

The Provincialisation of Power in South Africa

State, Elites, Power

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Introduction

One of the paradoxes of contemporary South Africa is this: The majority of political parties insist on the preeminent role of the State in driving development, in transforming the economy, dealing with unemployment and providing basic services. Yet for all that there are few political parties committed to building public institutions.

The ruling party has, especially over the last ten years, actively corrupted government administrations at all levels of government and State-Owned Enterprises. Today, the leadership of the ANC and especially the President is more inclined to look to corporate leaders as agents of growth and development than to government and the public service. What is more, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), whose intellectual and political influence vastly exceeds its physical size, either in absolute terms or in parliament, is beholden to a politics that is, frankly, hostile to institutions and to institution-building – despite that its manifesto positions the state at the centre of its flagship policies (nationalising the mines and land reform). Only the Democratic Alliance has made a virtue of public administration and of institution-building.

Yet there is consensus amongst development scholars from around the world that one of the basic conditions of growth and development is what in South Africa we have to come to call a ‘capable state’. In other words, the ability of the State to raise taxes, to administer social grants, to do economic and industrial planning, to generate and distribute electricity, to build classrooms and to educate children, to treat the sick, to recruit, train and deploy effective policemen requires autonomous, stable and professional administrations. From such a perspective, the dominant political culture in South Africa makes it very difficult to put in place in the necessary conditions of social and economic transformation.

In this paper I will argue that the failure of state-building in South Africa arises from two factors. In the first places, growing elite competition in South Africa, fuelled by the assertion of local and provincial forces, is responsible for the fragmentation of the state. It has also prevented a *governing bloc* from emerging in South Africa, especially one that is national and developmental. Secondly, a virulent form of nationalism has been ascendant over the last decade that is more interested in a politics of disruption than in building institutions. Although nationalist politicians are not necessarily local and regional elites, their actions, nonetheless, serve the latter's interests by weakening the influence and the hold of national politicians and institutions.

Development and Bureaucracy

In reviewing contemporary economic and development theory, Peter Evans, one of the foremost scholars in this field himself, writes: Though not a sufficient condition of development, "capable and coherent twentieth-century public bureaucratic apparatuses are an invaluable foundation for the additional capacities that need to be constructed to meet twenty-first-century challenges" (Evans, p. 378). Here the experience of the East Asian 'tigers' is illustrative. The ability of countries like Malaysia, for example, or more recently Indonesia to break from their peripheral location in the world economy and to achieve rapid economic growth and industrialisation is a function of the specific relationships that emerged between state officials and industrial elites. Such an economic transformation was undergirded by reforms that brought government administrations close to the Weberian ideal-type of bureaucracy: meritocratic recruitment to public office and public service careers offering long-term rewards were institutional cornerstones of the East Asian economic miracle (Evans, Op Cit., p.365).

In their earlier cross-national study of 35 countries, Evans and Rauch had found that the degree to which government administrations were organised as bureaucracies – a measure of what they called 'Weberianess' - correlated very highly with economic growth. The sample of African countries scored low on the Weberianess scale as they did with economic growth. Latin America countries registered economic growth inferior to all other regions in their study except Africa, and this correlated with differences in their bureaucratic structure. East Asia as a region scored high marks in the bureaucratic stakes as they did in economic growth (Evan and Rauch, p. 757).

In the 2000s this equation that had long been predicted by Weber (and by Polanyi) provided a necessary rebuff to ascendant neoliberal discourses that stressed the role of 'free markets' in development and that scorned the role of (failed or captured) states. What Evans and Rauch insisted was that development did not require a choice between markets and states.

South Africa has a long and uneven history of state-building. At Union in 1910, the territory of South Africa was marked by very different experiences of government, administration and of

development. By the 1890s Natal and the Cape Colony had relatively developed institutions as measured by their Treasuries and the capacity to raise taxation. The British invasion of the Transvaal in the 1890s was driven as much by the desire to bring the newly-discovered Gold Reef under imperial control as it was to build and modernise state administrations. Indeed, this was the task that fell to Lord Milner as the Governor of the Transvaal colony.

