in the post-apartheid era.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Alfonso’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/CharlesAlfonso1/status/502717075723653121>.

<sup>29</sup> TheRealCottonEater’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/amulicious/status/502704190339436544>; “Juju” is a popular South African nickname for Julius Malema.

<sup>30</sup> Sishubambongwe’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/sishubambongwe/status/502497378587656192>.

<sup>31</sup> Mmusi Maimane’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/MmusiMaimane/status/502558287322419200>.

posture was negatively received, as Twitter users in the response thread to this tweet questioned Maimane's manhood, stated that he and the DA were fence sitting – that he chose to hide rather than taking leadership in questioning the President with his moment in Parliament.

While it requires further analysis of how the DA responded to this response in a tactical or rhetorical shift, the situation created by the insurgent action seemed to demand one. Once established in a space such as Parliament, the EFF's insurgent actions immediately called attention to the particular impotence of the DA, in their refusal to engage in such forceful activity even in the face of governance which could be described as ineffective, improper, or corrupt on the part of the ANC under Zuma. As analyst Aubrey Matshiqi, speaking to the Voice of America News, stated "...it's very clear to me that in five minutes last Thursday, the EFF achieved something that the DA and other opposition parties have failed to achieve in 20 years: to highlight the fact that the ruling party, and the president, have been hiding behind parliamentary rules when they don't want to be accountable."<sup>32</sup> The EFF boosted its status, even in the eyes of those who were opposed to the party in principle, by refusing to play by the rules, so to speak, rules which when adhered to hindered the ability of the official opposition to act according to what they stated as their mission. There would be no response or new dynamic created within the ANC/DA cleavage without the insurgent action, as the engagement between the two parties would remain the same, at least in the immediate aftermath of the August 21<sup>st</sup> parliamentary meeting.

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<sup>32</sup> Powell, Anita. 2014. "South African Parliament Outburst Causes Order and Disorder." *Voice of America News*, August 29. <https://www.voanews.com/africa/south-african-parliament-outburst-causes-order-and-disorder>. It is important to note that the Voice of America News is and has been an important instrument of United States propaganda/soft power since World War II - see the official description of the organization's history (Voice of America 2021) and a critical perspective (Snow and Taylor 2006).



Additionally, what was observed shows that the cleavage pointed to in Hypothesis #1 was evidently seen to include more parties/institutionalized allies than just the DA, such as COPE, UDM, and the IFP. While none of these parties were as important or sizable as the DA, this points to the importance of the insurgent action, and the credible opposition it portended, to being something these parties to latch onto in support to increase their credibility as opposition. In a radio interview, longtime United Democratic Movement (UDM) party leader Bantu Holomisa stated his personal support for the EFF's actions.<sup>33</sup> Holomisa further stated that "they gave him his medicine" and that "arrogance of power must come to an end," approving of the tactical approach of the EFF's actions as being suited for confronting Zuma's particular form of authority.<sup>34</sup>

Mosiuo Lekota tweeted in support of the EFF: "The EFF would not have had a reason to resort to extreme measures in Parliament to demand accountability. It takes 2 to tango!"<sup>35</sup> He also stated in a press conference, flanked by members of the EFF and seemingly in direct response to the ANC statement's language, that "the anarchists are not the people in this room with the red overalls... the anarchists are those who are in power and are refusing to uphold the primary law of our land."<sup>36</sup> His expression exemplifies yet another endorsement of the position and tactics of the EFF. This drew supportive responses from accounts on Twitter. Lekota has served as the President of the Congress of the People (COPE) party, a minor left opposition breakaway from the ANC, since its formation in 2008. Additionally, he is a veteran of the national liberation struggle, having been imprisoned at Robbin Island and faced additional repression for being a leader in the United

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<sup>33</sup> Nyaki Merafe's Twitter, [https://twitter.com/nyaki\\_merafe/status/502473093634588672](https://twitter.com/nyaki_merafe/status/502473093634588672).

<sup>34</sup> Kodwa 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Mosiuoa Lekota's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/TerrorLekota/status/502536602405834752>.

<sup>36</sup> *SABC News* 2014a.

Democratic Front (UDF) under apartheid.<sup>37</sup> Lekota also took the opportunity to generally criticize the ANC's handling of the situation, stating that it was endemic to the party under Zuma's leadership.<sup>38</sup> As such, Lekota's tacit support seems to comport with the notion of intersecting cleavages between the ANC and competitor parties in the parliamentary system as well as between the ANC and its base.

These opposition parties did not escape criticism, even considering some of this support. One Twitter user called out COPE, Bantu Holomisa, and the IFP, stating that the EFF was "doing what (COPE and the IFP) were scared to do."<sup>39</sup> It is notable that early support came from more left-wing/mass-rooted opposition parties who might have less of a compunction regarding the proper maintenance of parliamentary procedure. However, they hadn't engaged in such actions and responses from South Africans active on Twitter indicate a boiling over of discontent at the lack of action that it was now realized could have been undertaken to confront the President within Parliament.

Responses to the ANC's actions also drew upon the legacy of the party as having been an insurgent force at one time, highlighting the contradiction between the party's methods when operating as an oppositional force and when it operated as the established party-in-power. One user highlighted the ANC's tactic of making areas "ungovernable."<sup>40</sup> This was also echoed in

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<sup>37</sup> Similar to the IFP, COPE lost most of its seats in Parliament in 2014, which again must be noted as the first election which the EFF contested. It is not inconceivable that many COPE voters switched to supporting the EFF during this time given their ideological congruity.

<sup>38</sup> Mosiuoa Lekota's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/TerrorLekota/status/502535144415432705>.

<sup>39</sup> Cynthia Moepe's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/scmoepi0219/status/502786557099900928>.

<sup>40</sup> Mzwanele Manyi's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/MzwaneleManyi/status/534399461557272576>.

Herron's response, previously cited. This comes as COPE and the UDM were either formed by dissidents from the ANC or were ideologically similar to the party and were attempting to tread similar ground to the EFF in contesting the legacy of the party in the post-apartheid period. If the EFF hadn't engaged in this first insurgent action, then these parties would have essentially maintained the position and practices they had been engaged in prior to the meeting. They wouldn't have had the ability to use the action as an opportunity to challenge both the ANC's repression of the EFF or Zuma himself through media statements and the like for as they would not have engaged in the insurgent action itself.

#### **4.1.3.2 Hypothesis #2: The ANC Mass Base**

Without the EFF having engaged in its insurgent action, it doesn't seem likely that the cleavage between the ANC and its base would widen. However, as seen in the numerous social media posts supporting the EFF the existing cleavage was already present. In an article on the protest action, a BBC commentator wrote of the South African public "...while they may not support the chanting and disruption to a formal sitting, many are quietly applauding their stand."<sup>41</sup> Political commentator Justice Malala tweeted "#Zuma's tenure is one big scandal. He is the #ANC's Achilles heel. So long as he is around #EFF will have chance to disrupt; be relevant".<sup>42</sup>

Additionally, users on Twitter used the event, and the attention to Nkandla, to call into question the ANC's legitimacy in upholding its legacy and the work of its heroes in the struggle for national liberation/against apartheid. One user stated that the ANC should cease honoring Joe

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<sup>41</sup> "Jacob Zuma address halted by EFF MPs in South Africa." 2014. *BBC*, August 21. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28886373>.

<sup>42</sup> Justice Malala's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/justicemalala/status/502507022575996928?s=20>.

Slovo, Walter Sisulu, and Nelson Mandela as its own, as “they never stole anything from taxpayers money...”<sup>43</sup> The EFF and many Twitter users noted that the very notion of parliamentary proceedings as established in South Africa are rooted in apartheid-era or otherwise Western, liberal-democratic standards that may not be conducive to an indigenous understanding of democratic practice. One account supportive of the party proclaimed that “the #EFF will NEVER allow itself to be harnessed to the chariot of apartheid-inherited rules and Western-defined norms in parliament.”<sup>44</sup>

This tracks with the refrain of Malema and the EFF that South Africa would not have undergone the end of apartheid if it were not for protest, and that introducing these tactics into Parliament was a continuation of this form of democratic struggle. The abundance of social movements which populate South African political life, and the protests and strikes which fight against the current regimes and animate the understanding that liberation is incomplete at best, make this additionally quite clear. However, there had yet to be a political party that brought the struggles of the township to the parliament, at least outside of simple discourse, until the EFF conducted its insurgent action on August 21<sup>st</sup>. The mass base that expressed itself on social media demonstrated support for the EFF’s innovative translation of the tactics of insurgent street protest to the halls of Parliament, Parliament being an institution which was to that point inaccessible to the existing movements operating in South Africa.

