**Chapter Fifteen**

**Institutional Challenges**

**in the “New” South Africa**

**Democracy and the Nature of South Africa’s Electoral Process**

The ANC was accused by its enemies in the middle of the 1990s of being authoritarian, secretive, and centralizing in its approach to decision-making and control. Many of the governance issues present in the apartheid government had also carried over into the new South Africa. The past chapter explored the process of transition to the ANC led government in the Mandela years. This chapter takes a closer look at the institutions of power and accountability within the ANC, as well as the procedures that governed the democratic process and power sharing with local governments during this period. In terms of the development deficits left by the apartheid system, serious challenges would remain for the administrations that were to follow President Mandela.

The GNU faced three issues during the GNU/Mandela administration: (1) What was the capacity needed at the national, provincial, and sub-provincial levels in order to create a credible management system at all levels of government? (2) Did the inherited departments and divisions, at all levels, need systematic organizational changes to create unified non-racial entities? (3) Finally, what political structures and capacities were needed at the sub-national level, particularly in the rural areas, in order to make the electoral promises a reality to those poorest of South Africans? These issues would continue be inherited by both the Mbeki and Zuma administrations.

**Authoritarian Tendencies**

One of the first who warned about the dangers of authoritarianism in a post-apartheid South Africa was the author Breyten Breytenbach (1993, p. 160) who expressed concern about what he called the "new hegemony" in 1990. For that heresy, ANC spokesman, Carl Niehaus (1993, p. 51), chided Breytenbach for being "out of touch...with the South African situation."The issue was real however. To reiterate: for Breytenbach and other ANC critics, there were inherent dangers to pluralism and civil society in the "Jacobin view of the people" held by some in the ANC (Welsh 1994c, p. 37).

Within the ANC before 1994, many still had a statist approach and "preferred the command economy and the benign one-party state" (Cartwright 1996, p. 60). As a result, ANC policy seemed likely to perpetuate centralist tendencies and the over-planned and under-implemented development state of a kind too common, particularly in Africa. Central to that centrist state was an unplanned patronage-based civil service whose function was not to facilitate development alternatives, but to ensure political quiescence. Tendencies towards secrecy and centralized control continued in the years after 1994.

Graham Linscott (1995b, p. 8), after the 1994 elections, lamented the loss of liberal governance in South Africa. He accused the ANC of working with "a centralist command system." The word "liberal" he argued now evoked hostility. Along with this, corruption and slowness were the order of the day. There was an evolving new ideology of collectivism and one-party dominant authoritarianism. Post-apartheid South Africa, according to Linscott, was not immune from authoritarian tendencies.

Between 1994 and 1995, authoritarian tendencies could be found within the Mass Democratic Movement (the ANC, the SACP, and COSATU) and among the personalities taking positions in the new government. Critics suggested that a future society might be divided between comrades and others, suggesting the latter should have a subjective relationship to the state. Other critics pointed to a lack of tolerance within the ANC towards provinces and provincial decision-making. To its critics, the ANC in the mid-1990s remained a highly-centralized organization (Sindane 1997).

Some South African scholars have noted that the Mandela period resulted in an increased centralization of power and authority (Shrire 1996). As it negotiated a permanent constitution in 1996, the ANC sought a more centralized decision-making process (Linscott 1995a; Nyatsumba 1995). Despite very liberal economic policies, the rhetoric of the South African state still came out “as a strident squawk for social re-engineering” (Beckett 2000, p. 145). According to Beckett (2000, p. 198), “[t]he much-identified chief sin of apartheid was that it set out to engineer society into colour-coded compartments. The central quest of the new state [was], in the name of redress, colour-coded racial parity.”

Within the ANC, ideologues debated whether or not the organization was a political party or a mass movement. Implicitly, community was defined in racial terms. A political party claims to represent no more than a part of the people, advocates a specific program, and should be open to rational criticism from other political parties with other programs. A movement claims representation of all peoples, represents a broad spectrum of programs, rejects criticism from political parties, and advocates of specific concerns (Fine & Davis 1990). Some ANC supporters called for a collectivist style of representational functions for civics organizations. To some within the ANC, this distinction was not resolved even after 1994.

Many within the ANC continued to define the movement as a "liberation pact" based on the power of mass mobilization and a transition in control of the state. Formally, the goal of the movement introduced a set of public policies that culminated in socialism (though not clearly defined). Focus was on moving the working class toward this perspective (Schreinner 1991). At the same time, the ANC's relationship with the SACP (South African Communist Party) came under criticism after 1994. Many feared that the SACP had a stranglehold over the ANC in exile and that this would carry over to the post-1994 period. Others feared that the alliance with the SACP made the ANC elitist (Uys 1992). Critics also argued that the failure of the armed struggle was directly attributable to the SACP.

The left wing in the ANC also criticized the authoritarian tendencies in government. SACP leader Jeremy Cronin argued that the ANC was dogmatic in terms of its slogans and philosophy, a tendency that Cronin blamed on "bad external habits" (McKinley 1997a, p. 68). One critic from the non-Communist left described the leadership, and in particular the influence of the SACP, as "Stalinist" in terms of its methods and control (McKinley 1997a, p. 48). The new democratic state, according to ANC leader Pallo Jordan,had to be "the agent of nation-building which may have to entail Jacobin-style methods of liberatory intolerance" (as cited in Du Toit 1995).

A common view within the ANC was that the "[t]ransformation of the state [entailed], first and foremost, extending the power of the national liberation movement over all levers of power: the army, the police, the bureaucracy, intelligence structures, the judiciary, parastatals and agencies such as regulatory bodies, the public broadcaster, the central bank and so on" (Mbhele 1998a, p. 12).After the 1994 elections, the ANC leadership expected loyalty from the grassroots of the movement (Seiler 1997b). This loyalty was not always there. Not surprisingly, after the transition, the liberal opposition parties, who had always been seen as untrustworthy, received the harshest treatment from the ANC (Daley 1997).

Within the ANC, concepts such as intensive or maximal democracy and grassroots democracy became popular. The ANC's concern for centralized power suggested that, in the end:

The irony of this crucial constraint on government tendencies toward arbitrary and authoritarian behavior is that it comes from within the ANC and its alliance partners, COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions] and the SACP.... The media (which plays a significant role in uncovering government and ANC peccadilloes), universities, business, and a range of non-profit organizations all risk ANC criticism of disloyalty to the nation or racism for their criticisms of government (Mbhele 1998a, p. 12).

