

Making Sense of Intra-Party Conflict in South Africa

An Expanded Conceptual Roadmap: The Operating Environment, Transactional Movement, and Future Transactional States

The 2024 South African General Election is only a few weeks away.¹ In the campaigning, serious concerns have been raised about the organization strength and leadership quality of the African National Congress (ANC).² The intensification of the power struggle between Jacob Zuma and the ANC leadership has not helped to allay these concerns.³ This provides strong motivation for trying to make sense of intra-party conflict within the South African political party system. Unfortunately, intra-party conflict is a thorny issue that can be difficult to understand, let alone explain, with the common ways of thinking about political parties. We can try to make sense of these phenomena through the internal actors, distribution of their party powers, and the hostile nature of their relations with one another. However, that only provides a largely one-dimensional account of intra-party conflict. What is needed is a systematic one. In search of progress, this article seeks to introduce an expanded set of concepts, conceptual matrices, and conceptual models that have been drawn from the business management literature. This includes the core concepts of operating environment, transactional movement, and future transactional states. It is hoped that these contributions prove to be transformative in the sense that they pry open the threshold⁴ to better ways of thinking about the relationship that exists between intra-party conflict and the political party system across time and space.⁵

Operating Environment

When seeking to make sense of intra-party conflict, it helps to have a grasp of the relationship that exists between the political party and its operating environment.

¹ This article was originally submitted in April 2024. The requested edits were submitted in May 2024.

² Khumalo, Kabelo. "Trevor Manuel issues sharp rebuke to SA's 'weak' leadership." *Business Day*, April 17, 2023.

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2023-04-17-trevor-manuel-issues-sharp-rebuke-to-sas-weak-leadership/>

³ Sguazzin, Anthony. "Zuma's popularity threatens ANC's majority hopes, SRF says." *Bloomberg*, January 16, 2024.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-01-16/zuma-s-popularity-threatens-anc-s-majority-hopes-srf-says>

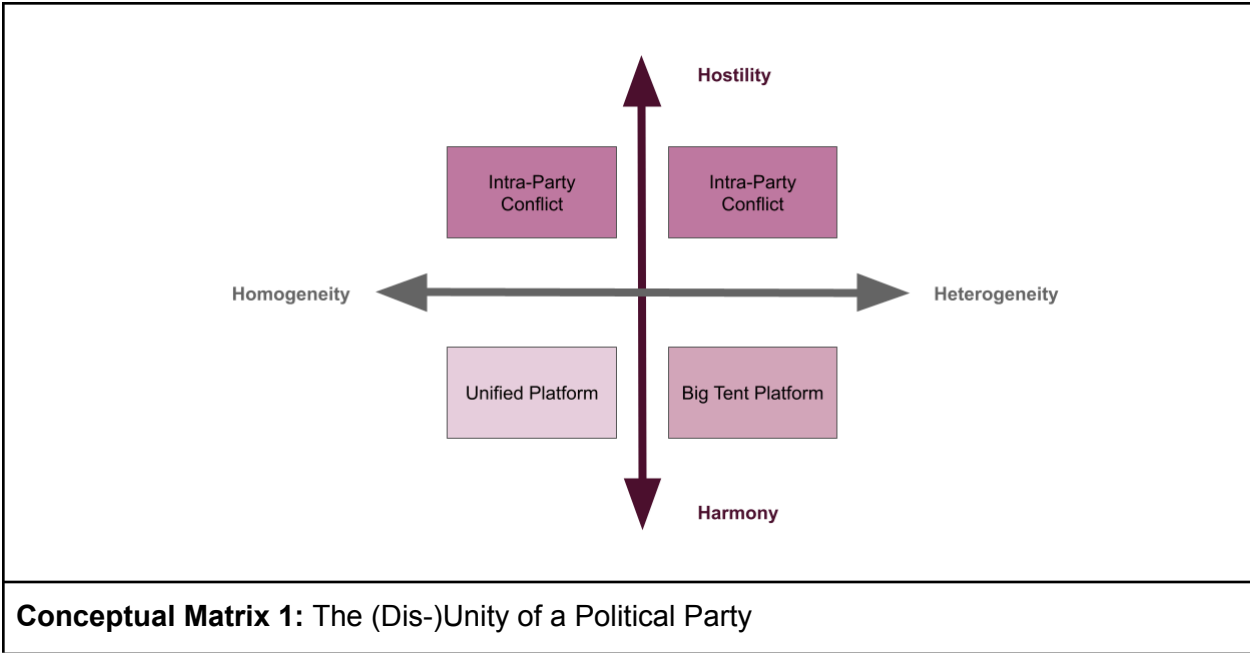
⁴ Zepke, Nick. "Threshold concepts and student engagement: Revisiting pedagogical content knowledge." *Active Learning in Higher Education* 14, no. 2 (2013): 97-107.

⁵ Meyer, Jan, and Ray Land. "Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning." *Higher education* 49 (2005): 373-388.

On the one hand, the concept of intra-party (dis-)unity has been tackled by prior researchers:⁶

- **Substance:** A political party can be said to have more than one platform. Drawing on the political science literature, it is therefore important to draw a distinction between political parties that possess a homogenous platform and political parties that possess a heterogeneous set of platforms.⁷
- **Valence:** There can be significant tension and infighting within a political party. It is therefore important to draw a distinction between political parties that are characterized by harmonious internal relations and those that are characterized by hostile internal relations.⁸

Per Klingelhöfer and Müller, it is this second dimension of party (dis-)unity that serves as the mark of inter-party conflict: “it is particularly helpful to think of intra-party conflict as characterized by hostility in intra-party relations.”⁹ This suggests the following conceptual matrix:



On the other hand, the operating environment has not received a similar depth of treatment from those who study intra-party conflict. In search of progress, we need to turn to distant literatures:

⁶ See: Lehrer, Roni, and Nick Lin. "Everything to everyone? Not when you are internally divided." *Party Politics* 26, no. 6 (2020): 783-794.

⁷ Klingelhöfer, Tristan, and Jochen Müller. "When do voters perceive intra-party conflict? A democratic life cycle perspective." *European Political Science Review* 16, no. 2 (2024): 207-224.

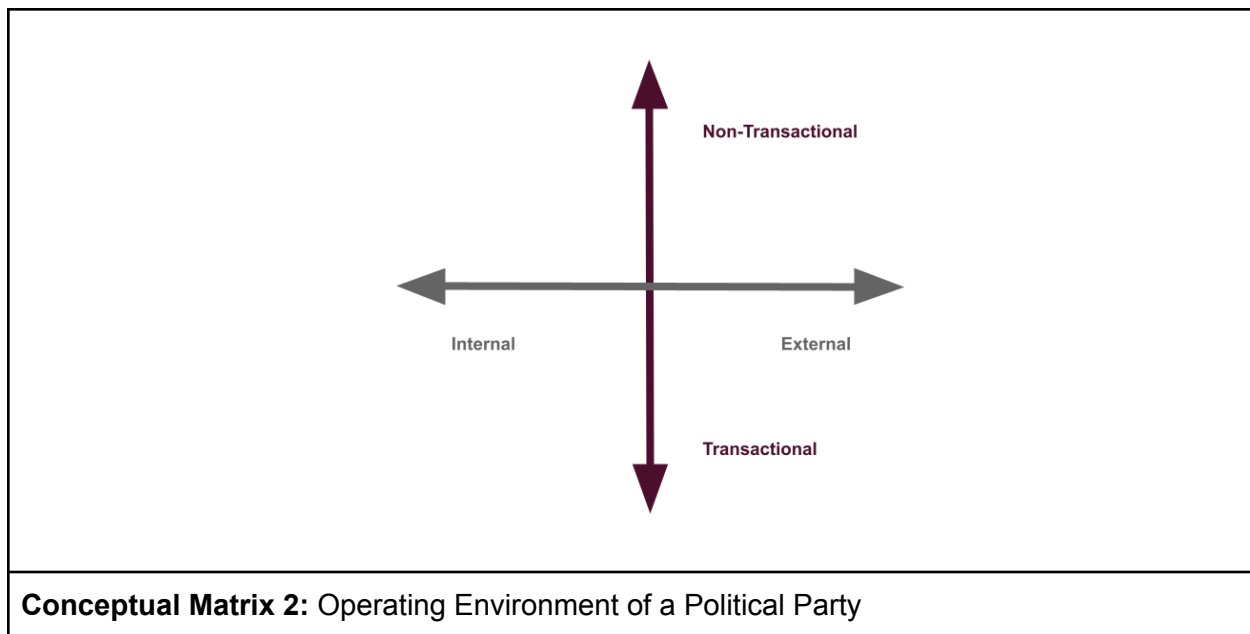
⁸ Klingelhöfer and Müller

⁹ Klingelhöfer and Müller

Working Draft | Not for Citation

- **Perspective:** A political party might be conceptualized as a type of organization. Like all organizations, it is therefore composed of a set of interrelated parts that exist within an internal world but are, at the same time, deeply intertwined with the outside world.¹⁰ Drawing on the systems thinking literature, it is therefore important to draw a distinction between the internal environment and the external environment of a political party.
- **Reach:** It is difficult, if not impossible, for the key stakeholders of a political party to influence all aspects of these environments. While they can directly influence the immediate area in which they operate, there are contextual factors that exist beyond that area which are “less well-known and more uncertain.”¹¹ Drawing on the scenario planning literature, it is therefore important to draw a distinction between the transactional environment and non-transactional environment of a political party.¹²

This suggests the following conceptual matrix:



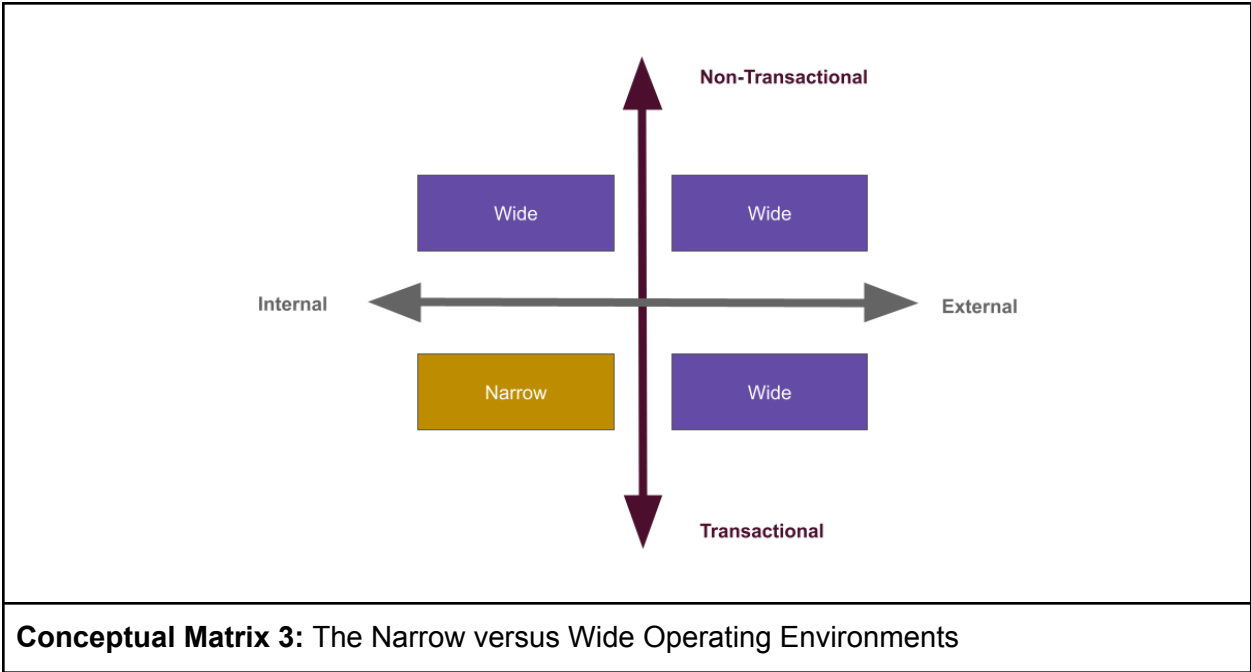
When seeking to make sense of the intra-party conflict that exists within a political party, it is therefore quite useful to have a simultaneous grasp of the internal transactional, external transactional, internal non-transactional, and external non-transactional dimensions of the operating environment.