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<sup>43</sup> Tshepo Thabane’s Twitter, [https://twitter.com/Tshepo\\_thabane/status/502503828076638209?s=20](https://twitter.com/Tshepo_thabane/status/502503828076638209?s=20).

<sup>44</sup> ShottaZee’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/ShottaZee/status/502517538253987840>.

#### **4.1.3.3 Hypothesis #3: The Tripartite Alliance**

There likely would not have been any change in the cleavage between the ANC and the Tripartite Alliance if the EFF had not conducted their first insurgent action, at least if one were to look at the action in isolation. There was no evident disunity as might be exemplified by elements in the Tripartite Alliance standing against the ANC's repression of the EFF. However, further analysis of the events/insurgent actions which followed partially as a result of the successes of the first action may prove a longer-term effect on this cleavage which supports the hypothesis.

To summarize: the EFF was able to, through its first insurgent action, draw wide attention to Zuma's continued refusal to adhere to the Public Protector's ruling regarding the Nkandla scandal, and in turn establish itself as a credible opposition to the ANC in the eyes of the ANC's mass base, other opposition parties, and the ANC itself. In counterfactually assessing the study's hypotheses through the first action and these demonstrated achievements, support can be found for propositions made in both Hypotheses #1 and #2, with certain conditions and expansions based in the evidence. These are: that the action provided a means for the DA to discredit the ANC; while it didn't ally with the EFF at this point, the response to its actions in the aftermath point to a political repositioning in order to tail the EFF to further its own aims in its conflict with the ANC. The hypothesized dynamic was more apparent with other opposition parties more ideologically aligned with the EFF who were quick to support the party in an effort to further their own aims as well. Additionally, the action demonstrated the hypothesized dynamic in which the EFF gained support from the ANC's mass base by actualizing itself as a party with characteristics/practices of a movement; this widened the cleavage between the ANC and its base as well as between the aforementioned opposition parties which were attempting to draw support from this base. All of these dynamics had the result of furthering broader popular animus towards Zuma and the ANC

and ensuring the material processes which might weaken him politically, such as the Nkandla ruling and further investigations, would be kept in the public eye.

## **4.2 November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

### **4.2.1 Description of Events**

On November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014 another significant EFF parliamentary protest took place in response to a vote which served to state that Zuma did not commit any form of crime in the Nkandla affair.<sup>45</sup> It is additionally important to note that this protest was not led by Julius Malema or the other members in party leadership who initiated the August 21<sup>st</sup> protest. Rather, the protest was initiated by a singular woman member of the EFF, MP Ngwanamakwetle Mashabela.<sup>46</sup> EFF supporters noted that this was indicative of the broader character of their party/movement, one that involved action being undertaken that wasn't simply directed from above. These filibusters themselves were a prefigurative to the protest, and importantly, they were the collective effort of the DA, the EFF, and the other smaller opposition parties to the ANC. This shows the beginning of collective action on the part of the other opposition parties with the EFF within the Parliament, which would deepen over the course of the day during and following the insurgent protest action

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<sup>45</sup> Harding, Andrew. 2014. "What MPs' scuffles reveal about South Africa's democracy." *BBC*, November 14. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30061677>.

<sup>46</sup> Davis, Rebecca. 2014. "Parliament diary: Scenes of shame." *Daily Maverick*, November 14. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-11-14-parliament-diary-scenes-of-shame/>.

by Mashabela. These were part of a strategic attempt to delay a vote on the acceptance of an ad-hoc parliamentary committee report on the Nkandla affair.<sup>47</sup>

The parliamentary proceedings began with Speaker Mbete stating that due to the sheer and “unforeseen” volume of the program for the session, there would be only 45 minutes allotted for parliamentary motions.<sup>48</sup> As these motions are times in which MPs are allowed to raise points which must be addressed in the session, and statements in support of these points, this was taken to be a violation of the rights of parliamentarians. EFF MP Godrich Gardee pointed out, to general applause from the opposition, that the article which Mbete cited to justify the change in procedure was intended for unforeseen eventualities such as acts of god, not an important procession of issues with regard to which controversy could be foreseen. Additionally, more MPs from the EFF, as well as the DA, the UDM, and the IFP all attempted (though not necessarily in a unified manner) to raise points of order objecting to this sudden ruling. The Speaker refused to recognize any of the various discordant members, only allowing DA Chief Whip John Steenhuisen to speak because, in her words, his “position as the Chief Whip of the biggest opposition party” would make him “helpful to the House” in corralling dissent. An additional notable sequence early in the proceedings the ordering out of the House of DA member Michael Waters, who refused to leave after continued protests. He was not, however, forcibly removed, though a lengthy verbal struggle

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<sup>47</sup> “Opposition purposefully delaying Parly session – sources.” 2014. *News24*, November 13. <https://www.news24.com/News24/Opposition-purposefully-delaying-Parly-session-sources-20141113>.

<sup>48</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2014c. “Proceedings of the National Assembly.” Hansard Record of Parliamentary Proceedings, November 13. [https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/hansard/614097\\_1.doc](https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/Docs/hansard/614097_1.doc).

ensued between Speaker Mbete, Steenhuisen, and Deputy Speaker Lechesa Tsenoli, among other ANC parliamentarians.

The substantial portion of the filibuster protests then commenced, filling up all the limited but allotted time, lasting around seven hours as previously stated. Motions raised ranged from the consequential (the EFF and DA motioning to raise issues surrounding Zuma's legal issues and the ANC's governance, particularly with regard to service delivery) to the relatively frivolous (a DA motion that "this House debates the exact meaning of the phrase, 'the lights of the Eiffel Tower are really shining tonight', as it relates to President Zuma"). At one point, EFF MP Gardee announced that he would be introducing 50 motions. Finally, the moment of contention was reached, one that had hung over the meeting to that point: the consideration of the report on the Nkandla affair by an ad-hoc parliamentary committee.

The ad-hoc committee was the subject of condemnation by the opposition parties in Parliament; in fact, on September 26<sup>th</sup>, in a meeting of the committee, all opposition members declined to participate in it and withdrew any support or recognition of its legitimacy.<sup>49</sup> This was referenced during the proceedings on November 26<sup>th</sup>, as the Deputy Speaker argued that the DA was being controlled or otherwise led in opposition to the function of the committee and the settling of the Nkandla affair: "The second point that I want to make is that the honorable opposition members are being led by the EFF – because now I can see that the DA doesn't have a parliamentary leader... *they rely on the mercy of the EFF to lead them*" (emphasis author's). In

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<sup>49</sup> SAPA. 2014b. "Opposition walks out of Nkandla ad hoc committee." *Polity*, September 26. <https://www.polity.org.za/article/opposition-walks-out-of-nkandla-ad-hoc-committee-2014-09-26>.



any case, the ad-hoc committee, which was now made up solely of ANC MPs, absolved Zuma of wrongdoing.

Along the lines of the preceding statement and the general contentious tenor of the meeting thus far, including more protests from EFF MP Gardee, the ANC forced a vote on whether the body of the Parliament would accept the findings of the ad-hoc committee. This was roundly condemned on all sides, and EFF MP Gardee declared the unconstitutionality of the ruling and attempted to call for the ability of the opposition to meet in caucus and. However, this did not come to be, and the vote passed in acceptance of the committee report. The Parliament then took a break for lunch, and at this point, most reporters stationed within the parliament to cover the proceedings took their leave, assuming the major event of the session had ended.<sup>50</sup>

Following the break, Frolick shut down multiple attempts to reinitiate dialogue contesting the ad-hoc committee's findings. Discussion began of a proposed dam project to be coordinated with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During this discussion, EFF MP Ngwanamakwetle Mashabela began to severely criticize the ANC's leadership in such a proposal. She sought to draw attention to the potential for corruption engrained in the project, in doing so alluding to many past instances of influence peddling in international dealings on the part of the ANC-led South African government. Beginning her remarks, she stated that while unopposed to regional development projects in principle, there were "serious reservations and concerns about the political manipulation of the project itself for the enrichment of friends and families". Consistent with the

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<sup>50</sup> Davis 2014.