After 1994, much of the system of bureaucratic elitism that dominated South Africa during the apartheid period remained in place, external to the political process. One danger to democratic patterns of governance was "the vesting of unaccountable power in the hands of bureaucrats" (Van zyl Slabbert & Welsh 1979, p. 86).During the GNU, many of the same white Afrikaners continued to dominate the bureaucracy. Moreover, the state security bureaucracy and its coercive apparatus proved dysfunctional in the post-apartheid period.

During the GNU, the ANC leadership often acted collectively, fearing what Keith Gottschalk (1998, p. 113) called "fratricide"[[1]](#footnote-1) as though any intra-party competition "might trigger ideological schism...among rivals, or ethnic polarization." The ANC was seen by its critics as both monolithic in terms of leadership values and diverse in terms of ideology, with a patron-based system linking leaders to subordinates. Added to this were elements of a mobilizing populism and democratic elements among former ANC activists (Picard, Research Diary, Lecture by Tom Lodge at University of Witwatersrand, June 8, 1992).According to Krog (1998 p. 339), in that situation, “Honor becomes the code, the atmosphere breathed by any close knit group- whether it’s based on clan loyalties, or ethnicity or color.”

The ANC had inherited a number of diverse cultural values. The movement, via the UDF, had an indigenous tradition of community consultation. Its universal demands were clearly stated in the 1957 Freedom Charter. The movement's democratic culture had developed during the struggle against apartheid as well as an organizational commitment to adhere to internal democratic practice. The Mass Democratic Movement had ideas of direct democracy that came out of the South African mass democratic organizations in the 1980s (Rantete 1998).

The ANC could rightly claim that it was non-racial in its leadership. Following the National Executive Committee elections in 1998, more than 99 percent of the voting delegates were African. However, 72 percent of the National Executive Committee members were African and 28 percent were non-African (Makgoba 1998).There was significant over-representation of whites, Indians, and Coloureds in the National Executive Committee. In the 1994 elections, the ANC electoral list over-represented whites, Coloureds, and Indians (Rantete 1998). Between one-third and one half of the cabinet, including very senior positions, has always been non-African.

Race, ethnicity, and ideology all remained important areas of tension in post-apartheid South Africa. During the negotiations that led up to the 1994 transitional election, and in the debate over a post-apartheid society, splits developed within the ANC between those who advocated non-racialism and those who saw South Africa as an African country where Africanist perspectives should predominate. Non-racialism tended to be important to white, Indian, and Coloured South Africans within the ANC and was often identified with the SACP.

Nationalists in the organization tended to be Africanist oriented and many came to favor a form of black capitalism or black economic empowerment, a form of affirmative action in South Africa. The socialists within the ANC have seemed to be more non-racial. However, a clear division of values within the organization is not easy to identify. A categorization of values has been difficult and an emphasis on the individual as opposed to the collective within the organization has not been entirely consistent over time.

The ANC's hostility to criticism became more pronounced after they entered the GNU. The South African government, after 1994, “was less than pleased with the kind of criticism it had to face from the former ‘alternative press’” or from editors and writers in the mainstream media that the ANC counted on to support it (Jacobs 1994, p. 155). One newspaper editorial commented

Not only does [the ANC] demand we act as a megaphone for government…implies that we should indulge in the sort of 'sunshine journalism' that has blighted the pages of newspapers owned by the larger corporations - notably Independent Newspapers - at least fairly recognized (“Waiting for the Punchline” 1998, p. 32).

Often it was not clear where "exactly the line was drawn... [though it] appeared to many ANC members as too authoritarian, and in conflict with the party's own commitment to transparency" (Brummer 1997, p. 4). In terms of party discipline, criticism within the movement was acceptable but complaining to the media or other public outlets was ordinarily grounds for ostracism or even removal from the ANC cadre (Seiler 1997b).

In May 1998, a newspaper report stated that there were "warning signs that the government could become bureaucratic and intolerant as a result of its declining popularity" (Paton & Hartley 1998). During the GNU, critics suggested that control patterns used in other African countries were being introduced in South Africa.[[2]](#footnote-2) One critic compared South Africa to Kenya and called attention to the fact that Kenya's press, like South Africa's, only had of late joined the “more free” (partly free) category in the Human Freedom Index. However, like Kenya’s, South Africa’s press was

…also among the most powerless. No more the blatant autocrat of the past, Moi [and by implication many South African leaders]…learned the refined skill of ruling ostrich-style: ignore a problem and it can do you no harm (Brummer 1997b, p. 1).

“The ANC,” as has one observer noted, "found the 'broad church' it had built, a cohesiveness more easily maintained in the face of a well-defined enemy, suddenly threatened by new centrifugal forces" (Brummer 1997b, p. 4). Some critics have suggested that its heterodoxy demonstrated its weakness as a political organization. That being said, there remained within the Mass Democratic Movement a tendency towards centralized authority that contributed to the institutional state structures the ANC inherited in 1994.

Hierarchical control after 1994 was essential to some in the ANC because "there [were] divisions within the ANC--hardliners and moderates. There [were] tensions between the internal and external groups. However, in the end, they [had to] come together and speak in one voice " (Interview with Mkatshwa, 1990). In what could be labeled a “dominant party thesis,” there was a danger of future political authoritarianism leading to an eventual stagnation of civil society. Civil society remained challenged by the racial block voting in South Africa after 1994 (Southall 1999). From this perspective, the ANC would be propelled toward authoritarianism and a one-party system in the future.

South Africa's judiciary was not immune from criticism by the ANC leadership. After several incidents in which the judiciary stopped ANC actions, "The ANC," according to a newspaper account,

called for the Government and people in general to take a closer look at the role it said courts were playing in frustrating transformation, and said there should be “national scrutiny” of the refusal of judges appointed while the previous government was in power to appear before the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] (Sawyer 1998, p.2).

With regard to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the ANC insisted that its members “stick” to the party line and the party line was unity. As the poet Antjie Krog (1998, p. 151) has put it, unity for the ANC was “more important than truth.” The ANC was particularly sensitive to influential Africans in public leadership positions who were not supporters of the ANC. The tense relationship developed with the Archbishop of Cape Town (alleged to have supported the PAC) reflected this. The ANC appeared to some to be intolerant of organized religion. A press report in 1998 noted “[t]he row between church and state erupted this week after the President invited senior Anglican clerics to a meeting during which he 'very forcibly' attacked the views of the Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev Njongonkulu Ndungane, in his absence” (Bulgring 1998, p. 1).