¹⁰ Worthington, Ian, Chris Britton, and Ed Thompson. *The business environment: A global perspective*. Pearson Higher Ed, 2018: 5.

¹¹ Ramirez, Rafael, Steve Churchhouse, Alejandra Palermo, and Jonas Hoffmann. "Using scenario planning to reshape strategy." *MIT Sloan Management Review* 58, no. 4 (2017).

¹² Ramirez *et al*

While hostile intra-party relations may be primarily, if not exclusively, located in the internal transactional dimension, observers must look beyond the internal transactional dimension to be able to understand the set of factors that brought those hostile intra-party relations into existence and sustained them. The narrow operating environment only exposes one part of the political party system. The wide operating environment reveals the rest. This can be visualized using the following conceptual matrix:



Wide Environment in South Africa

The extent to which the wide operating environment is relevant to intra-party conflict is an empirical, not a theoretical, question. The search for progress therefore demands consideration of the empirical case.

Fortunately, South Africa provides a useful case for exploring the extent to which the wide operating environment is relevant to the act of making sense of intra-party conflict. Consider the following examples:

External Non-transactional Dimension: The external non-transactional environment appears to be of considerable relevance to intra-party conflict in South Africa. For example, Apartheid was a wickedly divisive one-party dominant system. Through its control of the government, the National Party not only established an institutionalized

system of segregation that was based on race. It used divide and rule and state-sponsored violence to sustain that system. By the end of Apartheid, the National Party had effectively splintered the various liberation movements into: 1) exiled members; 2) imprisoned members; 3) formerly imprisoned members; 4) underground members; 5) victims of assassination.¹³ It also had subdivided the political system through the creation of “homelands” that were drawn along cultural and linguistic hard lines.¹⁴ These were known as *bantustans* and they served what many would consider to be an evil purpose. They were an “administrative mechanism for removing blacks from the South African political system.”¹⁵ In these sorts of ways, Apartheid promoted extreme social fragmentation,¹⁶ economic inequality,¹⁷ and conspiratorial tendencies¹⁸ that continues to resonate through intra-party relations in post-Apartheid South Africa.

External Transactional Dimension: The external transactional environment similarly appears to be of considerable relevance to intra-party conflict in South Africa. The steady decline of the one party dominant state is not only demanding more cooperation and collaboration between major political parties. It has also increased the potential for rapid and unpredictable changes within the political party system.¹⁹ First, there is a high prevalence and incidence of political parties and candidates. In 1994, 19 political parties participated in the first South African general elections held under universal suffrage.²⁰ In

¹³ “Further submissions and responses by the African National Congress to questions raised by the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation.” *Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, Republic of South Africa*, 1997. <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/submit/anc2.htm#Appendix%201>

¹⁴ McKaiser, Eusebius. “In South African geography, echoes of Apartheid.” *New York Times*, July 30, 2013. <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/07/28/the-future-of-south-africa/in-south-african-geography-echoes-of-apartheid#:~:text=Apartheid%20geography%20was%20so%20finely,the%20prime%20minister%20until%201966>.

¹⁵ Masuku, Mfundo, and Victor Mlambo. “Tribalism and ethnophobia among black South Africans.” *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 10, no. 1 (2023): 125-140.

¹⁶ Rostron, Bryan. “A short history of South African conspiracies – you can’t make this stuff up (but someone does).” *Daily Maverick*, July 12, 2023. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-07-12-south-african-conspiracies-you-cant-make-this-stuff-up/>

¹⁷ “Six charts explain South Africa’s inequality.” *International Monetary Fund*, January 30, 2020. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/01/29/na012820six-charts-on-south-africas-persistent-and-multi-faceted-inequality>

¹⁸ Shoki, William. “Power struggle is the answer - not conspiracy theories.” *Jacobin*, January 20, 2020. <https://jacobin.com/2020/01/conspiracy-theories-nelson-mandela-anc-south-africa>

¹⁹ Gordon, Adam. “You Say VUCA, I Say TUNA: How Oxford Helps Leaders Face The Complex And Uncertain Future.” *Forbes*, April 6, 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamgordon/2016/04/06/oxford/?sh=49eed8984314>

²⁰ Mngomezulu, Bheki. “South Africa’s voting dynamics have changed: it’s no longer a race between the big three.” *The Conversation*, October 29, 2021. <https://theconversation.com/south-africas-voting-dynamics-have-changed-its-no-longer-a-race-between-the-big-three-170805>

2024, there are slated to be 52 political parties participating in the general elections.²¹ That represents more than a 173% increase in the number of political parties with national candidates from three decades ago. Second, there is a high rate of change in the composition of political parties. There are frequent dismissals, expulsions, and resignations of senior officials in prominent South African political parties. Consider the uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MK Party). In September 2023, it was registered to contest the 2024 South African General Election.²² Less than a year later, its founder, Jabulani Khumalo, was “expelled” from the party and branded a “lunatic” by his former compatriots.²³ These political party dynamics mean that the external transactional environment of South Africa political parties is often in a state of flux. There are high levels of turbulence, uncertainty, novelty, and ambiguity.²⁴ In the scenario planning literature, these are known as TUNA conditions.²⁵

Internal Non-transactional Dimension: Absent methodologically rigorous studies on the topic, it is difficult to know how much of a relationship exists between the internal non-transactional environment and intra-party conflicts in the South African political party system. However, the author believes that it is reasonable to hypothesize that some South African political parties have developed internal political norms that are highly resistant to short-term influence by individual party leadership figures while others have not. Examples of these political norms might include tolerance and respect for intra-party opponents, acceptance of intra-party processes and proceedings, and restraint in the exercise of formally granted party power among South African political parties.²⁶ This hypothesis still needs to be substantiated through further research that would hopefully

²¹ “2024 National Compensatory List - List of Parties.” Electoral commission of South Africa, April 2024. https://www.elections.org.za/pw/Documents/Parties-and-Independents/NPE%202024/National%20Compensatory%20-%20List%20of%20Parties_Alphabetic%20Order.pdf

²² Mavuso, Sihle. “Political party called Umkhonto Wesizwe, among others, gazetted by IEC to contest 2024 national elections.” *IOL*, September 26, 2023. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/political-party-called-umkhonto-wesizwe-among-others-gazetted-by-iec-to-contest-2024-national-elections-12313474-0dfd-4f70-9c5e-01792b011344>

²³ “MK Party hits back at expelled ‘lunatic’ Jabulani Khumalo.” *IOL*, May 10, 2024. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/watch-mk-party-hits-back-at-expelled-lunatic-jabulani-khumalo-f42b7a73-e692-427b-b9e3-98daf636560c>

²⁴ Brooks, Heidi. “A stable national coalition government in South Africa? Possible, but only if elites put country’s interests first.” *The Conversation*, November 6, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/a-stable-national-coalition-government-in-south-africa-possible-but-only-if-elites-put-countrys-interests-first-193828>

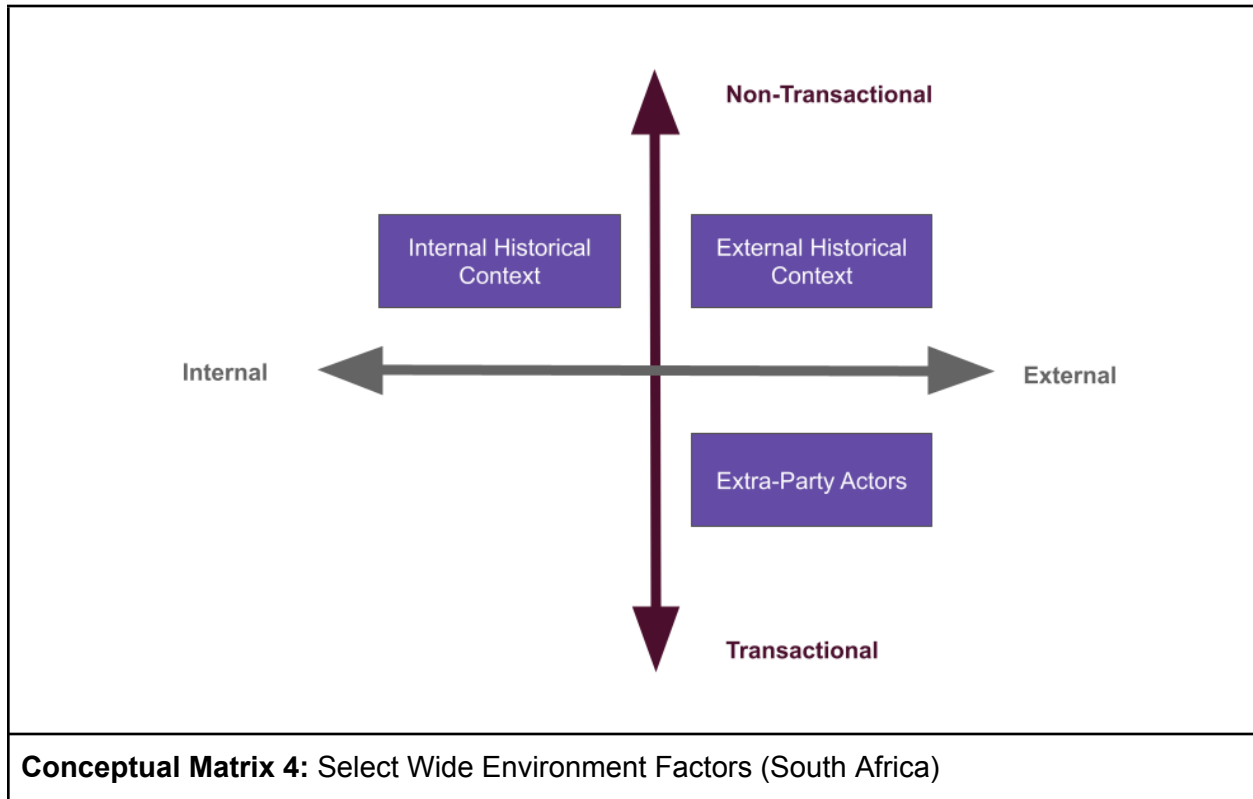
²⁵ Ramirez, Rafael, and Angela Wilkinson. *Strategic reframing: The Oxford scenario planning approach*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

²⁶ Hinterleitner, Markus, and Fritz Sager. “Political challengers and norm erosion in advanced democracies.” *European Journal of Political Research* 62, no. 4 (2023): 1301-1319.