EFF's framing of the ANC's governance, Mashabela's protest came in the form of an attack on Zuma and the ANC, as well as in her refusal to cease or withdraw her statements.<sup>51</sup>

She began her statements by noting the historic role of shared corruption between Zuma and DRC President Joseph Kabila in the awarding of state contracts to family members, with Zuma's nephew being awarded oilfield concessions in the DRC. Mashabela then returned to speaking about "Nkandlagate", forcefully stating on behalf of her party that "the EFF is tired of funding Zuma, the thief, the criminal, who refused to pay a cent... the President of the ANC is the greatest thief in the world...". This drew jeers and requests for withdrawal from ANC members, though Mashabela stood her ground: "I'm not going to withdraw".

The Chairperson of the House and ANC member Cedric Frolick addressed Mashabela: "honorable member Mashabela, you have said repeatedly, on numerous occasions, that the President is a thief, and that is what we are asking you to withdraw." Fighting through the interjections of other parliamentarians, Mashabela continued her protest: "I'm not going to withdraw. Allow me to finish my speech... Chair, allow me to finish my speech, please allow me to finish my speech..." She would keep repeating her refrain "Zuma is a thief, Zuma is a criminal" through multiple interjections, holding her stand at the podium.

Frolick had at this point had enough: "honorable member, you are not going to be allowed to finish your speech... you will leave the podium, and as you are not withdrawing the remark, you are also going to leave the House." Parliamentary Sergeant-at-Arms Regina Mohlomi then

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<sup>51</sup> SAPA. 2014c. "Chaos in Parly as riot police clash with MPs (video)." *The Citizen*, November 14. Archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20141117135221/https://citizen.co.za/274832/chaos-parly-riot-police-clash-mps-video/>.

attempted to remove Mashabela from the podium.<sup>52</sup> Mashabela recoiled: “I don’t want to be touched... No, I don’t want to be touched!” A photo from DA member Solly Malatsi posed on Twitter would show Mashabela being dragged off the Parliamentary floor shortly thereafter by riot police.<sup>53</sup>

Frolic addressed Steenhuisen during the chaos, noticing that DA members had begun taking pictures of the assault on Mashabela. “Can you delete that picture, please?”, he asked, “Honorable member at the back, can you just... May I request you, hon Steenhuisen, just to talk to your member and have the picture deleted, please? Thank you.” This is an immediate further attempt at repression by forcing the deletion of evidence of violence against a member of Parliament.

“Chair, I think all of us in this place, at least if you believe in the Constitution of this country, you will know that in no world can police enter this Chamber”, pleaded Steenhuisen. However, within a few minutes of the attack on Mashabela, and her defense on the part of the DA and EFF, riot police were called to the scene to intervene and engage in forced removal of opposition party members.<sup>54</sup> DA MP Phumzille Van Damme tweeted photos of body armor-clad riot police massing in parliament alongside the message “hang your heads in shame ANC”.<sup>55</sup> Cellphone video taken from above the main parliamentary floor showed part of the fighting

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<sup>52</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2014d. “Plenary: National Assembly, 13 November.” November 13. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OD8CRqcEnKk>.

<sup>53</sup> Solly Malatsi’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/SollyMalatsi/status/533002293483151360>.

<sup>54</sup> SAPA 2014c.

<sup>55</sup> Phumzile Van Damme’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/zilevandamme/status/533005128450965504>.

towards the rear of the chamber; one can see the larger involvement of MPs from opposition parties beyond just the red-suited EFF membership.<sup>56</sup>

DA members would testify during and after the event that they faced particularly violent repression from the riot police. A deleted tweet from DA MP Terri Stander read “the @SAPoliceService has just assaulted me and threw me over the @ParliamentofRSA bench”.<sup>57</sup> An archived copy of the tweet shows EFF members/supporters providing support for her in responses. DA Chief Whip Steenhuisen stated that no less than four DA MPs– the aforementioned Terri Stander, Gordon Mackay, Denise Robinson and Dean Macpherson – were assaulted, with Stander being physically stood upon by police for some period of time.<sup>58</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Response From the ANC/State**

The insurgent action on November 13<sup>th</sup> provoked the direct repressive response of body armor-clad riot police arriving into the chamber and committing violent acts against MPs within the house. These repressive actions, detailed in the preceding narrative, marked the first time that the state actually utilized physical violence *within* Parliament, and as such marked a rapid escalation of the overall repression being placed on the EFF. It also marked the first time that

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<sup>56</sup> Wandile. 2014. “Chaos in South Africa’s National Assembly.” November 13. Video. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OE5x2W\\_2sJ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OE5x2W_2sJ8).

<sup>57</sup> Terri Stander’s Twitter, archived at [https://web.archive.org/web/20180803013407if\\_/https://twitter.com/TerriStander/status/533001593806155776](https://web.archive.org/web/20180803013407if_/https://twitter.com/TerriStander/status/533001593806155776).

<sup>58</sup> SAPA 2014c.

violence was being used against third parties who became united with the EFF in their insurgent actions, as demonstrated by the violence against DA members.

Beyond the direct, physically violent repressive response, the ANC continued its discursive attacks against the EFF and the broader opposition. As noted in the narrative, the video cut out at key points in the confrontation, affecting the clarity through which one could discern what occurred and when; this, however, was noticed in the news media and was thwarted by the different actors present with the ability to visually document the violence.<sup>59</sup> In turn, the direct attempts to influence documentation and/or social media posting by members of the Parliament during the event mark further repression along these lines. The ANC had also continued to control the official narrative regarding the parliamentary protest action through the control of the official video record of the parliamentary proceedings. Beyond this direct demonstration, ANCYL leader Bram Hanekom accused the EFF and DA of celebrating the events of November 11<sup>th</sup> as they fit into their respective political agendas. This also marked the beginning of insinuations that the EFF was directing the opposition, thereby amounting to a justification for the broader repression of the parliamentary opposition, as noted in the narrative.

#### **4.2.3 Analysis of November 13<sup>th</sup> Event**

The November 13<sup>th</sup> parliamentary protest indicated the heightening of a few dynamics since the August protest event. It illustrated, at least in the first major segment of the sitting, combined protest efforts on the part of the EFF, the DA, and other minor opposition parties. The

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<sup>59</sup> Davis 2014.

drawing-out of the session, and the use of bureaucratic practice to disrupt, was used by a variety of members of the opposition. To pose the counterfactual of the EFF not being involved in this action, it is difficult to say that the DA and the other parties would have been so bold as to engage in this form of protest had the disruption not occurred in August. Further, the growing interplay (if not full-on allyship) at this point between the EFF and the DA probably sustained the length of the more low-level protest which drew out the session and set the stage for the more disruptive protest of Mashabela and the concordant intervention of DA parliamentarians. Therefore, the compounding effect of historic protest events starts to be seen with the November action and cannot be disaggregated from the succeeding events in counterfactual analysis.

In turn, the repressive response was much greater, and for the first time included a particular targeting of the DA. This came, of course, as a result of the DA participating in the protest event directly for the first time. Although the bodily defense of the EFF by the DA did not seem to be planned, it indicated a willingness of the DA to directly take sides on the issue of the protest against the actions of the ANC and the forces of the state which it marshalled. In doing so, there was a compounding effect of repression. Simply put, there was more violence, as more participants were engaged in defending Mashabela and the protest action and found themselves subject to attacks from security forces. All of these were well-documented even despite the lack of direct news media coverage due to the circumstances of the event.