The article went on to take note of the Archbishop's "criticisms of the government neglect of the poor, its inhumane treatment of pensioners in the Eastern Cape, the slow delivery of houses and the financial crisis at the universities" (Bulgring, 1998). Although the Archbishop was no longer a PAC member, it was widely known, that he was not an ANC supporter. The Archbishop’s cool relationship with the ANC had a negative impact upon his relationship with the government.

The ANC portrayed criticism of its policies as criticism of Africans as a whole and critics of the ANC as racist. In late 1997, President Nelson Mandela, in a bitter speech at an ANC conference in Mafeking, lashed out at South Africa's whites, international donors, the news media, and opposition political parties blaming them for the problems which had developed in post-apartheid South Africa, saying that they expected "continued economic advantages in exchange for relinquishing political power" (Daley 1999a, p. A1.)

Nelson Mandela, in a "surprisingly aggressive speech to the conference, written in sometimes crude revolutionary language... lashed out at white intransigence" over affirmative action (“South Africa’s New Men” 1997, p. 55). Mandela told whites in early 1999, "they had to stop defending their privileges" (Daley 1999a, p. A1).Such events suggested that there were limits to the political tolerance of the new non-racial government. Internal democracy within the ANC was not well accepted. There were a number of examples of ANC leaders expressing impatience with criticism of its economic policy. The independence of the ANC parliamentary caucus which characterized the early months of democracy in 1994 had all but vanished by 1999.

The ANC, according to critics, had long suffered from an orthodoxy fallacy both prior to and after 1994. This fallacy led to a situation where political correctness and group think was the norm (Schwella 1998). During the GNU, in part because of collectivist tendencies within the ANC, there remained a "substantial disconnect" between civil society and the state in South Africa (Barkan et al. 1998, p. 3).

After 1996, parts of South Africa still suffered from violence, intimidation, and lack of information during the GNU period. Similar patterns of intolerance appeared at the local government level. The newly militant DP took note of press criticism by government officials. By 1998, according to one critic, the ANC was poised to become "even more authoritarian and intolerant of dissent" (Venter 1997, p. 103). Equality was now measured in racial statistics (Venter 1997).According to Breytenbach (2000, p. 16), South Africa under the ANC was “now experiencing the same obtuseness and arrogance, and a similar overlap of ruling party and state, in the new order as when the National Party was in control”.

At the end of the Mandela years, many within the ANC still confused "liberation democracy," with "liberal democracy" and viewed the government as a site that had to be "captured permanently by the dominant party and then used as the key instrument to 'liberate' the economy 'for the people'" (Adam et al. 1997, pp. 83-84).However, routine tasks seemed beyond the capacity of the state to carry out. Ultimately the nature of South Africa’s democracy and its capacity to govern would be defined by the way that civil society functioned.

It is important to stress that the issue raised here is not that the ANC was authoritarian in 1994. It was not. But to what extent did elements within the ANC, in part because of its internal weaknesses, have centralizing, authoritarian tendencies and to what extent did these tendencies impact upon the development of a democratic and civil society. While there should be concern about these tendencies, it is important to realize that the ANC had only been legal a few months when such accusations began, mostly the product of National Party negotiations and pre-election propaganda. It is also true that accusations were made within the context of a violent struggle, which would not have occurred in periods of peaceful democratic debate.

While there are many parts to the ANC puzzle, there is considerable evidence that, particularly at the leadership level, these characteristics made up a part of its organizational culture. Ideologically, democratic centralism remained an institutional and political goal and some within the ANC have articulated views characteristic of a one-party dominant state. One of the identifying factors of the one-party state was a pull towards social, economic, and/or cultural orthodoxy. The idea that the party, in this case the ANC, should be able to veto cultural activities which did not meet the test of orthodoxy was both discussed and criticized within the Mass Democratic Movement. The use of the generic, undifferentiated phrase such as "the people" or "the masses" illustrated this tendency.

**Political Culture and the Social Values.**

There are two sets of factors which impact upon the nature of inter-governmental relationships in South Africa. The first of these is the context of South Africa’s political culture as it impacts upon social divisions and sub-national government. We examine that issue here. In the next section we look at the institutional arrangements that intersect with that political culture in order to understand the way that politics is played out at national, provincial, and local levels.

There are five components to South African political culture that became apparent during the negotiations on non-racial government between 1990 and 1994 and during the post-apartheid period (Adam & Moodley 1993; Sisk 1995). First, political leadership both during the apartheid period and afterward has tended to be hierarchical, with the party leader forming an authoritative (and critics suggest authoritarian) relationship with the masses within the party. Challenges to party leadership, while possible, do represent a dramatic change of form and substance (F.W. de Klerk’s challenge to P.W. Botha and Jacob Zuma’s later challenge to Thabo Mbeki both represent such challenges to established policy and party authority).

Popular revolt, or at least the symbolism of it, is a second component of political culture in South Africa. Beginning in 1960 with the PAC challenges in the Sharpsville and Cape Town protests, political challenges came from urban townships inspired by the PAC and the ANC. The Soweto school children’s revolt against use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in 1976 brought to a head a festering series of challenges to apartheid led by a group who followed black consciousness leaders such as Steve Biko. In the 1980s, the UDF (which was only partly the public face of the outlawed ANC) arose out of the township challenges to the racially defined reforms of local government and the so-called racially segregated tri-cameral constitution. Popular revolt, therefore, was and is an important component of political culture in South Africa.

Ideology remains a third, and debated, characteristic of political culture in South Africa. Neither the National Party nor the ANC historically had strong concerns about market conditions or private enterprise. Both looked to state control of the economy and apartheid South Africa was littered with inefficient public corporations that provided “jobs for pals” among the Afrikaner faithful. The ANC, as it came to power, continued to see a role for mass mobilization in its political influence, particularly during times of crisis, and saw the public sector as the basis of an affirmative action that distributed jobs to its followers and deployed its cadres to most strategic positions. Only the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) party was then explicitly oriented towards market forces and small government liberalism.

Fourth, many observers question the liberal *bona fides* of South African political elites in the long run. Political institutions in South Africa remain fragile. The ANC remains only partly comfortable with political liberalism, while embracing individual freedoms to a greater degree than most parts of Africa, let alone other parts of the World. The continuing intellectual role of the SACP and the influence of labor unions dedicated to industrial democracy both suggest that debates about liberalism have not been entirely resolved (Marais 1998).