The history of government in the period after Union is characterised by a double movement. On the one hand Union governments sought to build national institutions, sometimes successfully and at other times not. Eskom, for example was established in 1923 to generate and supply electricity across the territory. The establishment of a national railway network and company was a far more difficult proposition. On the other hand, under the auspices of policies of 'segregation', various Union governments reproduced and intensified the system of indirect rule first developed by Theophilus Sheptone in Natal. This saw Africans allocated to locations under the control of a Chief and subject to customary law (Guy, p. 86). The Apartheid government intensified and transformed this model of colonial government through the Bantustan policies, culminating in the creation of 5 nominally independent states (Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda and Ciskei) and 5 self-governing regions. By the end of the Apartheid period, that is, there were no properly-speaking national administrations with a presence and a capacity across the whole territory of the State. From this perspective, the achievements of the ANC government in the first decade of democracy are considerable. Consider briefly the history of the National Treasury.

When the African National Congress came to power in 1994 it was alarmed to find that the country's finances in a parlous condition. In the 1994/95 fiscal year public debt had risen to 47% of GDP, up from 30% ten years before. The global economic recession had taken its toll as had international sanctions. In the main, however, it reflected the crippling costs of the war in Angola and Namibia as well as the price of internal repression. In this context, the deficit was massive, inflation was spiralling (it was more than 20% in 1985 and above 15% in the early 1990s) and there was capital flight. What is more, financial management systems had broken down, especially in the former Homelands. These were not circumstances propitious to the financing of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) – an ambitious project of state-funded investment in infrastructure and in basic service delivery. Firstly, the ANC-government inherited a nearly bankrupt fiscus and secondly, the money that was available for development was spread across numerous accounts in multiple governments and administrations – some of which were secret and illicit. There was no national institution to which they were accountable or that oversaw them. Development in South Africa was thus constrained by the shortage of money and by the highly fragmented nature of the South African state. The establishment of the National Treasury was a response to this dire financial situation but also to the colonial legacy of Apartheid.

The 1993 Interim Constitution made fiscal consolidation a priority, especially in Chapter 12. Department of Finance officials were given the work of producing a single revenue and expenditure framework by combining the budgets of all of South Africa's various administrations. This was no simple accounting task. It required nothing less than stitching homeland administrations back into the fabric of a united South Africa and bringing them under the sovereignty of a democratic, national government. The right to raise taxes was withdrawn from homelands and former provincial administrations as they were slowly phased out. New provincial governments were established with limited financial and fiscal powers.

By the time of the Final Constitution in 1996 the importance of financial and fiscal matters to South Africa's future was recognised in Section 216, which provided for establishment of a National Treasury. It is the only government department specifically provided for by Constitution. The Constitution placed the National Treasury at the centre of a new, inter-governmental system, responsible for coordinating and developing financial management and budgeting processes. The difficulty with the Treasury's mandate, however, is that it could not be realised through legislative or regulatory fiat. Provinces and local governments are protected in the Constitution as autonomous spheres of government. In this context, fiscal consolidation had to take place in a context of widespread institutional decentralisation or what came to be known in South Africa as a framework of 'cooperative governance'.

Failure adequately to adapt to this institutional environment had severely undermined the RDP Office. Officials from other departments and spheres of government frequently failed or refused to submit their expenditure plans, undermining the Office's role as some kind of 'super Ministry'. The events of 1997 and 1998 helped expedite moves to formally establish the National Treasury. In those years many provinces proved unable to prepare properly financial budgets and over-spent by between R6 and R7 billion. The Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu-Natal were placed under administration.

The new Treasury was formally established in 2000 after the passage of the Public Finance Management Act, which merged the departments of finance and state expenditure. It had core responsibility for budget management, intergovernmental relations, macroeconomic policy and asset and liability management. The constitutional constraints on the National Treasury's powers were largely overcome through institutional and political arrangements.

In the first place, the National Treasury quickly developed a reputation for technical competence in its field, employing and retaining highly qualified staff that were usually able to persuade politicians and other officials by the force of their arguments and/or the sophistication of their tools. Whereas other departments in government experienced very high staff turn-over rates, especially at senior levels, the National Treasury was remarkably stable during this period. This

helped create a robust intellectual culture within a collegial environment – creating the conditions for what became known as “Team Finance”.

Secondly, the close relationship between the Finance Minister, Trevor Manuel and President Thabo Mbeki complemented the department’s status. This was further supported by the fact that Mbeki saw the NT as a key driver of state-building in South Africa and in a privileged position to drive through the implementation of the controversial Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR).

Thirdly, without the legal authority simply to give binding instructions to provincial officials, the National Treasury developed a complex inter-government system that relied as much on formal power as on social capital to achieve its aims. The flagship process in this regard was the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), which devolved management authority to state institutions subject to the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA).