Conversely, in posing the counterfactual question, there would most definitely have not been the same sort of repression had the EFF *not* engaged in this protest event. The DA would not have gotten involved in the physical protection of the EFF, and as previously mentioned it is hard to prove that the DA could have sustained the length of disruption, let alone initiated it at all, without the example set by the EFF in engaging in their initial insurgent protest in August. The

EFF was observed to be leading the struggle, despite the actions of the DA and the repression they faced. Prominent South African comedian Conrad Koch tweeted “the DA's parliamentary press releases these days should just say: ask the EFF”.<sup>60</sup> While downplaying the large role the DA had in supporting the EFF during the protest for effect, this response is indicative of the broader awareness that the EFF was the motive force in the November action and those which preceded it. This would give the EFF further credibility as a political force. Journalist Max du Preez, himself a consistent critic of the EFF, argued that the united opposition’s tactics during the proceedings were both “legitimate and effective”.<sup>61</sup>

#### **4.2.3.1 Hypothesis #1: Opposition Parties and Supporters**

The insurgent protest event itself formed an example of the widening cleavage between the ANC and the DA, one which was being fully taken advantage of by the EFF in a now fully-practical way. Leaders in the DA issued strong statements against the repressive response of the ANC in the days following the November action. Maimane stated that the DA “felt (the repressive response) was a violation of the Constitutional order... it breaks down the social contract we all got into. If they can call in the police today, it could be the army tomorrow.”<sup>62</sup> DA MP Solly Malatsi stated the violent removal of Mashabela was “the lowest moment in (South Africa’s) democracy”.<sup>63</sup> Notably, Steenhuisen responded directly to Hanekom’s tweet by calling him a

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<sup>60</sup> Conrad Koch’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/chestermising/status/532987148065325056?s=20>.

<sup>61</sup> Max du Preez’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/MaxduPreez/status/532916302080663553>.

<sup>62</sup> Davis 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Solly Malatsi’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/SollyMalatsi/status/533001625422794752>.

“little sniveling rat-ass lickspittle”, restating the violence of the act and that the ANC was to blame for it (as undertaken by “your security forces”), followed by a “go fuck yourself”.<sup>64</sup>

DA supporters on Twitter were active on social media throughout what was being posted from within the parliament and on accounts of the day’s events in the aftermath. The Twitter thread from Standers’s tweet accusing the riot police of assault on her person had many DA supporters arguing that the assault and the overall handling of the situation amounted to South Africa becoming a police state. A user responding to Van Damme’s tweet with pictures of the riot police within Parliament compared the current government’s handling of the protest to the policies of the apartheid state, as did a DA supporter who stated the censorship of the proceedings in the official video feed amounted to a “pre-1994” (i.e., apartheid era) form of censorship.<sup>65</sup>

#### **4.2.3.2 Hypothesis #2: The ANC Mass Base**

Echoing the refrains of DA and EFF supporters, the general tendency of the ANC mass base, as indicated in news and social media, was to argue that the arrival of riot police in the chamber to remove Mashabela indicated the presence of a “police state”.<sup>66</sup> Many of those who admitted to being critical of the EFF continued to support their actions in Parliament. One Twitter user tweeted that the insurgent protests were “necessary... encouraged even”.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, multiple Twitter users within the ANC’s base called attention to the fact that white DA MP Waters wasn’t forcibly removed for insubordination, while Mashabela, a Black woman, was subject to

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<sup>64</sup> Bram Hanekom’s Twitter, [https://twitter.com/bram\\_hanekom/status/533016097952632832](https://twitter.com/bram_hanekom/status/533016097952632832).

<sup>65</sup> Eusebius McKaiser’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/Eusebius/status/533000059424866304>.

<sup>66</sup> Marius Redelinghuys’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/chatlas/status/533001622222536704>.

<sup>67</sup> PearlPillay’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/PearlPillay/status/533009388920135680?s=20>.



violent removal.<sup>68</sup> Social media users also noted with surprise the increased support for the EFF by the DA, even throwing themselves in harm's way for them; one in assuming this was due to the EFF's growing capacity to provoke the ANC and draw such support by seizing the moment through their insurgent activity.<sup>69</sup>

#### **4.2.3.3 Hypothesis #3: The Tripartite Alliance**

An interesting contextual point here is that November 8th, 2014 was the date of NUMSA's expulsion from COSATU (Hunter 2014). None of the member groups of the Tripartite Alliance outside of the ANC commented and/or were apparently involved in the events of November 13th. However, this isn't to say that the two events aren't connected, and as such that they do not connect to dissension within the Tripartite Alliance for political reasons. Sharp (2014) argues that the expulsion of NUMSA from COSATU was at least partly rooted in the ANC's desire to win over the Black middle class, which had increasingly voted for the DA in preceding elections. This, of course, would lend credence to the EFF's claims argued within the context of its insurgency, and add context to the decreasing fealty of the ANC to its historic mass base. It additionally might have been linked to the ANC's fears of the DA, and conversely the DA's willingness to ally itself with the EFF, even if on a tentative basis. These are speculative claims, however, and may rather be the subject of future research. In any case, it was not readily apparent in the aftermath of the November 13th event that it had served to widen a cleavage between the ANC and the rest of the Tripartite Alliance.

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<sup>68</sup> Gaye Davis's Twitter, [https://twitter.com/Gaye\\_Davis/status/533026226836111360](https://twitter.com/Gaye_Davis/status/533026226836111360).

<sup>69</sup> Ory Okolloh-Mwangi's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/kenyanpundit/status/533018863899017216?s=20>.

The events of November 13th showed the progression of the EFF's insurgency in several important ways. First, the DA became an actual ally in the context of the protest itself, with DA parliamentarians even serving to put their bodies in harms' way to protect the EFF's protest. This expanded their role far beyond the non-involvement and both-sidesism that characterized their response to the August protest event. This widened the cleavage between the DA and the ANC, and in turn further indicated a growing movement against the government. Supporters of both parties noted this shift in alliances/actions while attributing it to a strategic capacity in the EFF's insurgent actions and/or a general willingness of the DA to follow the EFF's lead in engaging in any sort of political activity as forthright as insurgent protest.

The ANC was readily aware of this, and in the aftermath attempted to further condemn and repress this seeming alliance. ANC spokesperson Zizi Kodwa stated as much: "the dangerous alliance of a racist DA and a fascist EFF driven by a common hatred and disdain for the ANC has once again displayed its contempt for our democratic institutions."<sup>70</sup> This being said, it had become clear that the impetus for this threat was the initializing insurgent actions of the EFF, and that the actions of the DA and their apparent allyship came as a result of the effectiveness of the insurgency.

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<sup>70</sup> Mack, David. 2014. "Riot Police Break Up Chaotic Scenes In South African Parliament." *BuzzFeed News*, November 14. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/davidmack/riot-police-break-up-chaotic-scenes-in-south-african-parliam>.

### 4.3 February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015

#### 4.3.1 Description of Events

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the South African Parliament met in a joint sitting of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces for President Zuma's State of the Nation Address. The official streaming video from the session begins as Zuma entered the parliamentary hall, with most members of the Parliament rising to attention, applauding his procession onto the floor, with the applause giving way to a rhythmic chant by ANC members: "Zuma, Zuma, Zuma..."<sup>71</sup> Musicians sang the South African national anthem. However, two groups stood apart from the otherwise jubilant atmosphere. Members of the EFF were clad in their typical red workers' attire, hard hats and all. More uncharacteristic, however, was the coordinated fashion statement of the DA: all members were clad in black. This was apparently both a metaphor for the service delivery issues of Eskom, the South African state-run electricity concern and a means to contradict the celebratory atmosphere of the rest of the address: "...we are not celebrating this as a red-carpet occasion" stated DA leader Maimane prior to the sitting.<sup>72</sup> This was clearly a significant turn, as the DA was not normally given to such performative statements. This may have had something to do with pronouncements by Malema in the lead-up to the State of the Nation Address that he would

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<sup>71</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2015. "State of the Nation Address: Joint Sitting, 12 February 2015." February 12. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPluIw3uPPo&t=2288s>.

<sup>72</sup> Davis, Rebecca. 2015. "SONA: Shame of the Nation 2015." *The Daily Maverick*, February 13. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-02-13-sona-shame-of-the-nation-2015/>.