Working Draft | Not for Citation

include measurements of the mutually exclusive effects of internal non-transactional environments on intra-party conflict within South African political parties.

These factors can be visualized in the following conceptual matrix:



Transactional Movement

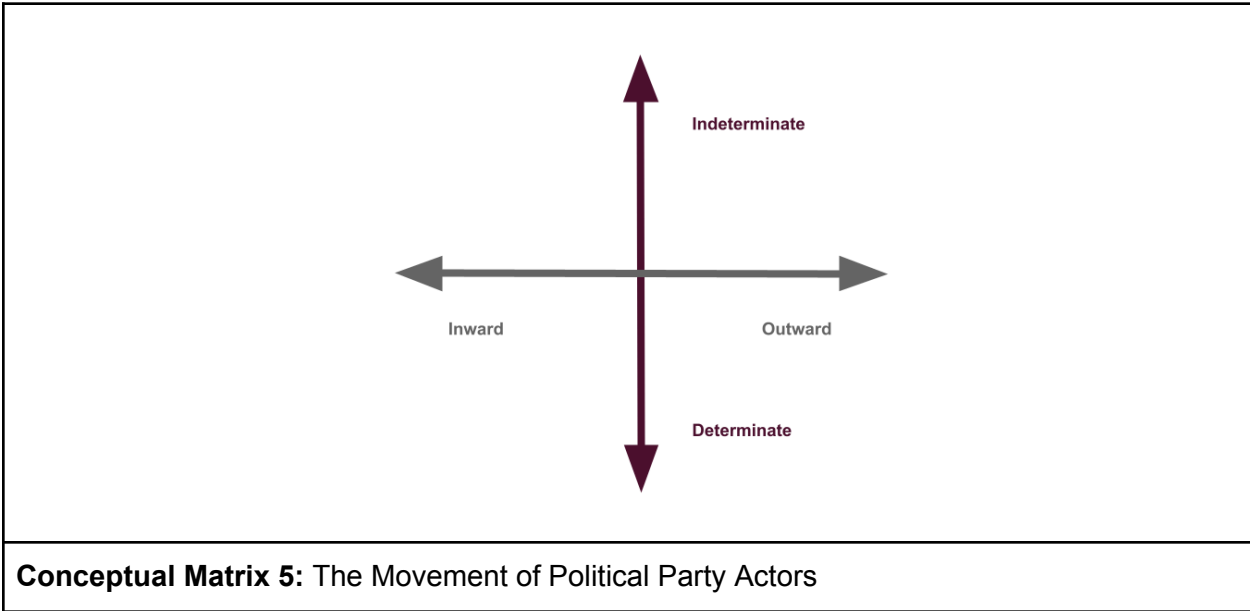
When seeking to make sense of intra-party conflict, it helps to have a grasp of the movement of political party actors between the internal and external dimensions of the environment.

Problematically, the concept of transactional movement is not well understood by scholars of intra-party conflict. In search of progress, we need to turn to distant literatures:

- **Directionality:** Political party actors can move from the external transactional dimension to the internal transactional one, and vice versa. It is therefore important to draw a distinction between inward and outward movements or political party actors from the perspective of the internal transactional dimension.

- **Certainty:** The movement of political party actors between the internal and external transactional dimensions is sometimes indeterminate, at least to an empirical observer. For example, it seems reasonable to assume that most observers would agree that a formal expulsion or resignation counts as a determinate outward transactional movement. But, what about an informal suspension of a political party member? Drawing on the philosophy of science and philosophy of language literatures, it is therefore important to draw a distinction between determinate and indeterminate transactional movements.^{27,28}

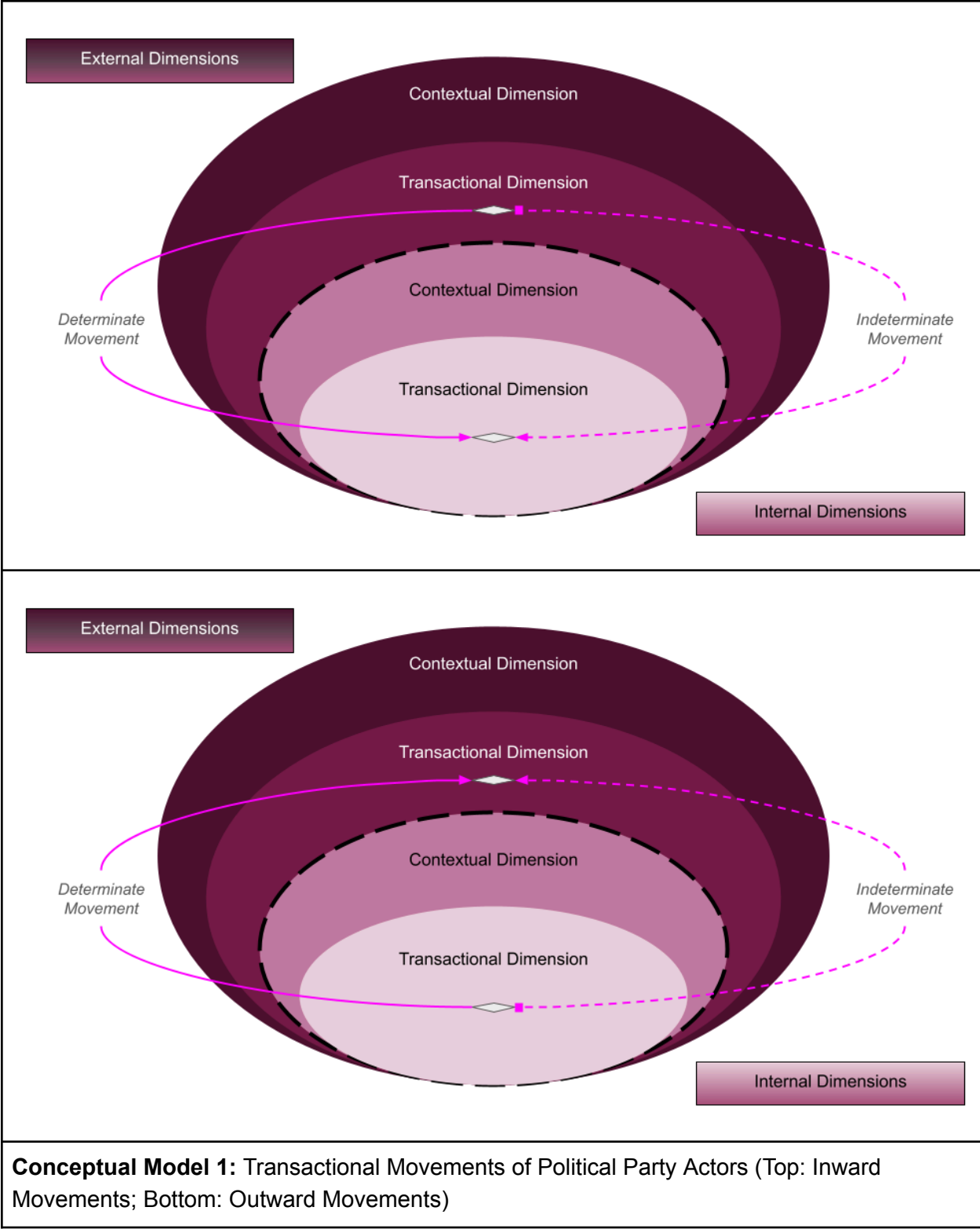
This suggests the following conceptual matrix:



Note, this conceptual matrix can be easily transformed into a conceptual model. In the scenario planning literature, the non-transactional dimension is often referred to as the contextual dimension. Adopting this terminology suggests the following conceptual model:

²⁷ See: Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of pure reason*. Cambridge University Press (2013), Guyer, Paul, and Allen W. Wood. (trs.).

²⁸ See: Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical investigations (4th Ed)*. Wiley-Blackwell, GEM Anscombe (tr) (2009).



Transactional Environments in South Africa

Fortunately, South Africa provides a useful case for exploring transactional movements that occur in the context of party (dis-)unity, including intra-party conflict.

This becomes evident when one considers the historical records of the dominant political party, the ANC, and the official opposition, the Democratic Alliance (DA).²⁹

African National Congress

There have been internal divisions within the ANC for a very long time. As argued elsewhere, there have long been “camps within camps within camps.”³⁰ In the early years, there was disagreement over whether non-violent means could be used to achieve the desired end states of ANC members. Eventually, the ANC Youth League prosecuted a successful campaign that set the ANC on the path to transforming into a militant liberation movement.³¹ Initially, the members were guided by the ANC Program of Action of 1949. However, that program was soon shelved in favor of the Freedom Charter. African nationalists opposed that move. Ultimately, this resulted in an institutional rupture. Some left the ANC and established the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC).

Internal divisions multiplied in the aftermath of the infamous Sharpeville Massacre. Under the Unlawful Organisations Act of 1960, the Apartheid government banned the ANC and PAC. With little to no political space left to maneuver, many ANC and PAC leaders fled into exile, and the parties turned to armed struggle to advance their causes. Paramilitary wings were soon established. For example, the ANC established uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK). At the time, not everyone^{32,33} agreed that “armed struggle was indispensable as part of the strategy for liberation.”³⁴ The Soweto Uprising Massacre of 1976 helped shift those perceptions.³⁵ Afterward,

²⁹ “Democratic Alliance.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 11, 2024.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Democratic-Alliance-political-party-South-Africa>

³⁰ Michael Walsh and Phiwokuhle Mnyandu, “Democracy at stake in South Africa.” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, May 10, 2023. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/05/democracy-at-stake-in-south-africa/>

³¹ Richburg, Keith. “ANC accepts blame, apologizes for torture, killings of members.” *The Washington Post*, August 31, 1993.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1993/08/31/anc-accepts-blame-apologizes-for-torture-killings-of-members/7fd2bb-13ee-4bc3-ad8f-24410ec5a02d/>

³² Stevens, Simon. “The turn to sabotage by the Congress movement in South Africa.” *Past & Present* 245, no. 1 (2019): 221-255.

³³ Smith, David James. *Young Mandela: The revolutionary years*. Hachette UK, 2010.