Ethnic and racial divisions, as illustrated by the sensitivities linked to the killing of a white supremacist leader, Eugene Terre Blanche, are a final component of South African political culture and remain unresolved. There is very little social or political mingling and the economy remains largely segregated except among intellectuals, economic, and political elites. There is an intellectual leadership within the ANC which is ethnically diverse (and both it and the SACP are influenced by white intellectuals), but little of this impacts on society. Ethnic and linguistic sensitivities, likewise, remain, though heavily discouraged, but not muted. According to one long time insider, Simon Brand,[[3]](#footnote-3) “if you can take these things out of the political sphere as much as possible then Parliament and the Government play a less important role and it becomes a less important matter for people to necessarily have a certain form of representation in the central Parliament” (as quoted in Zille 1983).

**Political Institutions in the New South Africa**

Sub-national autonomy reflects upon the extent to which local and regional governments can take political, administrative, and fiscal decisions with some degree of independence from central government. Limits on decentralization are often exacerbated by a poor understanding of the principles of separation of the party and government by members of ruling party. As Mangusutho Buthelezi told one of the authors in an interview in 1994, “Regionalism is important to us… It is the only issue that separates us from other political parties.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

The autonomy that sub-national governments have with respect to the central government in South Africa is limited. This is a characteristic of South African government that ironically has changed little before and after the end of the apartheid regime. South Africa, legally and politically, is a unitary state with high levels of centralized policy control, mediated, however, by uneven patterns of implementation caused by inefficiency, corruption, and limited fiscal resources.

The formal balance of power between the branches of the South African government (branches being a term not commonly used in parliamentary fused systems), is defined by the theoretical accountability that the executive branch has to the South African Parliament. There is no balance of power between the executive branch and the legislative branch in a fused (British style cabinet) system of government (Davenport 1998b).

The legal basis for the South African electoral system is derived chiefly from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, considered one of the most democratic constitutions in the world (Sparks 2003). It is supplemented by a series of acts that define participation in the South African political system, including the Electoral Act 73 of 1998, the Electoral Commission Act of 1996, and the Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act of 1997. Elections since 1994, at all levels of government, have been free and fair by virtually all international standards.

The electoral system in South Africa is based on direct universal adult franchise with a proportional representation within the National Assembly for participating political parties. The National Assembly, in turn, elects the president. The election period for the National Assembly occurs every five years with the president elected by every new National Assembly. For elections in the national parliament and provincial legislatures, South Africa uses a party-based list system of proportional representation which distributes seats to all political parties that receive at least 1 percent of the vote and redistributes unused seats according to a formula to ensure a close match between the percentage of vote the party receives and its percentage in the legislature. Several electoral institutions have been set up to ensure fairness in electoral outcomes and competent running of elections across all the three levels of government. The institutions are Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and Electoral Court (for both see Constitution of South Africa 1996).[[5]](#footnote-5)

The IEC is principally responsible for the management of elections at all levels of government, to ensure elections are free and fair, and to declare the results in as short a time as possible. The Electoral Court is meant to review decisions of the IEC. It should be said that since 1994 there have been very few electoral irregularities, (outside of the somewhat chaotic 1994 election) which have been all easily resolved.

The IEC is responsible for determining the number of seats allocated to each constituency in national and provincial elections, with the nine provinces serving as constituencies. The IEC is further obliged to conduct voter education programs and thereby promote what it calls knowledge of sound and democratic electoral processes. The upper house of Parliament (formerly the Senate and now the National Council of Provinces) has been described as ‘rather toothless’ by some in the press (Sparks 2003).

The South African Constitution enjoins the electoral institutions of the country to be independent. In this regard, members of the IEC are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the National Assembly, following nomination by a National Assembly inter-party committee. Members of the IEC may be removed for misconduct, incapacity, or incompetence by the President on a resolution of the National Assembly. The Electoral Court is conferred the status of a Supreme Court and membership is made up of individuals appointed by the president at the recommendation of the Judicial Services Commission.

There are no legal partisan restrictions that impact upon electoral participation in South Africa. Nor does the ANC dominant party monopoly result from electoral legislation or administrative practice. That said, there are a number of what are referred to in South Africa as “no go” areas where minority parties are not able to access communities or campaign freely. Further, while the written press is considered free, the media (except for private radio stations) shows evidence of bias towards the government of the day. South African wags tend to refer to the South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC) mockingly as the “SANC.”

Membership of the National Assembly starts with the nomination of candidates on lists prepared and submitted by registered political parties. A similar process is used for the provincial assemblies. The funding of political parties in South Africa is partly through the public purse on the one hand, roughly in proportion to their representation in the National Assembly and provincial legislatures, and through private fund raising, especially during campaigning periods, on the other.

South Africa, though a broadly democratic country, has been a de facto one-party state (at least prior to the 2016 local government elections. Since 1994, only the ANC has been able to muster a majority to form a government and select a president. Parties, prior to 2016 were effectively segregated with the overwhelming majority of black South Africans (including many Indians and many Coloured (mixed race people)) voting for the ANC. The DA is the major opposition party, which is supported overwhelmingly by whites, but with support of Coloured and some Asian South Africans and increasing numbers of middle class African voters. In 2017 it controled the Western Cape Provincial Government and the Cape Town city government as well as the city governments of Pretoria and Nelson Mandela (Port Elizabeth). The DA also made significant gains in Johannesburg though it did not gain a plurality. There are several other small parties, some with small delegations in the national assembly.

Parties are disciplined but not rigid. There is some movement of members between parties especially when they are allowed to cross the floor, as is periodically permitted by the rules of the legislature. There have been long been threats of ideological and ethnic splits within the ANC but, until 2008 with the founding of the Congress of the People (COPE) by a group of senior ANC dissidents, such a split (post-PAC) had not happened. South Africa’s electoral system is proportional and the president is elected by the parliament and functions legally as a prime minister who is also head of state. Provincial governments function with a legislature and premier with roughly the same electoral rules as national institutions, though the ANC appoints provincial candidates for premier from the central level (ANC party structures).

At both national and sub-national levels, South Africa is governed constitutionally (though critics have expressed increasing concern on this front after 2005). Elections are fought less on the basis of national issues (and still less on the basis of regional and local issues) than on the basis of historical binds of loyalty to the anti-apartheid movement and the ANC’s historical role. Though public opinion polls often show dissatisfaction with government policies within the electorate this does not translate into support for opposition movements, even for those with origins in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Provincial governments have elected political heads based on majority control of the legislative body. Politically, provinces are headed by a premier and an executive council which functions as a provincial cabinet. The provincial administrative authority is housed in a provincial administration headed by a director general with directors heading provincial departments (sometimes referred to as ministries) administratively. There is no direct local government representation at the provincial and national level (though there is token representation of local government in the National Council of Provinces)

As we have seen in previous chapters, from 1910 to 1994, South Africa had four provinces which were governed on a racial basis: Transvaal, the Cape, the Orange Free State, and Natal. Provinces, initially, had elected councils on a racial franchise until these were replaced by an appointed executive committee, eliminating opposition members of provincial councils. From the 1950s, the National Party government began to create a series of 10 black homelands which were either “self-governing” or “independent.” These homelands were never recognized internationally. The homelands accounted for some 13 percent of the land.