“politely” insist on asking Zuma the questions which had been at the heart of the previous months’ insurgent protest activities by the EFF.<sup>73</sup>

The procedural content began with Chief Whip Steenhuisen calling to attention the fact that a cellphone jamming device had been placed in the halls of Parliament.<sup>74</sup> Reporters and figures in attendance at the proceedings had noticed that there was no Internet signal on their respective phones and connected devices. He requested that the device be turned off as this was a matter of constitutionally protected freedom of communication in the Parliament. This was followed by coordinated applause on the part of the DA membership in attendance. Speaker Mbete attempted to sidestep the issue, merely responding that “we will make sure that the Secretary follows up on that issue...”. This was met with audible disapproval across the Parliamentary floor, and there continued to be a back and forth between Mbete and members of the DA such as Mmusi Maimane, who called attention to the fact that this had never happened in the twenty years of democratic governance since the end of apartheid and argued that the proceedings could not continue unless the device was turned off. However, they continued to be waved off by Mbete.

This was, however, until EFF member Floyd Shivambu stood to protest. In the face of admonition by Mbete to “take (his) seat”, Shivambu proposed that “you adjourn the House until we have dealt with this situation”. Only then could the proceedings continue under “tolerable

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<sup>73</sup> Roelf, Wendell. 2015. “South African parliament descends into chaos as Zuma gets hostile reception.” *Reuters*, February 12. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-safrica-zuma/south-african-parliament-descends-into-chaos-as-zuma-gets-hostile-reception-idUKKBN0LG2HT20150212>.

<sup>74</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2015. “Proceedings of the Joint Sitting.” Hansard Record of Parliamentary Proceedings, February 12. [https://www.parliament.gov.za/hansard?sorts\[date\]=-1&queries\[search\]=JS120215](https://www.parliament.gov.za/hansard?sorts[date]=-1&queries[search]=JS120215).

conditions”. This was met with applause, and in turn reporters in attendance began to interrupt with a chant: “bring back the signal! Bring back the signal!” The leaders of the DA and the EFF in particular, Zille and Malema, both held up their phones alongside their comrades and led such chants from the floor.<sup>75</sup> The official video cuts out at this point, during minutes of tension as the Speaker stopped the continuation if not the overall content of the proceedings while waiting for an apparent response from the Secretary.

EFF member and spokesperson Ndlozi took advantage of this period to make the pertinent statement that “while we are waiting for the signal, we don’t have water”, articulating the discomfort of many of the parliamentarians that more than an hour had passed since the start of the proceedings and they simply did not have water or the basic provision of Internet services. He concluded, in a glib manner which bore laughter in the hall, that “there is a service delivery crisis here in Parliament!” This, of course, was a reference to the incapacity of the ANC-led government to deliver basic services to most South African people on a regular basis, and thus formed a sort of pre-emptive discursive attack on the ANC which drew parallels between what was happening in the halls of power and on the outside.

After more minutes of tension, DA leader Maimane continued to press the issue of freedom of speech, calling for the Internet signal to be restored. Finally, after some additional time, Mbete announced that the signal had been restored to somewhat mocking cheers from the parliamentary floor and press section. At this point, Zuma finally began his address.

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<sup>75</sup> “SONA Disrupted as EFF MPs Removed, DA MPs Walk Out.” 2015. *EWN*, February 12. <https://ewn.co.za/2015/02/12/Sona-disrupted-as-EFF-MPs-thrown-out-and-DA-MPs-walk-out>.

However, he was then interrupted by EFF MP Gardee with a point of order, more specifically a *point of privilege*.<sup>76</sup> Gardee's point of privilege was at first allowed to generally be made. Gardee's point was this: "May we ask the President as to when he is going pay back the money in terms of what the Public Protector has said?" This, of course, further deepened the EFF's insurgent protest engagement, again calling attention to Zuma's refusal to as of yet follow the recommendation of the Public Protector's office. In turn, by casting this as a point of privilege, Gardee and the EFF made a particular point through which they'd hoped to force a response – was the President using his privilege as such a figure to avoid the rule of law and the democratic norms so strictly followed that they justified the EFF's removal in previous sittings of the Parliament?

Mbete attempted to shut down this line of questioning and the insurgent action as a whole by stating that points of order had to be pertinent to the current seating. However, Gardee responded with the previous point regarding the matter being a point of privilege as such. EFF MP Matiase responded to the lack of an adequate response to this particular point by stating that "we (the body of the Parliament) are of the view that the question deserves an adequate response, and we call upon this House to apply its *collective memory* to recall that the President has evaded coming here and answering questions, not once, not twice, but on more than three occasions" (emphasis author's). Again the EFF was using its insurgent action in a very considered way, helping to broaden the space through which democracy could be practiced in South African Parliament and contesting its selective and limited application.

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<sup>76</sup> Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. 2015. "State of the Nation Address: Joint Sitting, 12 February 2015." February 12. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPluIw3uPPo&t=1271s>.

Speaker Mbete responded in an intentionally-limiting manner: “this Joint sitting is not meant for any of the issues you are raising, as I said, not a point of order, or a point of privilege nor questions are the business of this particular sitting”, arguing instead that it was a formal meeting merely to hear the State of the Nation address without anything in the way of a dialogue in the proceedings. In turn, EFF leader Malema began to ask to raise a point with the Speaker, to which she responded that she didn’t think he was to make a substantive contribution beyond that which had been covered by her previous rejections.

Malema began his intervention as such: “you are making a mistake because you are reading my mind.” He called attention to the fact that as a representative democratic organ, “it is within my rights to speak as a member of this House, and remind you that it is incorrect of you to suggest that when the President speaks, you suspend the Rules. The Rules are not suspended and the Rules must apply even when the President speaks...”, further demanding an answer to the question of when and how President Zuma would pay back the money.

Speaker Mbete would not countenance this, asking Malema to leave Parliament “because it’s clear that you are not prepared to cooperate with us.” Malema refused this, and raised his challenge by saying that his comrades were “protected by the rules” in their lines of questioning. After this EFF MP Shivambu asked the question of what procedure was being followed by expelling Malema, Mbete directed him to leave as well, finally also bringing up the warning that had been handed over the proceedings: “you have come here to disrupt... you have told the country you would disrupt...”, speaking of Malema’s assertion that Zuma would be questioned during his address, and further intimating that she would take preemptive measures to ensure this didn’t happen.

Malema responded forcefully: “I am not here on your invitation. I was elected to be here...” and that as such, he would not leave. In turn, Mbete announced that she would call the Sergeant-at-Arms to expel the members that she had directed to leave. EFF MP Ndlozi attempted to raise a point of order regarding this chain of events, during which time he was also told to leave by Speaker Mbete.

A commotion had become raised in Parliament, with EFF members in particular angry at the repression of those who had disrupted Zuma’s speech with their questioning and demands to be heard. In turn, Mbete specifically requested that Parliamentary Protection Officers come into the chambers to remove the aforementioned members.

Ndlozi attempted to appeal to Mbete’s experience as a former revolutionary to ensure their voices were heard and they would not be expelled otherwise: “we are appealing to your conscience... hopefully it still has a revolutionary content!” Mbete was unmoved, calling upon the Powers and Privileges Act as giving her the right to have police eject the EFF members in such a way. The commotion continued, replete with some EFF members chanting in Zulu that they would not be moved (*sizolala la*, or “we will sleep here”).

At this point, “dozens and dozens” of plainclothes yet armed security forces arrived.<sup>77</sup> They began to attempt to force out the EFF members.<sup>78</sup> The official parliamentary video maintains a close-up on Mbete’s position as Speaker, without giving any documentation of the goings-on in the chambers at the time in which this was happening. However, in videos taken elsewhere,

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<sup>77</sup> Davis 2015.

