Historical Reflections on the role of Politicised Collective Identity Groupings against the African National Congress (ANC) Led Government in South Africa: An Un(realistic) Challenge to Democracy?

Chitja Twala

*Department of History, Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State,
Bloemfontein, South Africa
E-mail: twalacm@ufs.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Local Government. Poverty. Councillors. Politics. Social Conflicts. Community Protests

ABSTRACT The local state is important for understanding the social context within which social conflict and contestation occur. Therefore, the local arena, with its specific historical development and local political scene should be factored into any analysis of social conflict and protest. The study acknowledges that most social movements and community protests have their base in the locality and are often aimed at challenging particular aspects within this geographic space. Furthermore, the study attempts to reflect on whether or not community protests in South Africa are aimed at challenging the newly established democracy or not? In this study, the author contends that in one way or another community protests are politically motivated with the purpose to a certain extent destabilising the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. In providing a historical reflection on these protests, the study acknowledges the fact that there is a link between community protests and the complaints against the issue of poverty escalation in South Africa. In the socially stratified South African society, the problem of closing the gap between the *haves* and the *have nots* is a contested terrain among political parties, politicised collective identity groupings as well as those individuals contesting the ANC's rule and governance in South Africa. Although there are other reasons for contesting the ANC's rule and governance, community based or social issues are mainly used as springboards to challenge the ANC in terms of the delivery of services are concerned. The final analysis of the study shows that in the main, the instigators of these community protests are politicised collective groupings with certain sociological and political identities.