These patterns of racial government were replicated at the local government level, with cities and towns having whites-only elected governments and black townships and rural areas controlled by territorial administrators and what were later called urban Bantu Administration Boards. These Boards were appointed by the central government. In the 1980s, partly elected, segregated black councils were created by the P.W. Botha administration. These were elected in a racially separate franchise. Black townships became the central point of resistance to apartheid in South Africa in the last half of the decade.

As part of the negotiations, the four “white” provinces and the 10 homelands were restructured into nine provinces. Provinces have been referred to by constitutional scholars as having quasi-federal relationships with the national government. Their existence is constitutionally guaranteed. However, their reserved powers are limited and most of their authority is concurrent with the national government. Financially and administratively, they do not enjoy a great deal of autonomy. There is a national second chamber of parliament, called the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), that functions like a Senate with indirectly elected representatives, selected by provincial legislatures, but its powers are restricted, and it is considered a backwater politically.

**Loss of Faith in the System**

**Grafting Old Structures on New Institutions**

In ANC dominant areas, the government has functioned as a virtual one-party system, with local representatives, key civil society leaders, and senior (and often middle level) administrators all functioning from within the umbrella of the political party “movement.” This is in part a legacy of the organization’s projected image as a broad-based mass movement in its struggle against apartheid.

In several provinces (Western Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng, and Kwa-Zulu Natal), where there is significant opposition to the ANC (opposition parties are able to approach 40 percent of the votes), political representation takes on a more neutral, multi-party form and administrators are more sensitive to political neutrality. The exception is in the Western Cape, where there is a built-in loyalty among bureaucrats to the DA. Where opposition is stronger at the local government level, patterns of neutrality are similar to that of provincial levels. Respect for the results of political decisions was not always immediate, however. According to a press account, "Officials [claimed that] their posts were downgraded after the ANC restructured the city's local authorities in January" (Jacobson 1997, p. 1).

The legal framework for provincial government rests in the 1996 Constitution and amendments, which have shaped the *de jure* responsibilities of provinces and significantly reduced the federal element in their relationship with the national government*.* Legally, all sub-national political institutions have *de jure* legislative and executive authority in their own spheres. However, provinces are referred to legally as components of the national government, thus, denying a federal style relationship to the national government. Provinces have exclusive jurisdiction in only a few areas related to infrastructure development, such as roads, recreation, and the management of certain environmental policies, and in constitutional functions, including boundary definitions and the provincial role in the upper house of parliament, the National Council of Provinces (or Senate).

The upper house of Parliament, styled the National Council of Provinces by the 1996 Constitution, had little influence over the policy process between 1996 and 1999. Questions were raised about whether there was, or should be, a serious role for the provinces in the parliamentary process (Clayton 1999).The National Council of Provinces continues to exist as colonial vestige; an equivalent of the Westminster model House of Lords. It consists of nominated members of provincial legislatures (MPLs) and 10 South African Local Government Association (SALGA) representatives designed to represent provincial and organized local government interests at the national sphere. Constitutionally, it performs its representative function by participating in national legislative processes and by providing a national forum for public consideration of issues affecting provinces.

Performance wise, the National Council of Provinces does its best to justify its existence by, for instance, setting up shop in various locations/regions on a regular basis and opening forums around the country for general public participation. These are considered by South African observers to be token, (giving the society a sense of bringing parliament to the people), without making much difference on national policy and legislative programs as defined in National Assembly.

Reorganization of provincial interests was made difficult because of the retrogression of authority to the national government until provincial capacity was fully constituted. Retrogression and the conservative nature of the Public Service Commission meant that provinces could neither hire nor fire civil servants nor implement the most basic policies (Collinge 1994). A key assumption in 1994 was that the creation of provincial level Public Service Commissions (called Provincial Service Commissions) would encourage the development of a mentoring and training process in the senior levels of the provincial bureaucracy.

Throughout the GNU, the provincial government system was characterized by a concurrency of powers, with provinces holding (residual) semi-federal responsibility but in tandem with the national government. This proved to be a significant problem for the ANC leadership (Humphries & Shubane 1994). The policy shifts outlined above led to uncertainties within the provincial civil service and increasing dissatisfaction with the role of provincial government. As the situation in the provinces deteriorated, central government officials came to blame provincial leaders. According to the then Minister of Public Service and Administration, Zola Skweyiya, the ultimate responsibility for policy implementation in each of the provinces lay with the Premiers in terms of the Public Service Act that defined them as the executing authorities for their provinces. Skweyiya noted in a February 1997 speech[[6]](#footnote-6) that he intended to monitor the leadership at the provincial level very closely throughout the year.

After 1996, there was a further trend towards centralism in inter-governmental relationships. The long-term goal of the ANC leadership was to weaken provincial government and delegate most of their power to municipalities. That said, as we have noted, most of what government does in South Africa is provincial. Provinces spend approximately two-thirds of the national budget and employ the vast majority of the country’s public servants (Lodge 1999a). Critics expressed concern with the costs, both financial and human, of “creeping provincialism” (Lodge 1999b, p. 24).

The National Council of Provinces had little influence over the policy process between 1996 and 1999. In the end, Provincial authorities were given twenty-nine areas of authority, most of them concurrent with central government authority that had the right to intervene. This gave central government ample authority to intervene and ensure the implementation of national policy. Formally, South Africa’s government departments function on the basis of deconcentrated authority, as do provincial departments in theory. In practice, there is a great deal of ambiguity in relationships between political and administrative leadership at all levels and often confusion about roles and responsibilities within government units. In practice, South African government, at all levels—national, provincial, and local—operate on the basis of “cooperative governance” which suggests a centrally defined mission and strategy. Critics of South Africa’s government also suggest that the system at all levels is characterized by high levels of patronage, rent seeking, and embezzlement (Picard 2006).

In theory, the civil service is non-partisan and selected by merit, but in practice, the senior administrators have been loyal to the governing political party, the ANC, since 1994. Provincial administrators fall under the control of the Ministry of Public Service and Administration (MPSA) while local government administrators formally fall outside of the civil service and are supervised through the Integrated Provincial Support Program, as are national and provincial delegated entities.