<sup>78</sup> Daily Maverick. “Removal of EFF from National Assembly. #SONA2015.” February 12. Video. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWOz8vKcn\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWOz8vKcn_g).



including from the media corps, plainclothes police could be seen throwing punches *first* at EFF members, who then responded in kind with punches and throwing of their uniform hard hats.<sup>79</sup> As shown in a video taken by DA MP Terri Stander from the parliamentary floor, this gave way to a phalanx of plainclothes officers shoving the members *en masse* out of the parliamentary chambers as the members tried to hold their collective ground.<sup>80</sup> EFF MP Reneiloe Mashabela was seen to have severe facial swelling and a deep gash on her nose from an attack by the police.<sup>81</sup> One journalist even speculated that EFF MPs had been pepper sprayed given their affect in the aftermath.<sup>82</sup> Leadership from the EFF was forced into their parliamentary offices to give statements.<sup>83</sup>

Maimane repeatedly requested a clarification as to whether the police which forced the EFF out of the chambers were normal parliamentary police or were armed members of the general police forces of the South African Police Service, whose use in such a manner was unprecedented. He particularly argued against the use of such police during a sitting of Parliament, when it had not been adjourned or put on hold in a procedural manner; he concluded his protests by saying that this was a grave violation of the South African Constitution, one that was “unacceptable”. The response given by Chairperson of the NCOP Thandi Modise (who had replaced Mbete in chairing the goings-on at this point) was that it was within the privileges of the Parliamentary leadership to

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<sup>79</sup> Sihle Mlambo’s Twitter, [https://twitter.com/SihleMlambo\\_/status/565937005587365888](https://twitter.com/SihleMlambo_/status/565937005587365888).

<sup>80</sup> Terri Stander. 2015. “EFF forcible removal #SONA2015.” February 12. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-mtKyImGa4>.

<sup>81</sup> Kgothatso Madisa’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/kgmadisa/status/565958224852299776>.

<sup>82</sup> Leigh-Anne Jansen’s Twitter, [https://twitter.com/LA\\_JANSEN/status/565930744267415552?s=20](https://twitter.com/LA_JANSEN/status/565930744267415552?s=20).

<sup>83</sup> “SONA Disrupted” 2015.

escalate the situation in such a way as to call in the police, while evading the specific content of the situation. A respectful back and forth between DA Chief Whip Steenhuisen and Modise ensued, but Maimane, clearly distressed by what had transpired, demanded an answer to the question of whether or not the plainclothes officers were SAPS. Refuted an answer, he intimated that the next natural level of escalation would be for the military to be called in to repress parliament, and as such asked “that our party be left outside of the State of the Nation address” given the lack of a response.

Finally, Chair Modise answered, in a convoluted fashion, that “security forces working with the parliamentary protection services” had indeed entered the chambers during the proceedings to eject the EFF membership. Without a further word, the DA left the house of parliament collectively alongside the membership of the UDM, COPE, and Agang.<sup>84</sup>

In the immediate aftermath, the EFF initiated its usual offensive against the ever more increasingly violent response of the state to their protest. Malema, whose undershirt had been torn by police, argued that it showed that South Africa had become a police state.<sup>85</sup> In turn, other members and supporters rallied outside into the night, chanting the now famous slogan “pay back the money”.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Munusamy, Ranjeni. 2015. “SONA2015: The day our country broke.” *The Daily Maverick*, February 13. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-02-13-sona2015-they-day-our-country-broke/>

<sup>85</sup> Roelf 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Dianne Hawker’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/diannehawker/status/565935068632584193>.

#### 4.3.2 Response from the ANC/State

The immediate response from the ANC/state took the form of ever-increasing levels of overt and more implicit forms of violence and suppression, reaching new heights in the February protest event. The use of signal jamming, which preceded the protest itself and certainly didn't contribute to alternate perceptions of the ANC's right to physical force later in the confrontation, was well noted by the press during the event, which provoked the first outcries of protest if not the actual insurgent action itself. This speaks to the power of the EFF's insurgency in provoking such prefigurative repressive tactics. As the prior events had generated a great deal of coverage and attention as previously noted, the ANC seemingly undertook these measures to ensure that a foreseen response could potentially go under covered were it to take place. Even as the signal jammers were turned off, they highlighted such a dynamic and illustrated the oppositional strength of the EFF in the moment.

Another first in the ANC's repressive response came in the use of armed, plainclothes officers from the South African Police Service to eject the EFF during their insurgent action. As noted in the narrative by Maimane, this was unprecedented and the first time in the post-apartheid era in which "regular" police were used in such a way. Indeed, by 2017, it would become admitted/commonly known that the plainclothes police were being disguised as waiters from the State of the Nation festivities so as to avoid arousing suspicion or outrage before the matter.<sup>87</sup> Further, a journalist noted that even outside of the plainclothes presence, there was a much more

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<sup>87</sup> "South African's Jacob Zuma deploys troops to state address SONA.". 2017. *BBC*, February 8. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38904902>.

pronounced security presence than had ever been noted at a parliamentary function in years of journalism.<sup>88</sup> The specificities of the direct repressive response were mentioned, again, within the narrative reconstruction of the event itself.

In the immediate aftermath of the event, ANC members were in a celebratory mood, feeling as though they'd achieved another victory and effectively suppressed the EFF's protest. ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe repeated the discursive tactic of appealing to the country's supposed democratic institutions in justifying the repression, stating that "if we allow Parliament to become a circus, we are destroying democracy".<sup>89</sup> Mantashe further accused the EFF of trying to initiate a "coup" by interrupting during the State of the Nation address.<sup>90</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Analysis of February 12<sup>th</sup> Event

To quote South African investigative newspaper *The Daily Maverick*: "Nobody will remember what President Zuma said in his 2015 State of the Nation Address".<sup>91</sup> Indeed, it was the protest of the EFF, the repression which was initiated even *prior* to their protest as a result of the compounding insurgency and the foreseen continuation of its tactics during the State of the Nation,

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<sup>88</sup> Leigh-Anne Jansen's Twitter, [https://twitter.com/LA\\_JANSEN/status/565881926209536000?s=20](https://twitter.com/LA_JANSEN/status/565881926209536000?s=20).

<sup>89</sup> Hunter, Qaanitah and Mmanaledi Mataboge. 2015. "Sona 2015: 'We had to show them who is in charge'." *Mail & Guardian*, February 13. <https://mg.co.za/article/2015-02-13-sona-2015-we-had-to-show-them-who-is-in-charge/>.

<sup>90</sup> "Brawl in South African parliament as opposition MPs give Zuma hostile reception." 2015. *The Guardian*, February 12. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/12/south-african-mps-fight-in-parliament-as-zuma-gets-hostile-reception>.

<sup>91</sup> "SONA" in *We Have A Gamechanger: A Decade of Daily Maverick*. 2015. Electric Book Works. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/gamechanger/book/text/2015-01.html>.

and the resultant repression and dynamic response of third parties which made the occasion historic. The EFF scored several victories with this event, the culmination of the two preceding actions from August and November. Journalist Andrew Harding, while not a specific supporter of the EFF, especially appreciated the contribution of the EFF's confrontation: "when Julius Malema stood up in parliament on Thursday evening and demanded to be heard it felt, for a moment, like he was doing so on behalf of many South Africans."<sup>92</sup>

The February event definitively showed the definite utility of the media in documenting the insurgent dynamics at play in a way which proved advantageous for the EFF. In turn, the compounding nature of the insurgency to that point ensured that this would be an event that was well-covered and that any potential actions by the EFF would be anticipated by journalists given their sensational character, particularly given the now common knowledge that the early refusal of the news media in the November event prevented a better understanding of the goings-on later into that evening. For example, this helped to flesh out some of the chain of events, particularly as the insurgent protest erupted into violence and a more measured brawl. This insurgent action was in turn, strategic, "broadcast primetime on national television".<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Harding, Andrew. 2015. "South Africa parliament ruckus is a noisy new low." *BBC*, February 14. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31469640>.

<sup>93</sup> Baker, Aryn. 2015. "South Africa's State of Nation Address Has Become a Carnival that Avoids Country's Real Problems." *Time*, February 12. <https://time.com/3706818/south-african-president-zuma-addresses-the-nation/>.