³⁴ “Defiance Campaign in South Africa recalled.” *Asian Times*, London, June 26, 1987. Republished in “Defiance Campaign.” *African National Congress*, n.d., <https://www.anc1912.org.za/defiance-campaign-1952-the-defiance-campaign-in-south-africa-recalled>

³⁵ “Defiance Campaign in South Africa recalled.”

there was a significant escalation in the use of violence. That gave rise to further internal divisions. For example, there were internal disagreements over bombings and necklacings involving ANC / MK members.³⁶ There were also mutinies within the MK training camps in Angola. These were reportedly suppressed with extreme violence.³⁷

As the end of Apartheid neared, a policy window opened for transforming the ANC into a moderate political organization.³⁸ In 1994, the ANC achieved a landslide victory in the first democratic elections under universal suffrage. This was a remarkable achievement when you consider the deep social, political, and economic divisions that existed across the South African electorate and the internal divisions that existed within the ANC. For the next decade, Nelson Mandela provided the “glue” that held this deeply divided political institution together.³⁹ This was another remarkable achievement. The ANC was already political parties within political parties within a political party. Without Mandela’s leadership, it is difficult to imagine a single party dominant state emerging under the ANC. Look at how quickly serious infighting emerged once Mandela left office. If Mandela was glue, those who followed were rubbing alcohol.

By 2008, the ANC was facing the first of a series of post-Apartheid existential crises. Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma were locked in a longstanding power struggle for control of the party. Zuma famously prevailed. It helped that he had the support of the ANC Youth League. Facing purge, Mbeki loyalists left the ANC and founded the Congress of the People. Soon thereafter, the relationship between Zuma and the leader of the ANC Youth League, Julius Malema, soured. This gave rise to another power struggle for control of the party. Again, Zuma famously prevailed. Malema was expelled on the grounds that he had brought “the party in disrepute” and caused “rifts in the group.”⁴⁰ In response, he founded the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

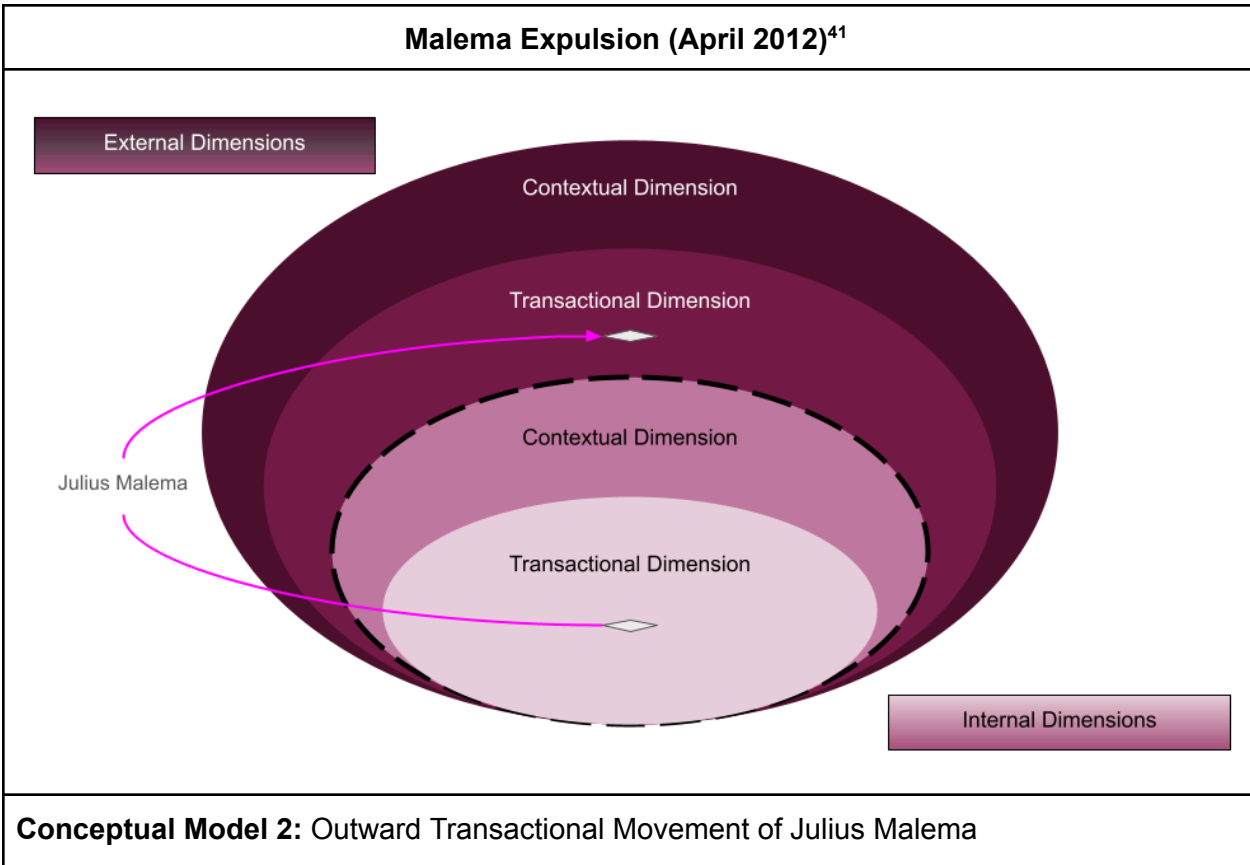
³⁶ “Winnie Madikizela Mandela: Tragic figure? Populist tribune? Township tough?” *South African Report*, August 1998. <https://projects.kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/210-808-4551/SAR13-4opt.pdf#page=16>

³⁷ “ANC Camps.” SABC, n.d. https://sabctrc.saha.org.za/glossary/anc_camps.htm

³⁸ “ANC accepts blame, apologizes for torture, killings of members.”

³⁹ Gemude, William. “With Nelson Mandela’s death the ANC has lost the glue that kept it together.” *The Guardian*, December 8, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/08/nelson-mandela-death-anc-south-african-democracy>

⁴⁰ “S.Africa’s Malema loses appeal, expelled from ANC.” *Reuters*, February 4, 2012. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSJOE81303B/>



In 2016, Zuma faced a serious challenge. A complaint was lodged by the then leader of the Democratic Alliance, Mmusi Maimane, and others. In response, the Public Protector, Thulisile “Thuli” Madonsela, launched an investigation into state capture by Zuma and the Guptas.⁴² The public report revealed “alleged corruption and peddling of political influence”⁴³ by Zuma and his family.⁴⁴ This paved the way for Cyril Ramaphosa to be elected as the President of the ANC, which set the stage for yet another power struggle for control of the party. This time, Zuma did

⁴¹ “South Africa’s ANC expels youth leader.” *CNN*, April 24, 2012.

⁴² Reed, Alastair. “South Africa’s Opposition DA Seeks Zuma Graft Probe Over Guptas.” *Bloomberg*, March 18, 2016.
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-03-18/south-africa-s-opposition-da-seeks-zuma-graft-probe-over-guptas>

⁴³ Gaffer, Conor. “South Africa: Jacob Zuma criticizes Thuli Madonsela for ‘public attacks.’” *Newsweek*, November 16, 2016.
<https://www.newsweek.com/south-africa-jacob-zuma-lashes-out-against-thuli-madonsela-public-attacks-520076>

⁴⁴ “South Africa’s Zuma survives impeachment vote.” *France 24*, May 4, 2016.
<https://www.france24.com/en/20160405-south-africa-zuma-survives-impeachment-vote>

not prevail. Zuma was recalled by the party.⁴⁵ Eventually, he resigned. In a plot twist worthy of Shakespeare, Zuma was replaced by Ramaphosa.

Following the Madonsela investigation, “internal bickering” seems to have increased within the ANC,⁴⁶ and additional power struggles involving its senior leadership figures have emerged. One involved the ANC Secretary General, Ace Magashule, a supporter of Zuma. At the time, there were rumors that he was linked to the African Transformation Movement (ATM), which was described by some as “an alternative party to compete with the Cyril Ramaphosa-led ANC.”^{47,48} Like Zuma, Magashule did not prevail. He was suspended and then expelled from the party over allegations of corruption, money laundering, and fraud.^{49,50} In response, he founded the African Congress for Transformation (ACT).⁵¹ Another targeted Ramaphosa. He was accused of corruption and money laundering by Arthur Fraser, a close associate of Zuma.⁵²

⁴⁵ Neuman, Scott and Merrit Kennedy, “Ruling party votes to recall South African President Jacob Zuma.” NPR, February 13, 2018.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/13/585285126/ruling-party-votes-to-recall-south-african-president-jacob-zuma>.

⁴⁶ Eligon, Joe and Lynsey Chutel. “He brokered Apartheid’s end. Can he save South Africa’s liberation party?” *New York Times*, October 31, 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/31/us/ramaphosa-anc-south-africa.html>

⁴⁷ “Zuma, Magashule linked to formation of opposition party ATM - ANC ‘expected’ allegations.” *News 24*, May 5, 2019.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/anc-expected-zuma-magashule-link-to-formation-of-opposition-party-at-m-20190505>

⁴⁸ Behngu, Cebelihle. “ATM president denies Jacob Zuma, Ace Magashule had a hand in the party’s formation.” *Sunday Times*, June 20, 2019.

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2019-06-20-atm-president-denies-jacob-zuma-ace-magashule-had-a-hand-in-the-partys-formation/>

⁴⁹ Winning, Alexander, and Wendell Roelf “South Africa’s ANC suspends top official Magashule, local media say.” *Reuters*, May 5, 2021.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/south-africas-anc-suspends-secretary-general-magashule-eyewitness-news-2021-05-05/>

⁵⁰ Acharya, Bhargav. “South Africa’s governing ANC party expels former top official.” *Reuters*, June 12, 2023.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/south-africas-governing-anc-party-expels-former-top-official-2023-06-12/>

⁵¹ Masuabi, Queenin. “No Aces to play — Magashule’s party among five to lose critical candidate lists court bid.” *Daily Maverick*, April 17, 2024.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-04-17-no-aces-to-play-magashules-party-among-five-to-lose-critical-candidate-lists-court-bid/>

⁵² Chanson, Romain. “South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa, his cows and the case of the hidden millions.” *The Africa Report*, October 4, 2022.

<https://www.theafricareport.com/246259/south-africas-president-cyril-ramaphosa-his-cows-and-the-case-of-the-hidden-millions/>

Ramaphosa survived this political proxy war. However, he was wounded in the process.⁵³ That not only harmed his political interests. It increased the level of hostility within the ANC.

By the end of 2023, it was becoming clear that the ANC would struggle to win the upcoming general election outright.⁵⁴ Zuma may have many demerits. But lack of strategic foresight is not one of them. Zuma sensed an opening and he seized it. In December 2023, Zuma announced that he would not be campaigning for the ANC in the upcoming general election on the grounds that “[i]t would be a betrayal to campaign for the ANC of Ramaphosa.”⁵⁵ Instead, he declared that he would be backing the upstart MK Party. At the same time, he declared that he would “die a member of the ANC.”⁵⁶

For South African politics, Zuma’s defection was the equivalent of the shot heard round the world.⁵⁷ Almost overnight, it forced a total reassessment of the political fortunes of the ANC and Ramaphosa in the run-up to the 2024 South African General Elections.⁵⁸

Following Zuma’s defection, the ANC leadership suspended his party membership. However, it did not expel him - at least not immediately.⁵⁹ That decision was critical. This approach played right into the hands of Zuma and the MK Party. It not only sowed further divisions among ANC leadership figures at multiple levels.⁶⁰ It made it difficult to determine whether Zuma and his ANC supporters remained within the internal transactional environment of the ANC party.