**Challenges and Successes**

**Remaining Socio-economic Challenges: Beyond the Transition**

Despite the 1994 historic transition that instituted non-racial majority rule government in South Africa, much remained to be done to consolidate the South African democratic transition in terms of economic and social development. According to Nelson Mandela, the world saw the new government "as the end of the fairytale. In reality, it was the beginning of 'a quite different story, with bureaucrats and exchange rates instead of heroes and villains'" (as quoted in Sampson 1999, p. 495).

Socio-economic challenges were particularly acute in the rural areas where the bulk of South Africa's poor resided and where the legacy of apartheid resulted in inherited patterns of poor quality education which lacked relevance and threatened the collapse of the youth labor market. These social and economic challenges were of particular importance to the historically disadvantaged people of South Africa. Sparks is correct to warn that the ANC in 1994 inherited an economic and a fiscal mess. At the same time, the ANC “imagined South Africa to be an economic cornucopia that would provide them with ample resources to do their socio-economic restructuring” (Sparks 2003, p. 16). In the first decade in power, the ANC saw the loss of at least a half a million jobs.

South Africa, in 1994, was a Newly Industrialized Country - a middle income country, ranking in the middle of other middle-income countries, with a gross national product of US$92 million. Mining, agricultural production, and manufacturing were leading sectors of the economy. South Africa had an open economy dominated by international trade. Yet, overwhelming problems remained in South Africa. Unemployment was at 40 percent and the country had one of the highest crime rates in the world. Three million people were still on the waiting list for housing. Many others still lacked water, health facilities, and access to education (Moll 1990). South Africa continued to be plagued with severe levels of economic inequity. The debt burden and the one third of the budget that went for civil service salaries made economic and social development difficult in South Africa (Van zyl Slabbert 2000).

South Africa, at the beginning of the GNU, had a highly regulated economy. Public corporations functioned in areas normally left to the private sector in other countries. The country had a bureaucracy that was large by international standards and likely to continue to grow (Maasdorp 1990).The rising government employment was criticized for creating "entirely unproductive bureaucrats... constrained by a weak state fiscal position" (Moll 1989, p. 149).During the GNU, the country had set development goals that would “tax the wealthiest of countries” (Woods 2000, p. 192).

The expansion of the bureaucracy was in part related to security management and little of the expansion was targeted at the productive sector or for socio-economic development. The new GNU inherited a developed market economy, together with a civil society of state-dependent institutions (trade unions, media, communication structures, and business associations) in black and white segments (Adam & Moodley 1986).

Overall, South Africa remained stable politically (Van zyl Slabbert 1994). Direct apartheid bureaucratic spending had accounted for up to fourteen percent of the country's budget. It was hoped that some of this could be redirected to social services. Some even talked of a post-apartheid dividend if the country could reduce the size of its civil service significantly (Coker 1989). The assumption was that when duplicate structures were eliminated, the government would save money that could be used for development activities.

There were differences between the different population groups in terms of their patterns of living and economic resources. More than 90 percent of the white population lived in the urban areas. The majority of the Africans still lived in the rural areas (Guelke 1999). Absolute poverty was high, at 18 million people below the minimum subsistence level in 1994. There was severe poverty in the former homeland areas and in most peri-urban areas. Poverty in the homelands was structural. Over 80 percent of the African population lived below the poverty line and most lived in the country's ten former homelands. Though they consisted of only 14 percent of the land area, 44 percent of the people of South Africa live in homeland areas (Munslow & FitzGerald 1994).

By 1994, the 76 percent of the population defined as African controlled only 33 percent of personal income (Lester 1998). Statistically, 61 percent of the African population and 38 percent the Coloured population was poor in 1999. This is contrasted with 1 percent of whites and 5 percent of Indians. Only 21 percent of South Africans had piped water, 28 percent had sanitation facilities and less than half had electricity (Goodman 1999).

The developmental goal for South Africa had to be based on some form of sustainable economic growth and human resource development for the rural as well as the urban areas. Public sector capacity, and specifically human resource skills, was a pre-requisite to institutional capacity within civil society. Institutional development was what the development of management capacity was all about. In order to address capacity issues, it was essential to have a conception of the role and functions of the state.

Downsizing and privatization became a major area of debate within the ANC during the GNU. In the townships, there continued to be resistance to service payments for social services. Development was not possible unless a pattern of the non-payment of rent/mortgage bonds stopped (Adam et al. 1997). Therefore, a lingering issue in South Africa at transition continued to be "dramatically heightened expectations" (Johnson & Schlemmer 1996, p. 353).Coming out of the election, a social contract had been made with the majority of black South Africans. The ANC was to deliver economic opportunities that were not available under apartheid, but they could not meet these goals in the short run (Venter 1997). There was, after 1994, a South African version of a Hobbesian Leviathan,[[7]](#footnote-7) developed out of a consciousness of people of their helplessness and the power of government above them. To critics, an entitlement culture and a demand-oriented view of the economy had developed within the ANC and within South Africa more generally. By early 1995, more than a third of urban Africans and more than half of rural Africans felt that the new government had disappointed them. Surveys showed that a majority of black South Africans felt that the GNU had not delivered on their socio-economic promises (Johnson & Schlemmer 1996).

Many black South Africans, as part of the heritage of apartheid, had developed a statist approach where people in South Africa perceived themselves as subjects not citizens (Mamdani, 1996). As such, some expected government to provide a variety of goods and services (jobs, housing, water and education) without accepting the need for payment of taxes or for service charges. When asked who was responsible for achieving these socio-economic objectives, Over 73 percent of South Africans saw government as responsible to provide social services free of taxes This was a point in 1995 when government expenditures already consumed 21 percent of the national income (Munslow & FitzGerald 1995). At the same time, many South Africans saw government as "virtually omnipotent” and there was very little sense of an empowered civil society (Johnson & Schlemmer 1996).

Financial management was also a significant problem faced by the GNU after 1994. Apartheid debt continued to be the major hangover from the apartheid period. In 1989, the debt was R80 billion (US$31 billion). By 1999, however, the debt had risen to R311 billion (US$68 billion) with most significant increase occurring during the De Klerk regime. Dealing with apartheid’s financial burden was a major source of concern for the post-apartheid government, one which was never entirely resolved.