#### 4.3.3.1 Hypothesis #1: Opposition Parties and Supporters

As previously noted, the February event marked the culminating shift from equal opposition to the EFF and the ANC on the part of the DA to a focus of protest and/or critique fully on the ANC. This was combined with tactical allyship towards that end with the EFF, and even the beginnings of the replication of some of the performative aspects of the EFF's insurgent practice in the rhetorical flourish of the "funeral" for South African democracy. Mmusi Maimane made a statement in the aftermath which argued that the ANC's all-out response to the protest of the EFF "robs the people of South Africa of what President Nelson Mandela fought for, which is the upholding of the rule of the law and the constitution."<sup>94</sup> He also called into question whether or not the "defense force", or military, would be called into Parliament next, maintaining the EFF's argument and the increasingly held popular opinion that post-apartheid South Africa was becoming more of a police state.<sup>95</sup>

In turn, the EFF further established that an effective opposition bloc united against Zuma had been formed. Following the insurgent event, Malema proclaimed that the EFF was "very happy with the courage of the DA" in joining with their action.<sup>96</sup> Leadership from both parties participated in the "bring back the signal chants" which helped to remove the signal jamming device placed on the hall, another example of the unified opposition in concrete practice. DA member Terri Stander, through her aforementioned video posted to YouTube, engaged in her own

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<sup>94</sup> Roelf 2015.

<sup>95</sup> "SONA Disrupted" 2015.

<sup>96</sup> Dianne Hawker's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/diannehawker/status/565936710874566656>.

documentation of the EFF attempting to maintain their place in parliament even when forced out by plainclothes officers.

Certain more minor opposition parties weighed in in support of the efforts of the EFF/against Zuma and the ANC. UDM leader Holomisa made a statement in the aftermath that South Africa had become a police state.<sup>97</sup> As mentioned previously, other minor parties which aligned mostly with the EFF also left parliament alongside the DA against the actions of the ANC.

Interestingly enough, some other minor opposition parties weighed in on the matter with a negative stance. IFP leader Buthelezi condemned the EFF's actions from the position that it would not "make... voters proud", and African Christian Democratic Party leader Rev. Kenneth Meshoe engaged in the old blaming of both the ANC and the EFF for the conflict in Parliament.<sup>98</sup> However, as previously stated, members from the UDM, COPE, and Agang walked out of Parliament alongside the DA specifically against the actions of the ANC.<sup>99</sup>

#### **4.3.3.2 Hypothesis #2: The ANC Mass Base**

The general sentiment of those who were part of the ANC mass base and active on Twitter around the time of the February 2015 protests was of a blanket condemnation of the ANC's actions. In particular, the brutal injuries suffered by EFF MP Mashabela sparked particular concerns. One person noted that while they "can't stand EFF's agitation, this is just wrong" in response to the posted photo of Mashabela.<sup>100</sup> Another testified to her power in the face of such a beating, calling

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<sup>97</sup> Dianne Hawker's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/diannehawker/status/565934260297949185?s=20>.

<sup>98</sup> Hunter and Mataboge 2015.

<sup>99</sup> Munusami 2015.

<sup>100</sup> LuchosGali's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/LuchosGali/status/565959201248514048?s=20>.

her a “fighter par excellence” using the preferred term for EFF members.<sup>101</sup> Others called attention to the use of police violence and repression more broadly, repeating the EFF and now the DA’s refrain that South Africa under Zuma’s ANC was becoming a police state.<sup>102</sup>

In turn, the EFF’s protest, strategically placed before Zuma’s speech itself, allowed for a more fully realized understanding amongst those in the ANC’s mass base of the prospects for democratic practice in the country. South African correspondents for German news concern DW stated that the armed repression of the EFF’s call for clarity and against corruption, followed by another well-worn, “uninspiring speech” from Zuma drastically illuminated the degree to which democracy in the country had been “compromised”, as supported by contacts on the ground.<sup>103</sup>

#### **4.3.3.3 Hypothesis #3: The Tripartite Alliance**

The February 12<sup>th</sup> event was notable in that it was clear that at least one non-ANC sector of the Tripartite Alliance was in full support of the repression. SACP General Secretary Blade Nzimande stated that the action “showed (the EFF) who was in charge”, in doing so “(teaching the EFF) a lesson”, ostensibly in knowing their place not to interfere with the ANC’s governance.<sup>104</sup> Such a statement was a new phenomenon, and it could be understood that such a statement would have not been made if the Tripartite Alliance partners did not feel the need to present a unified front in establishing the repression of the EFF as a victory. As such, it certainly stands to reason that the progression of the EFF’s insurgency had enabled a certain shift in the Tripartite Alliance

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<sup>101</sup> Jmoznana’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/mjoznana/status/565958887371997186?s=20>.

<sup>102</sup> Amos Tabane’s Twitter, <https://twitter.com/RealAmosTabane/status/565920754194448384?s=20>.

<sup>103</sup> Khumalo, Thuso and Abu-Bakarr Jalloh. 2015. “Chaos during state of the nation address in South Africa.”

<sup>104</sup> Hunter and Mataboge 2015.



by this point, though it was unclear the degree to which this caused internal dissension with the increasingly public stance of the SACP's leadership as to the conflict with the EFF.

The events of February 12<sup>th</sup> marked an important culmination for the insurgent practices of the EFF since they had begun in August 2014, and in doing so present the opportunity to more fully understand the degree to which the dynamics of insurgent practice may have been present in the case of their insurgency. In particular, the February event showed that the DA was now in full tactical alliance with the EFF to the point where they had begun engaging in similarly disruptive actions, manifest from dress to walk-out, in support of the EFF's insurgent practices *against* the Zuma-led ANC. Simultaneously, the media had fully emerged as an important third party which had the power to highlight the EFF's insurgency and in turn which could be repressed by the ANC – with immense consequences if found out. The ANC heightened its repression to new levels having become aware of the leadership of the EFF in its disruption and in the visibility of its practices, again with unintended consequences as the covert nature of some elements of this policing were exposed in their use.

This ended up resulting in a historic moment at which one could understand the counter-factual necessity of the EFF's insurgent practice in producing a unified and effective opposition to the ANC for the first time in the post-apartheid era. If the EFF had not engaged in this particular protest event at this particular time, this being at the State of the Nation address following two insurgent protest events with evident compounding effects on third party relationships, taking advantage of what it had built to this point, you would not see the full emergence of the DA as a strategic ally and of the power of the media as an advantageous third party to such a degree, nor would you see such unprecedented levels of repression in practice.

## 5.0 Discussion

Between the August and the February events, it is clearly evident that a shift in the political dynamics of South Africa had occurred, and that it had been spurred by the insurgent practices of the EFF. These practices advanced a particular form of practice, unorthodox protests within the halls of Parliament, involving chanting, interruption through strategic questioning/use of parliamentary points of order and procedure, and physical filibustering in the refusal to physically vacate the hall or positions within the hall. These disrupted the proceedings of Parliament to the point where in the first two events the sessions could not continue and had to be adjourned, and in the final their actions induced a majority of the participants to protest alongside them and walk out. However, these protests were purposeful, drawing on rhetoric which directly confronted the ruling party with not just allegations but proof of corruption in the South African Public Protector's ruling on misappropriation of public funds by President Zuma and in turn a demand for restitution to be made. These practices were strategic in that they made ample use of a highly public terrain, the South African Parliament, which garnered ample media attention for their protests, genuinely disrupted business-as-usual, and at least theoretically ensured their protests would become part of the public record as recorded in parliamentary transcriptions and recorded video of the proceedings.

These protests set off a dynamic chain of events which only compounded with time and their succeeding utilization. The ANC engaged in heightening waves of immediate and longer-term repression of the EFF's insurgency through discursive and more directly coercive means. These were significant in that they both proved the real threat of the EFF's actions to the status quo, and in that they were uncharacteristic in their severity with regard to the practice of repression

within the halls of power. As incidents such as the Marikana massacre showed, violent repression of insurgent activity was not out of character in the whole of South African society, or particularly with the state in relation to the masses, but before the insurgency of the EFF in Parliament there had never been a need for any sort of evident policing of the chambers. The EFF's insurgency, as such, brought the confrontation of insurgent disruptive protest into the halls of power for the first time in post-apartheid South Africa, and in doing so provoked a number of in-kind repressive firsts: the first time police were called into Parliament, the first time SAPS was called into Parliament, the first time police and security forces used violent force within Parliament and on elected officials themselves, and the first time evidently that electronic jamming was used to disrupt media coverage of parliamentary proceedings in a preemptive effort to quell documentation of further repressive action on the part of the ANC-led government. These significant confrontations brought widespread media coverage and provoked responses from other third parties.