⁵³ Oderson, Crystal. “Analysis: Countdown to perdition or 2nd term for SA’s Ramaphosa?” *Al Jazeera*, December 12, 2022.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/12/12/analysis-countdown-to-perdition-for-sas-ramaphosa-or-2nd-term>

⁵⁴ “The ANC will inevitably fall — just not yet.” *Financial Times*, November 30, 2023.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f6f12247-46fb-4fa6-bae2-b84d95fde830>

⁵⁵ “Jacob Zuma withdraws support for ANC in run-up to 2024 South African election.” *The Guardian*, December 16, 2023.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/16/jacob-zuma-withdraws-support-for-anc-in-run-up-to-2024-south-african-election>

⁵⁶ “The battle for the soul of uMkhonto weSizwe.” *News 24 Wire*, December 18, 2023.

<https://www.polity.org.za/article/the-battle-for-the-soul-of-umkhonto-wesizwe-2023-12-18>

⁵⁷ Niz, Elizabeth. “What was the ‘shot heard round the world’?” *history Channel*, August 30, 2018.

<https://www.history.com/news/what-was-the-shot-heard-round-the-world>

⁵⁸ “‘Wrecking ball’ ex-president Jacob Zuma upends South African election.” *Financial Times*, April 14, 2024. <https://www.ft.com/content/5396ae18-9d00-48fc-939b-b160ee4d1296>

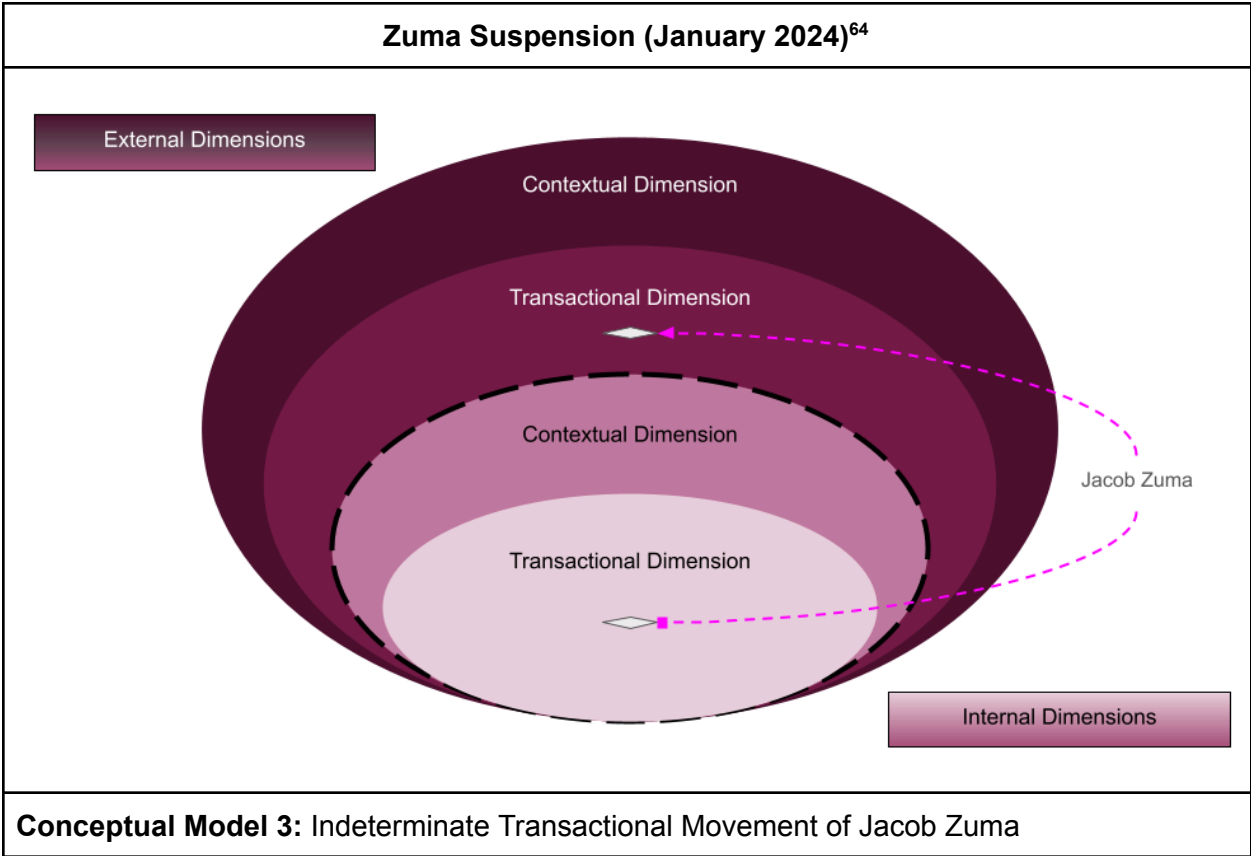
⁵⁹ Imray, Gerald. “South Africa’s ruling ANC suspends former president Zuma for backing a new party in elections.” *Associated Press*, January 29, 2024.

<https://apnews.com/article/south-africa-anc-zuma-suspended-7a0b25099fd7778a057f2b8fc52fefdf>

⁶⁰ Capa, Siyamtanda. “Jacob Zuma should have been expelled, says ANC Youth League.” *News 24*, January 31, 2024.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/politics/political-parties/jacob-zuma-should-have-been-expelled-says-anc-youth-league-20240131>

Eventually, the ANC reconsidered what to do about Zuma’s defection. A few weeks prior to the national election, the ANC scheduled a disciplinary hearing. Zuma was charged with “two counts of contravening the ANC constitution.”⁶¹ On the eve of the hearing, Mbeki entered the fray. He declared that this was “the correct procedure for the ANC.”⁶² However, the ANC leadership backed down at the last minute. They announced that the disciplinary hearing would be delayed until after the elections due to “a risk of clashes at the party's headquarters.”⁶³



Democratic Alliance

Like the ANC, there have been internal divisions within the DA for a very long time. In 2000, the DA was effectively brought into existence through the merger of the Democratic Party (DP),

⁶¹ Maphanga, Canny. “Zuma to attend ANC disciplinary amid reports of SG calling for delay” SABC, May 4, 2024. <https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/937479-2/>
⁶² “Zuma to attend ANC disciplinary amid reports of SG calling for delay.”
⁶³ “ANC vs Jacob Zuma: Mbalula confirms security assessment delays disciplinary hearing.” *TimesLive*, May 5, 2024. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2024-05-05-anc-vs-jacob-zuma-mbalula-confirms-security-assessment-delays-disciplinary-hearing/>
⁶⁴ Booty, Natasha. “South Africa: ANC suspends ex-President Jacob Zuma after rival party launch.” *BBC*, January 29, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68129365>

Federal Alliance, and New National Party (NNP).⁶⁵ A year later, that merger broke down when the NNP “left the alliance” in pursuit of “co-operative governance”⁶⁶ with the ANC across “all three spheres of government.”⁶⁷ In spite of this setback, the DA soon emerged as “the only viable alternative to the ANC.”⁶⁸ Under the leadership of Tony Leon, the party prosecuted a “fight back” campaign.⁶⁹ This was a controversial campaign. Some pundits have argued that it created the perception that the party “stood against social change.”⁷⁰ This made it difficult for the party to make “inroads into the black electorate.”⁷¹

In 2007, Leon stepped down. He was replaced by Hellen Zille.⁷² Under her leadership, the DA more “actively sought to attract black supporters.”⁷³ She even made a public commitment to making the party “more reflective of our rich racial, linguistic and cultural heritage.”⁷⁴ However, she simultaneously stirred controversy⁷⁵ with comments that many felt carried racist undertones⁷⁶ and disparagements of non-white leaders in the party,⁷⁷ including Lindiwe Mazibuko, once heralded as her protege.⁷⁸ These actions not only undermined the party’s ability to contest elections with multiracial party politics.⁷⁹ They provided fodder to opponents who “routinely” alleged that the party “was run by ‘racists’ and ‘fascists’ who wanted to bring back

⁶⁵ “History.” *Democratic Alliance*, n.d. <https://www.da.org.za/why-the-da/history>

⁶⁶ “Democratic alliance.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 11, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Democratic-Alliance-political-party-South-Africa>

⁶⁷ Thompson, Richard, and Dirk van Zyl. “ANC-NNP coalition on the cards.” *Independent Online*, October 27, 2021. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/anc-nnp-coalition-on-the-cards-75920>

⁶⁸ “History.” *Democratic Alliance*

⁶⁹ “The failures of Tony Leon.” *Mail & Guardian*, December 4, 2006. <https://mg.co.za/article/2006-12-04-the-failures-of-tony-leon/>

⁷⁰ “The failures of Tony Leon.”

⁷¹ Lekota, Ido. “Leon to step down, saying one person as leader for too long unhealthy.” *Sowetan Live*, November 27, 2006.

<https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2006-11-27-leon-to-step-down-saying-one-person-as-leader-for-too-long-unhealthy/>

⁷² Ploch, Lauren. “South Africa: Current issues and U.S. relations.” *Congressional Research Services*, May 20, 2009. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA500945.pdf>

⁷³ Campbell, John. “Think again: Nelson Mandela.” *Foreign Policy*, December 6, 2013. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/12/06/think-again-nelson-mandela/>

⁷⁴ “Zille: Relaunching the DA as the party of government.” *Politics Web*. November 15, 2008. <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/rss-news/zille-relaunching-the-da-as-the-party-of-government>

⁷⁵ Shamase, Nelly. “DA’s black leaders ‘live with’ racism.” *Mail & Guardian*, January 28, 2018. <https://mg.co.za/article/2016-01-28-das-black-leaders-live-with-racism/>

⁷⁶ Smith, David. “South Africa racism row breaks out on Twitter.” *The Guardian*, December 29, 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/29/south-africa-racism-row-twitter>

⁷⁷ “Think again: Nelson Mandela.”