**Development (or lack thereof) Under Mandela**

Despite international admiration of the country's electoral transition, and particularly the role that President Nelson Mandela played in that process, there was little international capital investment drawn into the country after May of 1994. Foreign investment in South Africa remained slow because of fears of corruption and ethnic conflict (Sparks 1995a). The question of meeting the expectations in terms of the role of the state also continued to be debated as well. During the GNU, trade unionists continued to argue that the “centerpiece of the post-apartheid economics must include redistributing the wealth” (Goodman 1999, p. 354). Trade unions argued that the GNU was not doing enough for the poor and working class. A sense of alienation set in among the left. As Goodman (1999, p. 226) points out, “When restive members of SANCO [South African National Civics Organization] and COSATU complain about government inaction or object to government policy, they suddenly find themselves *persona non grata* in official circles.”

After the 1994 transition, "[t]he ANC in government include[d] members of the COSATU, the main trade-union federation, and the SACP. Neither [had] given up faith in interventional economics" (“The End” 1997, p. 18). The ANC in government was always careful to deny that there were any rifts between the ANC and its alliance partners over ideology. Despite this, during the GNU, there was tension in South Africa between the labor unions, which used socialism as their basic point of departure, and the national political elite, which increasingly took as its point of departure the need for a strong, competitive market economy (Van zyl Slabbert 2000).

To many in the ANC, the unequal distribution of wealth and the struggle against poverty also represented a barrier to democracy. The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), introduced in September of 1994, was designed to address this problem. The RDP program designed by the Mandela government was a “mild form of market-driven social democracy which [focused] on bringing education, housing, and health services within the reach of the majority of South Africans” (O’Meara 1996, p. 415). From the perspective of the ANC, "Any public sector reform programme should enhance the quality of life of the general public and build the kind of public service that can meet the challenges of the years ahead" (Kroukamp 1998, p. 2).

A goal of the GNU, through its RDP, was to restructure the bureaucracy (with its attendant legislative, institutional, and administrative components) and move the state into a developmental mode. After it came into power in 1994, the ANC introduced a number of what its critics called “half-baked” policies (Parsons 1999, p. 88). The RDP came to be known, according to its critics, as “Rumours, Dreams and Promises” (Johnson 2004, p. 213). Early versions of the RDP were characterized by "an omnipresence of the state in every area of society" (Rantete 1998, pp. 90-91). However, there was a lack of funds, a lack of capacity, resistance from the old bureaucracy, and political inexperience which all caused problems of delivery of the programs under the RDP (Matisson 1998).This in turn was linked to the lack of social institutions in black areas and the inability of many of the poorest of the poor to become involved in civil society organizations. Development activities during the RDP period were top down (Van der Waal 1998).

The GNU was not able to transform conditions of economic under-development within South Africa's black community. In part, this was because during the GNU there was an "absence of policy" (Venter 1997, p. 16).A scant two years later, the ANC had to abandon their dream of increased service delivery under the RDP due to administrative incapacity at provincial and local levels (Davenport 1998b). This was exacerbated by patterns of neglect and damage of facilities and “haste [and] authoritarian inclinations among officials in the field… The absence of responsive and legitimate local government until its election in 1995 and 1996 also posed an obstacle for the ‘people-driven’ progress of the RDP,” according to Tom Lodge (2003, p. 28 and 35). By 1996, the GNU had abandoned the RDP for a more conservative economic strategy.

Moreover, in post-apartheid South Africa, it was established urban interests that were successful in the competition for resources. Thus, traditional rural societies in the impoverished former homelands would be further neglected in the “implementation of the ANC’s economic reconstruction plan” (Lester 1998, p. 243). South Africa in 1994 had a high level of inequity though not out of line with world trends. The GINI co-efficient in South Africa was 0.65 in 1993. About the same time, the U.K. index was 7.8. (South Africa Yearbook 1995).

By 1995, the GINI co-efficient in South Africa had decreased to .55, where it remained throughout the GNU. The United Nations Human Development Report for 1998 ranked South Africa 89 out of the 174 countries surveyed for inequality of income. The country had been ranked 90th in 1997. South Africa was one of 74 countries with a lower human development index than its GDP ranking would suggest (Eveleth 1998).South Africa was ranked third in Africa but the data on the white population distorted the statistics transitioned out of the GNU.

The primary problem in post-apartheid South Africa is that of social services, particularly for the poor. The schools and hospitals remained severely understaffed 22 years after the transition and its hospitals and clinics were overwhelmed by the needs of South Africa’s poor and working classes (Timberg 2007b). The goal of the educational and public sectors has been transformative in terms of South Africa’s class system, focusing on the creation of a black elite group and a middle class. There was a change in the composition of the middle class. While, less than 10 percent of Africans were effectively members of the middle class in 1996, the number of African professionals exceeded whites (Lodge 1999a; Southall & Cobbing 1995). The reality is sobering, however. For most South Africans, there is very little evidence of material betterment after twelve years of non-racial government (Gordon 2006). This is evident in the unequal levels of wealth distribution between rural and urban as well, with over 63 percent of those living in homelands earned less than R900 ($128) per month, while the urban rate was R1500 ($214) in 1999 (Liebenberg 1999).

In terms of income, less than 10 percent of the African wage earners, about 600,000 people, earned a monthly salary of more than R2,500 and could be considered a part of the middle class. However, in total numbers, by 1997, the black professional class was greater in size than those of whites in most professional categories and, overall, the number of blacks in the middle class had doubled by that year from what it had been in 1994.

The tension between economic performance and social development was made more intense with low levels of public sector performance (Burger 1999). Above all, corruption hindered performance leaving a "soft state"[[8]](#footnote-8) which, too often, could not deliver (Burger 1999; Kotze & Kotze 1997).During the GNU, "most of the old problems- crime, poverty, inadequate services, education and unemployment remain[ed]" (Sampson 1999, p. 394).A survey in July of 2005 suggested that 86 percent of South Africans of all races and ethnic groups believed that corruption had become a way of life in South Africa since the end of apartheid (Van zyl Slabbert 2006a).

International investors at the end of the GNU waited for a clear statement of economic policy on the part of the government and evidence that administrative capacity in the institutional state would not significantly decline into drift and incompetence. Rightly or wrongly, the international community saw public sector capacity along with political devolution, privatization, and private sector management capacity as key indicators of the long-term viability of the country (Jenkings 1996).An economic decline in 1998-1999, linked to the Asia crisis, had a negative impact upon the South African middle class. Growth for 1998 declined to less than 1 percent (Haffajee 1998a).This economic decline continued through the 1999 election.