It cannot be understated the effect which media coverage had on the EFF's insurgency, as evidenced by the volume of social media response to this news coverage and the furthering attempts at repression of the media by the ANC-led government as evidenced by the February protest event at the State of the Nation event. In turn, it is evident that the media itself formed a relevant and not-hypothesized third party, particularly as it had formed a dependable force for opposition to the Zuma-led government in its own right and was eager to cover any sort of activity of the EFF. In turn, the leveraging of the media by the EFF, and their use of press releases and commentary on the dynamic of protest and repression, enabled further drawing in of third-party support as they became known to be an effective opposition to the ANC through the publicization of their tactics.

In turn, the DA-ANC cleavage was clearly leveraged by the EFF in a fruitful way, perhaps the most important to the EFF's insurgency from multiple standpoints. In its response to the initial protest action the DA was seen to be in full contradiction in practice to its position as official opposition, having not engaged in anything so significantly oppositional as insurgent protest activity in the form which the EFF took. As hypothesized, this forced the DA to recalculate and affirm its status to oppose the ANC by alternately tacitly and explicitly supporting the EFF. This compounded over time, as the EFF continued to practice their protest tactics over each succeeding event, the DA expanded their level of support. By November, DA members were engaging in coordinated (if lower-level) disruptive tactics alongside the EFF and putting their bodies on the line in defending EFF parliamentarians engaged in protest tactics and being subjected to violence by the EFF. By February, they were imitating the performative aspects of the EFF's protest practice and coordinating walkouts in response to the repression of the EFF by the ANC. It is difficult to see that these would have been practices engaged in by the DA were it not for the incitement offered by the EFF's insurgent activity and the response which provoked the DA to alter their stance on that activity from bemused outsider. Through the dynamics resulting from the EFF's insurgent practices, the DA became a participant in a growing opposition to the ANC, further lending the EFF credibility and different forms of support and enabling the insurgency to continue.

Other opposition parties, which were not directly hypothesized to have been party to the insurgent practice dynamic in turn lent support to the EFF in multiple forms, if lower level in scale, degree, and frankly in import. However, this must be mentioned in further support of the overall understanding of the effect which the EFF's insurgency had on building a broader, more active opposition to the ANC. Additionally, the transformation of support from smaller, more ideologically aligned parties to more major opposition parties with much less ideological ties to

the EFF demonstrates the importance of their tactics in building such a strategic relationship. It makes a counterfactual understanding of such relations of support much harder to prove in the sense that rhetoric of self-determination engaged by the EFF might find common ground with pan-Africanist or Black nationalist minor opposition parties, but the building of a unified opposition to Zuma due to the very character of his role as a common obstacle would be what allowed the EFF to cross over those lines in garnering the DA's tactical support in building a unified opposition.

Contrary to my hypothesis, the study showed little to no leveraging of the cleavage between the ANC and the rest of the Tripartite Alliance. There was next to no public comment on the dynamic between the ANC and the EFF by members of the Tripartite Alliance until February, and this did not speak to a contradiction but rather a consolidation of support for the ANC in the face of the contentious protest of the EFF.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Between August 2014 and February 2015, the EFF engaged in 3 major insurgent practice events: parliamentary protests unique to the South African political and historical context in form and content. They drew upon historic tactics of disruption used by anti-apartheid forces, and were discursively structured to contest the legitimacy of the ANC under Jacob Zuma based upon forms of corruption and broken policy promises unique to the post-colonial, post-apartheid political-economic context of South Africa. These protests drew constant and ever-heightening repression from the ANC in direct and indirect forms, such as violent confrontation during the protest events and immediately afterward as well as discursive and legal forms of repressive action which emerged over a longer period of time. These aimed to shut down the use of these insurgent practices by the EFF. However, this dynamic drew a great deal of sympathetic coverage from South African news media, and in turn drew third party support for the actions of the EFF from notable third parties, including the DA and the ANC's mass electoral base. During this emergent period, and through this dynamic process, the EFF was able to establish a cohesive set of allied actors, tools, and strategies to contest the ANC's legitimacy to govern in the post-apartheid era. This was the first such contestation within Parliament in the history of South Africa's post-apartheid governance.

What became of this contestation? The EFF, having established political credentials as an independent left force, found increasing degrees of electoral success in each South African election it contested as a party. It also began to engage in more fragile coalition-building (or as it has been alternately termed, "cooperation agreement(s)" with the DA, particularly in the Johannesburg city council, which led to further, if modest, policy and political gains (Pillay 2019). All in all, this

would lead to the ultimate achievement, if at a preliminary level, of one of the EFF's primary political goals: the establishment of land expropriation without compensation. In February 2018, Malema was able to set a motion in process in South African Parliament to amend the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation (Gerber 2018). This would enable the slow but actualized progression of land expropriation orders by August 2018, with the caveat that expropriation would proceed only after negotiations for compensation had broken down (Eybers 2018).

This advancement was enabled, in turn, by the eventual resignation of Jacob Zuma and the ascension to the Presidency of Cyril Ramaphosa. Ramaphosa, as Booysen (2018) noted, was seen as a representative figure who could serve to reorient the ANC in leadership through support for policies which spoke to the ANC base, such as that of finally pursuing land reform. While the trajectory of the decline of Zuma and the forcing of his resignation entailed many more dynamics than just that of the EFF's insurgency, this study showed that the EFF played a key role in broadening and sharpening the opposition to Zuma in the official political sphere, and through advancing a number of rhetorical points such as that of #PayBackTheMoney, which would be used in protest tactics by a variety of oppositional movement actors in the years to come.

In turn, future research should broaden out the study of the EFF's insurgent practices beyond the halls of Parliament. Ethnographic studies of EFF-led insurgent protest actions would offer a great deal of insight into the more micro-level interactions and dynamics of each insurgent action beyond that which can be achieved through the analysis of archival data. Finally, this study is just a small step towards a more nuanced and robust assessment of the EFF's overall political impact in South African society. It is clear that their confrontational tactics and radical challenge to the ANC exist far beyond the electoral space, but it will take further qualitative work engaging

in an analysis of the variety of protest and political tactics in the EFF's repertoire across the whole of the South African society to build out an empirical claim to their utility in helping the EFF come into further power while the ANC has foundered. In particular, an assessment of the dynamic interactions between the EFF and other non-electorally based or recognized insurgent movements which have marked post-apartheid South African social life would enable a fuller understanding of the overall left-insurgent oppositional challenge to the ANC's political dominance.

On the theoretical level, this study showed that insurgent practice theory can be applied to the Global South. It found that the dynamics of insurgent practice applied to the case of the EFF and its furthering of a broader and more effective opposition to the ANC. Following Bloom (2015), it can now be argued that the general framework of insurgent practice theory leaves enough room for the particular conditions which motivate insurgency in the Global South, such as the contested nature of post-colonial nationhood and democratic practice. In turn, it offers exciting possibilities for refractive future studies which further engage the framework specifically given the fact that insurgent practices helped give rise to the current political context of South Africa, as noted in the debates surrounding whether the EFF's insurgent actions constituted democracy. What dynamics would a similar group face if they decided to engage in a similar form of disruptive practice in the Global North? Would they even be able to garner access to the halls of power in such a way as the recent history and contestations surrounding the NDR allowed for the EFF to achieve the initial electoral success necessary to launch the insurgent practices which this study surveyed? These questions deserve answers for the assessment of both the theoretical and practical utility of insurgent practice theory into the future.



## **Appendix A: List of Abbreviations**

ANC	African National Congress
COPE	Congress of the People
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
MP	Member of Parliament
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAPS	South African Police Service
UDM	United Democratic Movement

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