⁷⁸ “Zille’s protégé aims for the top.” *Independent Online*, December 27, 2011. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/zilles-protege-aims-for-the-top-1145739>

⁷⁹ “Think again: Nelson Mandela.”

apartheid.”⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, political party affiliation continued to fall “mostly along racial lines,” with the DA being “supported primarily by white and mixed-race voters.”⁸¹

In 2015, Zille stepped down.⁸² She was replaced by Maimane, the first and only black leader in the history of the party.⁸³ Within a year, there were signs of trouble. Kohler Barnard, a shadow minister, caused a major scandal by sharing a social media post that “praised apartheid President PW Botha.”⁸⁴ There were internal divisions on how to respond. In 2017, Zille added fuel to the fire when she published a series of social media posts that suggested “that not all aspects of colonialism were bad.”⁸⁵ There were more internal divisions over how to respond. There was also political contestation. Maimane said that Zille “should have been removed from decision-making structures after she stepped down as party leader.”⁸⁶ These controversies should have shaken the DA to its core. They inflicted significant reputational harm on the party.⁸⁷ They also deepened internal divisions that already existed between the white and non-white members of the party.⁸⁸

In 2016, Mazibudo pulled back the curtains on the internal divisions that exist in the DA. She went public with claims that the DA was infused with a “culture that isolates black members and leaders” and a system that ensures “the almost exclusive dominance of white males within the party’s ‘brains trust.’”⁸⁹ Her remarks put tremendous pressure on Maimane to address structural

⁸⁰ MacDonald, Geoffrey. “The emergence of racial politics in South Africa: Lessons for peacebuilding.” Entry to the Case Studies in Peacebuilding Competition 2012, United States Institute of Peace, 2012. <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/files/case-study-competition/20130322-The-Emergence-of-Racial-Politics-in-South-Africa.pdf>

⁸¹ “Race divides South African politics.” *The World*, PRX, August 15, 2013.

<https://theworld.org/stories/2013/08/15/race-divides-south-african-politics>

⁸² “South Africa opposition leader steps down.” *Rappler*, April 13, 2015.

<https://www.rappler.com/world/africa/89696-south-africa-opposition-leader-steps-down/>

⁸³ Butty, James. “First Black leader elected for South Africa’s main opposition party.” *Voice of America*, May 11, 2015.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/first-black-leader-elected-for-south-africas-main-opposition-party/2762660.html>

⁸⁴ Nkosi, Milton. “Is South Africa’s Democratic Alliance serious about tackling racism?” *BBC*, October 5, 2015. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34443820>

⁸⁵ Essop, Philida. “‘Helen isn’t a racist.’ DA caucus ‘emotional’ over colonial tweets.” *City Press*, March 24, 2017.

<https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/da-caucus-about-zille-tweets-tense-and-emotional-20170324-2>

⁸⁶ Munusamy, Ranjeni. “It was a mistake to keep Zille - Mmusi Maimane.” *Sunday Times*, June 3, 2018.

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2018-06-02-it-was-a-mistake-to-keep-zille-mmusi-maimane/>

⁸⁷ Lamprecht, Maryna. “PW Botha Facebook post caused DA ‘massive damage.’” *News 25*, February 11, 2015.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160221143431/http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/PW-Botha-Facebook-post-caused-DA-massive-damage-20151102>

⁸⁸ “It was a mistake to keep Zille - Mmusi Maimane.”

⁸⁹ “DA’s black leaders ‘live with’ racism.”

issues that promoted racial inequalities within the party.⁹⁰ For his part, Maimane spoke out against white privilege.⁹¹ This was an incredibly risky move. In the short-term, it was bound to only deepen internal divisions within the party. Unsurprisingly, it led to strong blowback from senior party leaders, including those in the brain trust.⁹² Maimane reportedly also “went to great lengths to weaken Helen Zille and Tony Leon’s perceived influence in the party.”⁹³ This included bringing in foreign external actors to try to change the culture and strategy of the organization.

In 2019, Maimane faced a major setback. The DA fared poorly in the general elections. It achieved only “one of four targets set in the run-up to the elections.”⁹⁴ These results provided an opportunity for his opponents to attack and remise. According to Zille, the root cause of these stunning results⁹⁵ was that Maimane and his advisors “tried to turn the DA ‘Woke’ based on race essentialism and the politics of racial division.”⁹⁶ This glossed over the negative impact of the “outrage” caused by her own social media posts.⁹⁷ In the aftermath of the general elections, a three-person review panel was convened to “determine” what went wrong. Leon sat on the panel. In the eyes of his supporters, the cards were stacked against Maimane. Either way, the panel’s findings placed much of the blame on the shoulders of Maimane, who they described as “indecisive, inconsistent and conflict averse.”⁹⁸ They also recommended that the party “take urgent steps to re-engage disillusioned Afrikaans voters in an effort to win back their trust.”⁹⁹ This suggested that the party was less interested in challenging the ANC for an outright win in general elections and more interested in remaining the dominant party for white voters.

⁹⁰ “DA’s black leaders ‘live with’ racism.”

⁹¹ Cele, S’tthembele. “Mmusi Maimane feels pressure as ‘white privilege’ race row rocks DA.” *News 24*, May 6, 2018.

<https://www.news24.com/News24/mmusi-maimane-feels-pressure-as-white-privilege-race-row-rocks-da-20180506>

⁹² “Mmusi Maimane feels pressure as ‘white privilege’ race row rocks DA.”

⁹³ Harper, Paddy, and Lizeka Tandwa. “The USA, Maimane and the DA: How Mmusi Maimane’s plan to change the DA fell apart.” *Mail & Guardian*, February 19, 2023.

<https://mg.co.za/politics/2023-02-19-the-usa-maimane-and-the-da-how-mmusi-maimanes-plan-to-change-the-da-fell-apart/>

⁹⁴ Mailovich, Claudi. “DA has much to ponder at federal executive meeting after losing support.” *Business Day*, May 12, 2019.

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/politics/2019-05-12-da-has-much-to-ponder-at-federal-executive-meeting-after-losing-support/>

⁹⁵ “DA has much to ponder at federal executive meeting after losing support.”

⁹⁶ “The USA, Maimane and the DA: How Mmusi Maimane’s plan to change the DA fell apart.”

⁹⁷ “Outrage over Helen Zille’s colonialism tweets.” *Al Jazeera*, March 16, 2017.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/3/16/outrage-over-helen-zilles-colonialism-tweets>

⁹⁸ “Final report: A review of the Democratic Alliance.” *Democratic Alliance*, October 19, 2019.

<https://cdn.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/29170634/Review-Panel-Report.pdf>

⁹⁹ “Final report: A review of the Democratic Alliance.”

As one might expect, the report's findings were the last straw for some high-level black leaders in the party. The mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, was the first shoe to drop. He left the DA and founded ActionSA.¹⁰⁰ In his words, he could no longer reconcile himself "with a group of people who believe that race is irrelevant in the discussion of inequality and poverty in South Africa."¹⁰¹ In quick succession, Maimane was the second. He left the DA and founded Build One South Africa.¹⁰² In his words, "it has become more and more clear to me that there exists those in the DA who do not see eye-to-eye with me, who do not share the vision for the party and the direction it was taking."¹⁰³

Reflecting on these resignations, Mazibuko observed that "[i]t is quite clear that there's quite an exodus of some of the most talented people in that organisation."¹⁰⁴ She then provided her root cause assessment. In her words, the DA had been "captured by a certain faction."¹⁰⁵ If that assessment is correct, then Leon and Zille had achieved something that Zuma could not. They had re-captured their political party from within.

Resignations of Maimane (October 2019)

¹⁰⁰ "Johannesburg mayor quits over DA's stance on racial inequality." *Al Jazeera*, October 21, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/21/johannesburg-mayor-quits-over-das-stance-on-racial-inequality>

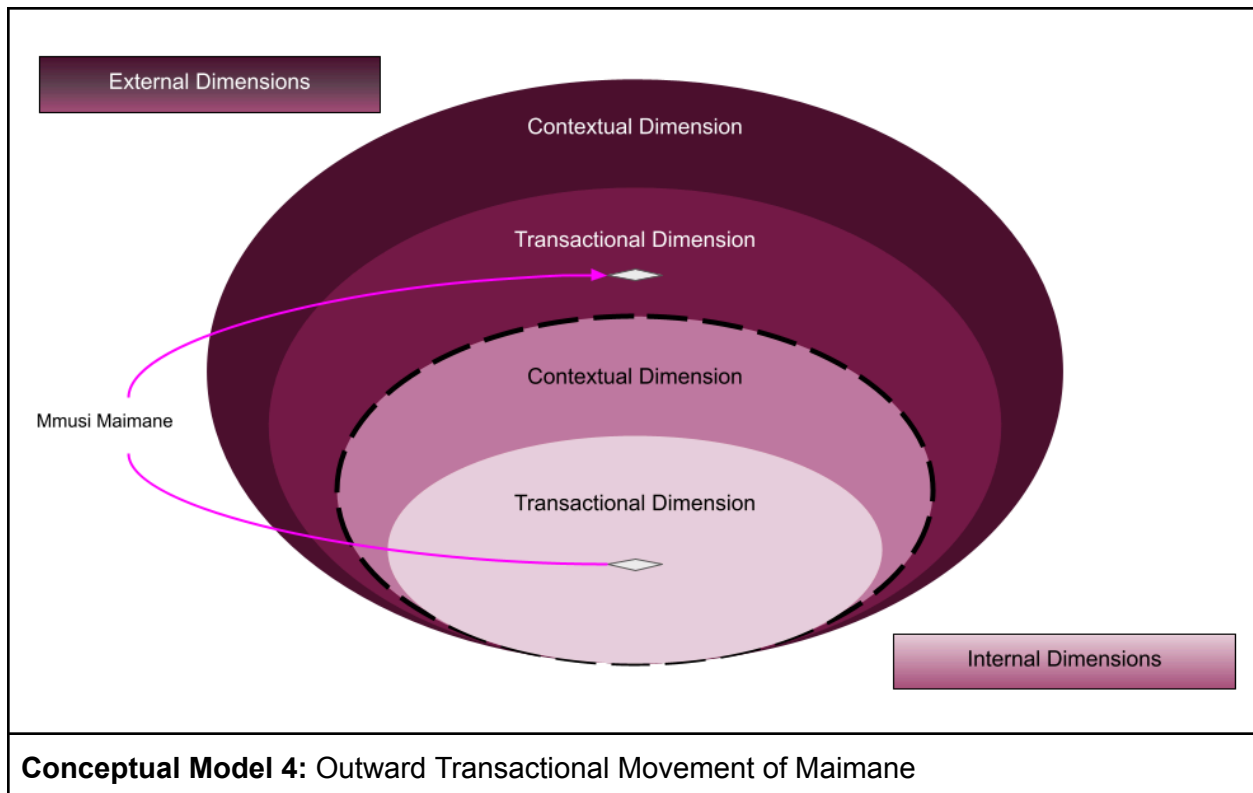
¹⁰¹ "Johannesburg mayor quits over DA's stance on racial inequality."

¹⁰² Tandwa, Lizeka. "Mmusi Maimane says he is ready to be South Africa's next president." *Mail & Guardian*, September 24, 2022. <https://mg.co.za/politics/2022-09-24-mmusi-maimane-says-he-is-ready-to-be-south-africas-next-president/>

¹⁰³ "South Africa's Mmusi Maimane quits as Democratic Alliance leader." *Al Jazeera*, October 23, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/23/south-africas-mmusi-maimane-quits-as-democratic-alliance-leader>

¹⁰⁴ Nkanjeni, Unathi. "'DA is captured by a certain faction and I won't go back': Lindiwe Mazibuko." *Sunday Times*, March 4, 2020. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2020-03-04-da-is-captured-by-a-certain-faction-and-i-wont-go-back-lindiwe-mazibuko/>

¹⁰⁵ "'DA is captured by a certain faction and I won't go back': Lindiwe Mazibuko."