The MTEF sought to create a collaborative system of decision-making by bringing officials from the National Treasury together with their counterparts from provincial departments. Min-MEC meetings and the Budget Forum, comprising the Minister and Deputy Minister of Finance, MECs of Finance and senior officials, aimed to coordinate the plans across the various spheres of government. The principle that informed the model was that departments had discretion to determine their own spending priorities, though within a framework of spending limits determined by the National Treasury.

This model of financial and fiscal governance was successful in bringing coordination and discipline in public accounts across the State (with the exception, perhaps, of local government) – earning the department high plaudits internationally. From 2000 government spending rose dramatically, sustained by impressive growth in government revenue (especially from 2003).

The attack on the National Treasury that started in 2012 and that represented the vanguard action of State Capture was an attempt to stall the state-building process. This has largely been attributed to the work of corrupt politicians, people in business and government officials acting out of self-interest or in the interest of a faction of the ruling party. Yet, state capture also represented the assertion of regional and provincial elites against the national centre.

Elite Competition

It is useful to distinguish between three concepts: *elites*, *power elite* or governing elite and *ruling class*.

An **elite** refers to an *occupational group of high status*. Depending on the level of social and economic differentiation the number and size of elites will differ from one society to another.

The **power elite** (or governing elite) is defined in terms of the “means of power”, that is, it refers to those who “occupy command posts” (Mills, p.23) or those “who actually exercise political power in a society at any given time” (Bottomore, p.7). It includes members of government and the senior levels of the civil service, military leaders and the police and intelligence high commands, politically influential families or aristocracies or royal families and the leaders of major economic enterprises (Bottomore, Op Cit., p.7).

A class is a social group that is defined in terms of its ownership and control of economic property. When such a class comes to dominate the exercise of political power in a society it constitutes a **ruling class**. As Dahrendorf has noted, however, it is not enough for the power elite to share a common social origin for it to constitute a ruling class. It must have developed self-consciousness as a class so that it functions as an “interest grouping” (Dahrendorf, p. ix).

The Union of South Africa, tethered together from territories and states with their own histories, peoples, languages and institutions was always faced with the challenge of reconciling different and competing elites. Indeed, in the early twentieth century when politicians recalled the ‘race’ problem they referred to the relationship between English and Afrikaans-speakers. No less of a problem was the relationship between the political, bureaucratic and business elites of the former Republics and colonies.

The National Party (NP), complemented by the Dutch Reform Church, provided for the reconciliation of Afrikaans-speaking, regional and local elites to the new, national centre. In the period after the Second World War as various social struggles intensified (over land, over wages, in opposition to racist, political exclusion) they exposed, O’Meara argues, deep divisions and conflicts within the State and within the capitalist class itself. In this context the National Party was able to “organise a new Afrikaner nationalist alliance based on [...] specific categories of white labour, the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie and the emerging capitalists of the *reddingsdaad*₁ movement” (O’Meara, p.243). In other words, a new *ruling class* emerged in South Africa in the 1950s, whose unity and organisational strength came through the National Party and the movements of Afrikaner nationalism.

¹ A body of ‘Christian-national’ organized businesses attached to the ‘volks’ movement.

The radical scholarship of the 1970s and the 1980s tended to obscure elites that were not grounded in classes. O'Meara, for example, overlooks the struggles in the state over the composition of the South Africa civil service. At stake was nothing less than the displacement of an English-speaking bureaucratic elite in favour of one that spoke Afrikaans and that was attached to or at least sympathetic to the formal movements of Afrikaner nationalism. In the 1980s police and military generals came to play a leading role in the development of government policy.

Analytically, it might be more accurate to say that a new governing elite emerged through the National Party in the 1950s, one whose composition fluctuated according to topographical struggles within the party itself (between its Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape constituencies in particular, between different class factions, between elements of the bureaucracy and between leading families and individuals). By the 1980s the governing elite in South Africa included the leadership of the various homelands, tied together through various formal and informal 'inter-national' partnerships, agreements and exchanges.

The collapse of Apartheid in the face of massive internal resistance and international opposition saw this increasingly precarious and unstable governing elite come apart. Civil-war broke out in Kwa-Zulu as the Bantustan government under the Inkatha Freedom Party failed to contain a popular insurrection. It spread to Pretoria and the reef towns of the Witwatersrand (Katlehong, Tokoza, Vosloorus) and to the Vaal Triangle. In Bophutatswana a mass strike by public servants quickly morphed into a popular revolt. Senior elements of the Apartheid army and the police threatened to break with their political leaders seeking a negotiated end to Apartheid.