**Development Successes of the GNU**

Between 1994 and 2006, successes included increased social service delivery (housing, electricity, water, infrastructure, and telecommunications). Compared to many LDCs, South Africa enjoyed fiscal and monetary discipline, low inflation, declining budget deficits, and a low foreign debt. Also upgraded was the extensive road network, three international airports and seven sea ports. Despite its weaknesses, according to Allister Sparks (2003, p. 38), the new ANC government after 1994 was “immeasurably more competent than the old.” Within two years of its coming to power, the new government began to sort out the country’s fiscal problems. South Africa’s “macro-economic policy has been acclaimed in all of the right circles, but it has not produced the growth rates needed” (Sparks 2003, pp. 331-332).

Despite not meeting its goal of one million new houses during the five years of the GNU, under the ANC, the government constructed 900,000 new or substantially upgraded houses. Government spent over thirty million Rand[[9]](#footnote-9) on housing, providing shelter (at least a room) to 3,000,000 people. Millions of people were supplied with running water, electricity, health care, and telephone service, particularly among rural, poor Africans (Lodge 1999a). Government provided basic water supply to 1.3 million people in the first three years of the GNU. By 1999, almost three million people had received drinkable water for the first time. The water pump in rural villages, a part of the national water supply scheme, became one of the “tangible” symbols of the new government (Goodman 1999, p. 234).

By the year 2000, 550 primary health clinics were built, while 250 were substantially upgraded. More than five million new people were given access to health services. The ANC built 100,000 new classrooms and brought 1.5 million pupils and 100,000 students into higher education (“The Issues that Few” 1999). The government spent close to R29 billion for basic services (Lunsche 1999). More than 1,500 schools were renovated or built. There were 12 million children in school, 90 percent of those of school age, while 860,000 attended institutes of higher education (Woods 2000). However, academic salaries in South African Universities have not kept up with those in the private and in the public sector (Southall & Cobbing 1995).

During the GNU, 2.5 million houses were scheduled for electrification. By the end of 1999, 42.59 percent of rural homes were electrified as well as 76 percent of urban homes. A total of 63 percent of all homes in South Africa had electricity by mid-1999. Pensioners received a 4 percent increase in their grants in July of 1999. These were tangible symbols of the government to redressing inequities (Swarns 1999). Table 15.1 provides a summary of the delivery of social services between 1994 and 1998.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 15.1**  Delivery of Social Services, 1994-1998 (Lunsche 1999) | | | |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Delivery | Capital Spending | Established Backlog in1998 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Low Cost Housing (Units Built or Under Construction) | 700,000 | R10 billion | 2.6-3 million |
| Water Supply (People with Access to Clean Water) | 3 million | R2.6 billion | 8.5 million |
| Telephones (Lines Installed) | 1.3 million | R10 billion | N/A |
| Primary Health Care Clinics Built and Upgraded) | 744 | R800 million | N/A |
| Municipal Infra-structure (Water Supply, Refuse Removal, Roads, Sanitation, etc) | N/A | R1 billion | N/A |

A lucky minority benefited from access to civil service jobs. After 1994, the new black middle-class began to be visible. Three years after the elections in South Africa there were “significant signs of growing affluence among non-whites" (Daley 1997a, p. A7).By 1996, 6 percent of black South Africans were classified as “‘rich,’ that is the top fifth of earners, compared with only 2 percent in 1990" (“The End” 1997, p. 18). Life for many in South Africa was moderately better. For many middle and upper middle-class blacks life was very good indeed after 1994. Moreover, in 1975, only 2 percent of all black households (including Indians and Coloureds) were among the 10 percent of the richest South Africans, by 1996, blacks were 22 percent of the wealthiest, and by 2000 they were about 25 percent. Despite very low levels of productivity, statistics suggested that there were areas of improvement in terms of the country’s competitiveness internationally as well (Woods 2000).

**Conclusion**

The debate over the political culture of the ANC can be divided into several parts. First, the organization had significant administrative shortcomings that it brought to government after 1994, some of which were caused by the long period in exile. Second, the ANC had a tendency towards a collective and, to its critics, an authoritarian organizational culture that clashed with the democratic values that it articulated publicly.

In 2004, former President F.W. de Klerk claimed that there was a “deeply embedded psychological empathy among South Africans of all races that allowed black and white South Africans to move towards a non-racial society (Bucher 2004). Divisions developed within the ANC and between the ANC and liberals over the nature of civil society in post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, third, the organization as a mass movement faced ideological contradictions in terms of economic policy that in the long run threatened to split it apart.

As a result of Affirmative Action an unknown number of highly skilled civil servants departed the service during the GNU, including many serving at the provincial level. There were no replacements waiting in the wings with managerial skills and professional qualifications, and the training effort for the future civil service remained limited. Public service reform at the provincial level was slow to implement and, as a result, many young, inexperienced new appointments replaced experienced managers who took the golden handshake and retired. What remaining leftover skills within the civil service were likely to cluster at the national government level. Vertical, as well as horizontal, capacity building was needed to ensure institutional transformation, deal with the threat of corruption, and apply an affirmative action policy that did not lead to decreased levels of capacity within the state system.

Over the next several years, the public service at the national and provincial levels faced a difficult transition that was defined by, and linked to, their capacity to deliver on the promises made by the ANC-led government. The government's economic and social development goals required an effective and efficient public service that was equipped to address the tasks that even a professional, well-trained bureaucracy would find difficult. This civil service did not exist and there was a concern that even basic functions of government might decline further if there was a significant loss of capacity within the public sector.

It was the provinces that inherited the bulk of the next generation of inexperienced South African administrators and provided them with the years of experience that almost all observers agree they needed. For many, those years of apprenticeship were painful, indeed. Those who suffered most were the rural dwellers who had the most to gain from a strong provincial administration. At the provincial level, a greater degree of autonomy could have developed out of an over-centralization process (Venter 1997). In the next chapters, we examine the organizational characteristics of the ANC under Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, the evolving political culture in South Africa, and the ideological debates within the organization as it played itself out in attempts to restructure the public sector.

1. Literally brother killing brother or in this case comrade fighting with comrade within the ANC. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The newspaper report noted, “no more the blatant autocrat of the past, Moi has learned the refined skill of ruling ostrich-style: ignore a problem and it can do you no harm" (Brummer 1997, p. 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Simon Brand was economic advisor to the Prime Minister then President P.W. Botha. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Buthelezi stressed that his only goal was a strong, federally based system in South Africa. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Articles 41(1), 86 (1); RSA, Article 190 (1). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This was a Speech by Dr. Zola Skweyiya, then Minister for the Public Service and Administration at Parliament Media Briefing Week. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hobbes advocated strong, authoritarian leadership. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The term was coined originally by Gunnar Myrdal 1968. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Approximately US$5 million using 1999 exchange rates of 6:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)