Future Transactional States

When seeking to make sense of intra-party conflict, it is useful to have a grasp of the hypothetical intra-party conflict scenarios that could come into existence in the future.¹⁰⁶

As shown by prior scholars, there are different approaches for thinking about these hypothetical intra-party conflict scenarios. These include a set of structured analytic techniques. These are distinguished from other analytic methods by their emphasis on “a step-by-step process that externalizes the analyst’s thinking in a manner that makes it readily apparent to others, thereby enabling it to be reviewed, discussed, and critiqued piece by piece, or step by step.”¹⁰⁷

The conceptual model of transactional movement can be transformed into a structural analytic technique for rapidly generating hypothetical intra-party conflict scenarios that could come into existence in the future:

¹⁰⁶ Heuer Jr, Richards J., and Randolph H. Pherson. *Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis*. Washington: CQ Press, (2011): 127.

¹⁰⁷ "Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis," 22

- **Transactional Movement Analysis:** The conceptual model of transactional movement provides a framework for generating a closed set of hypothetical intra-party conflict scenarios that could come into existence in the future. For each intra-party conflict actor, there are three options: 1) remain in the same transactional dimension; 2) determinate movement inward/outward to the other transactional dimension; 3) indeterminate movement inward/outward to the other transactional dimension.

In this way, TMA produces a set of “terminal frontiers”¹⁰⁸ across the contours of the plural futures of intra-party conflict.¹⁰⁹

Future Transactional States in South Africa

Fortunately, South Africa provides a useful case for intra-party conflict scenario analysis. For example, consider the following focal issue:

- What will become of the intra-ANC power struggle between Ramaphosa and Zuma in the aftermath of the 2024 South African General Election?

With TMA, one can rapidly generate a closed set of scenarios in response to that focal issue:

¹⁰⁸ <https://unistudentwellbeing.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Threshold-Concepts-Prf04.pdf>

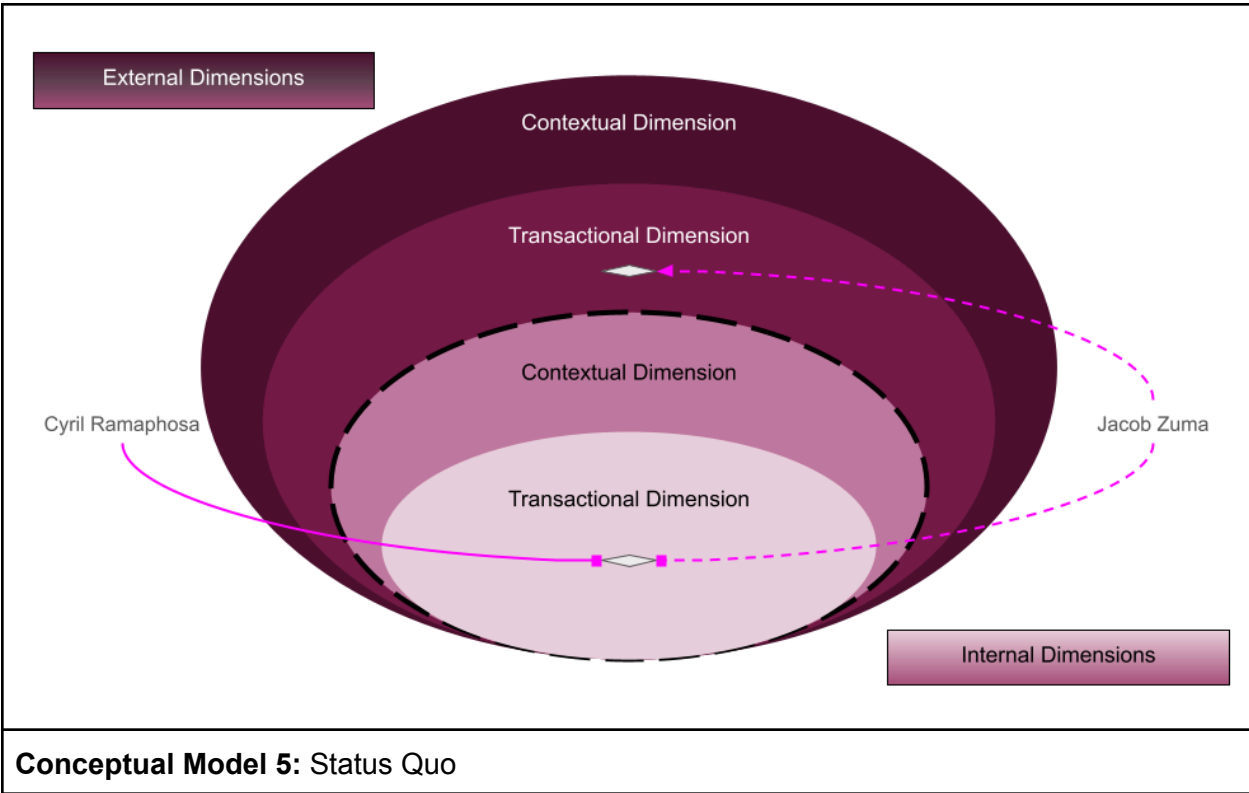
¹⁰⁹ See: Schwartz, Peter. *The art of the long view*. New York: Crown Currency (2006).

		Zuma		
		Remain Internal (RI)	Determinate Outward Movement (DOM)	Indeterminate Outward Movement* (IOM)
Ramaphosa	Remain Internal* (RI)	✓	✓	✓
	Determinate Outward Movement (DOM)	✓	✓	✓
	Indeterminate Outward Movement (IOM)	✓	✓	✓

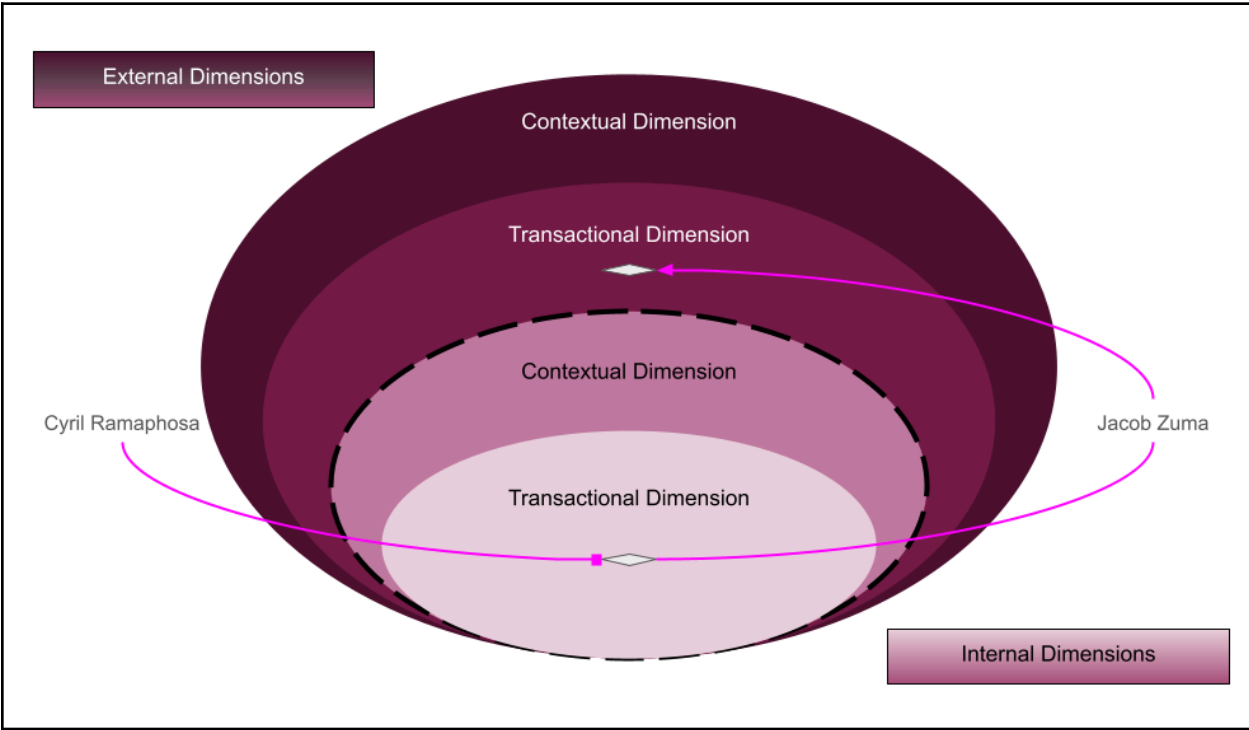
Table 1: Post-Election Intra-ANC Conflict Scenarios (* Current State)

These scenarios can be rapidly visualized using the conceptual model of transactional movement. For examples, consider this selection drawn from the closed set:

Future State One (R: RI*, Z: IOM*): The current state of affairs endures beyond the general elections.

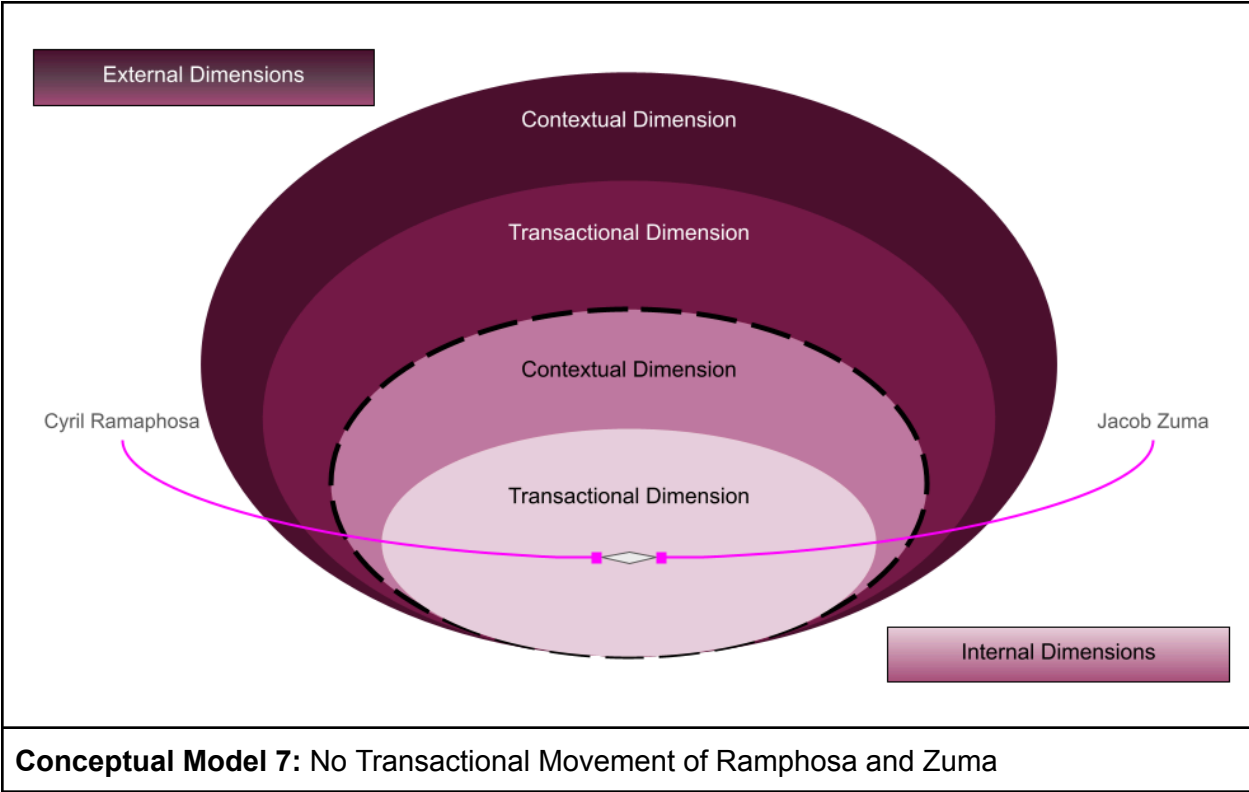


Future State Two (R: RI*, Z: DOM): The power struggle is resolved through the expulsion and/or resignation of Zuma from the party.



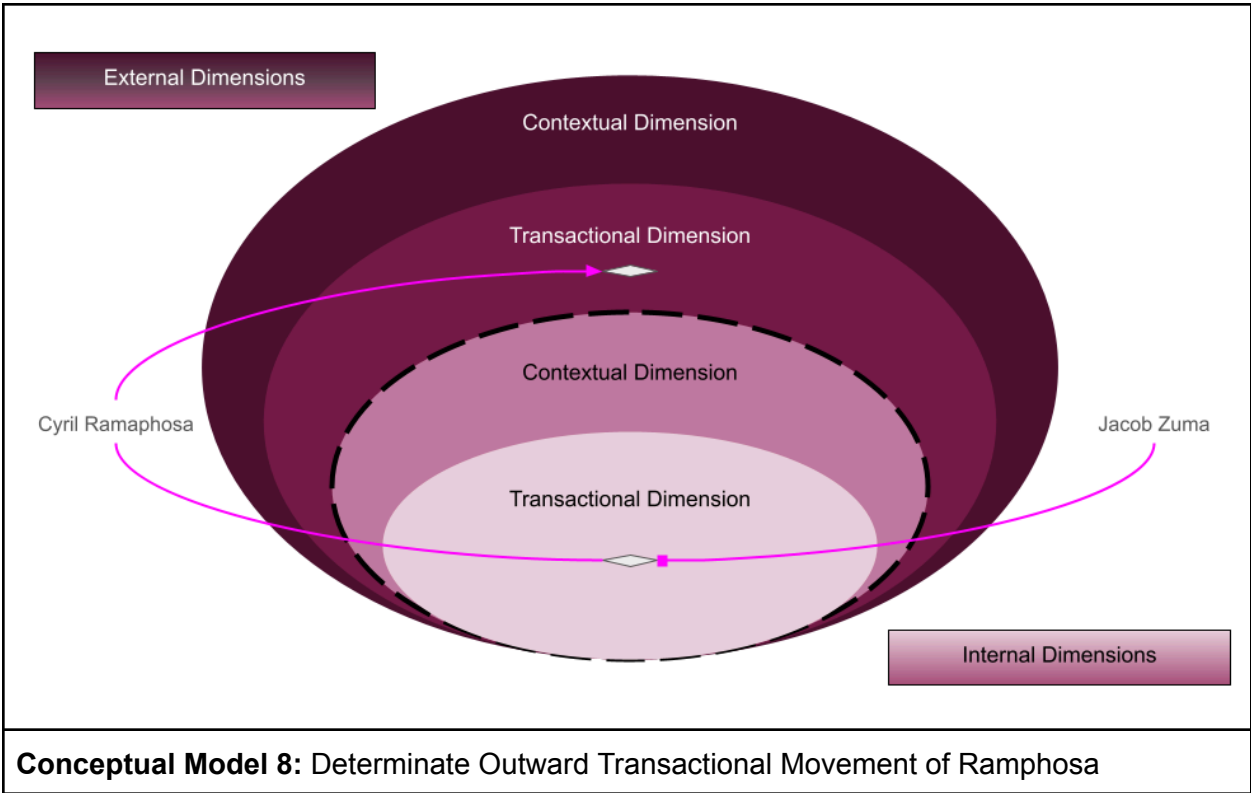
Conceptual Model 6: Determinate Outward Transactional Movement of Zuma

Future State Three (R: RI*, Z: RI): The power struggle is resolved through the burying of the hatchet by Zuma and Ramaphosa.

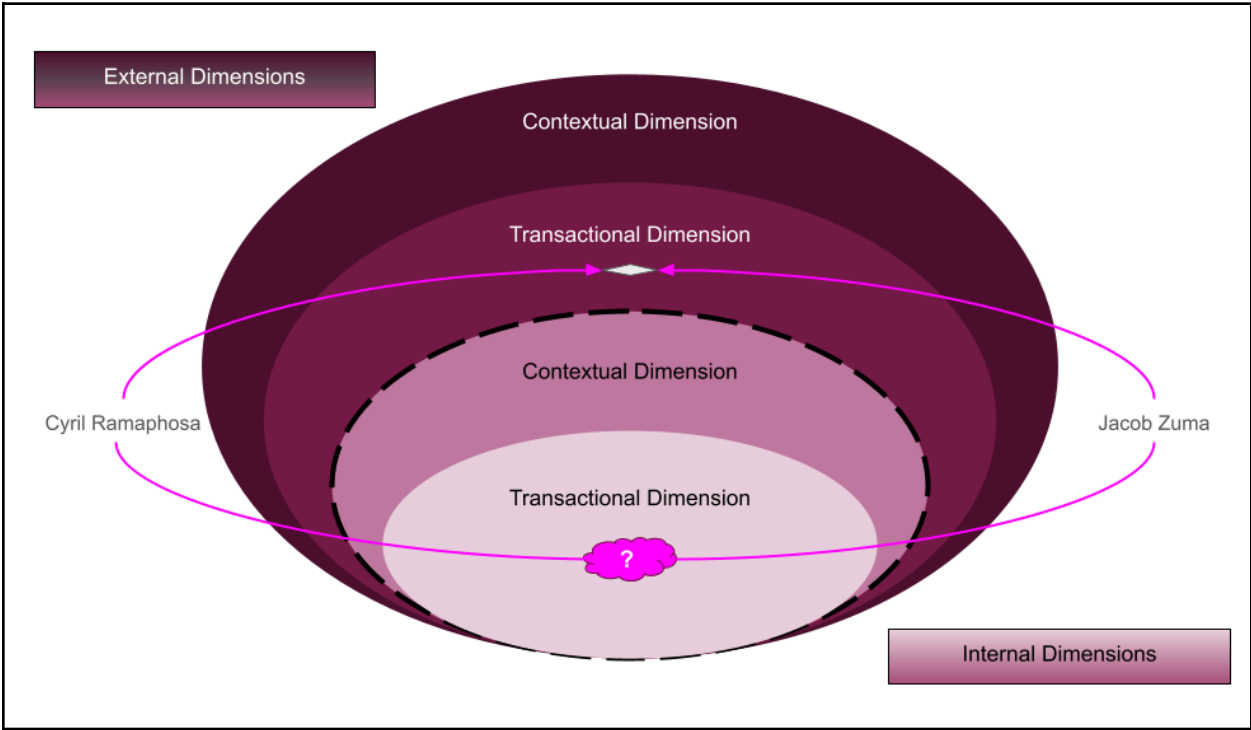


Conceptual Model 7: No Transactional Movement of Ramphosa and Zuma

Future State Four (R: DOM, Z: RI): The power struggle is resolved through the expulsion and/or resignation of Ramaphosa.



Future State Five (R: DOM, Z: DOM): The power struggle is resolved through the: 1) collapse of the ANC; or 2) expulsion and/or resignation of both Zuma and Ramaphosa.



Conceptual Model 9: Determinate Outward Transactional Movement of Ramphosa and Zuma

Of course, TMA has known limitations and potential pitfalls.¹¹⁰ First, it generates low information scenarios. Unlike Alternative Futures Analysis (AFA) or Multiple Scenarios Generation (MSG), TMA does not revolve around two or more critical drivers and the narrative stories that they inspire.¹¹¹ Second, it generates scenarios with low predictive power. Unlike Diagnostic Reasoning (DR) and Analysis of Competing Hypotheses (ACH), it is a useful method for systematically generating scenarios, but not for systematically testing which of those scenarios is the most plausible.¹¹² Third, it cannot be used to “provide an early warning of the direction in which the future is headed.”¹¹³ Another set of structured analytic techniques would be required to generate, validate, and monitor those kinds of indicators.¹¹⁴

To overcome these limitations, a researcher would need to use TMA in combination with other structured analytic techniques and/or other analytic methods. This is not an unusual requirement. Per Heuer and Pherson, the “use of multiple methods during the course of a single analytic project should be the norm, not the exception.”¹¹⁵ Nor is it detrimental to the final analysis. As noted by Heuer and Pherson, one of the key lessons that has been “learned from mentoring analysts in the use of structured techniques is that major benefits can result - and major mistakes be avoided - if analysts use two different techniques to conduct the same analysis.”¹¹⁶ To ice the cake, the combination of TMA with other structured analytic techniques may prove to be highly synergistic. TMA seems primed to act “akin to a portal.”¹¹⁷ It seems particularly well-suited to opening up other ways of thinking about the future of intra-party conflict in South Africa and beyond.

¹¹⁰ See: “Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis.”

¹¹¹ “Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis,” 122-131

¹¹² “Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis,” 150-172

¹¹³ “Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis,” 119

¹¹⁴ “Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis,” 132-149

¹¹⁵ “Structured analytic techniques for intelligence analysis,” 23.

¹¹⁶ Heuer Jr, Richards, and Randolph Pherson. “Choosing the right technique.” *Sage Publications*, 2021. https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-assets/107813_book_item_107813.pdf

¹¹⁷ “Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning,” 1

Working Draft | Not for Citation

Author: *Michael Walsh is a Senior Fellow of the Africa Program at Foreign Policy Research Institute. He is also a Research Associate at the Lasky Center of the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and President of Future Continuum LLC - a boutique strategic foresight consultancy.*

Topics: Context, Domestic Politics, Political Parties, Intelligence Studies, Structured Analytic Techniques, Systems Thinking, Scenario Analysis, Strategic Foresight, South Africa, African National Congress, Democratic Alliance, uMkhonto weSizwe, Jacob Zuma, Mmusi Maimane, Julius Malema, Cyril Ramaphosa, 2024 South African General Election, Apartheid