What made the political transition in South Africa ultimately possible is that the African National Congress under Nelson Mandela and the National Party under F.W de Klerk were able to hold enough of the country's different elites together in a process for long enough to formulate a binding agreement (the 1993 Constitution). This transitional arrangement barely survived the transition itself. In 1996 the New National Party resigned from the Government of National Unity.

Indeed, the challenge of contemporary South Africa is to constitute a stable governing elite. The constitution of 1996 as well as the institutional structure of the economy has made the task so much more difficult. In the first place, the 'federal' features of the Constitution, together with the highly decentralised structure of local government has consolidated the power of regional and local elites, be they political or bureaucratic. Sometimes these groups have a direct Homeland lineage. Decentralised public procurement and the outsourcing of government services has simultaneously multiplied the sites of local elite competition. State Owned Enterprises often control vast resources, making of their senior managers and officials elite groups with important economic power. The financialisation of the South African economy has seen the blurring of the

lines between distinct economic sectors, weakening the power of what has been called the Mineral-Energy Complex in South Africa. Two-hundred-and-thirty companies control 60% of the value of the South African economy, of which the largest of these are banks and financial services companies. Whereas mining capitalists and large-scale farmers once loomed large in the political landscape, this place is today occupied largely by bankers.

Since 1994 the African National Congress, like the National Party before it, has been the chief place where the struggle to constitute a governing elite has taken place. In other words, the party is the location where the fiercest elite competition takes place. The ANC has also had to contend with the power of bureaucratic and military/police elites drawn from the Apartheid period and initially hostile to ANC rule. The Arms Deal was an attempt to reconcile them to the new South Africa. Despite its costs, it looks to have been largely successful in this regard.

To the extent that a governing elite was beginning to emerge in South Africa through the Mandela and Mbeki years, the 52nd National Conference of the ANC in Polokwane in 2007 fundamentally disrupted this process. It interrupted, that is, the coalition that was emerging between senior members of government (President, Minister of Finance), the leaders of key national bureaucracies (Treasury officials, SARS officials, officials in the law and order sectors) and some corporate leaders. In its place emerged a loose and unstable coalition, including the President and his immediate family, provincial and regional politicians, officials in the State-Owned Enterprises, especially Eskom, Transnet and Denel and several wealthy families and individuals. The fact that these groupings were forced to rely on personal relations and extra-legal means to organise is surely testament to their failure to constitute a governing elite.

The Provincialisation of Government

It is possible to demonstrate the growing power of local and regional actors through a study of the composition of the South African cabinet since 1994. Here I have compiled basic biographies for ministers and deputy ministers since the dawn of democracy. Two processes are clearly at work. The first is what I will call **provincialisation**: more and more people with only local political careers are catapulted into cabinet after 2009. The second is a process of **juniorisation**: there is a noticeable decline in the qualifications, experience and worldliness of government ministers. We will see too that provincialisation is suggestive of ethnic considerations playing an important role in ministerial appointments.

Some important work has been done showing the turbulence that Jacob Zuma brought to the structure of government and its composition. Vinothan Naidoo, for example, has shown that after the relative stability of the Mbeki period, there was a sharp spike in the number of government entities. Cabinet saw 15 'big bang' organisational events, including the creation of new ministries,

the splitting of some and the repatriation of others. Gareth Van Onselen noted that between 2009 and the end of 2018, there were 164 changes to the cabinet. On the 25th of May 2014 alone 25 ministers and 22 deputy ministers were shuffled. This was not exceptional however. Twenty-six changes were made in 2010, 20 in March 2017 and 31 ministers were shuffled in February 2018. Sometimes a cabinet lasted only a few days. On average national executives lasted 35 weeks – not even three quarters of a year. In the political-administrative interface there was similar instability. 172 Director-Generals were appointed across 38 departments. On average they served less than 2 years. They seldom remained with the same minister for more than a year.

Van Onselen described this period as one of a “profound turmoil and dramatic and frequent change” (REF). With characteristic bluntness he writes, “this is not how you manage a national government, it is how to sew chaos, uncertainty and [disorder](#)”.

Yet it was not only chaos that these changes produced. Cabinet shuffles were the pretext for a very orderly transfer of power, from national figures to local and regional politicians.

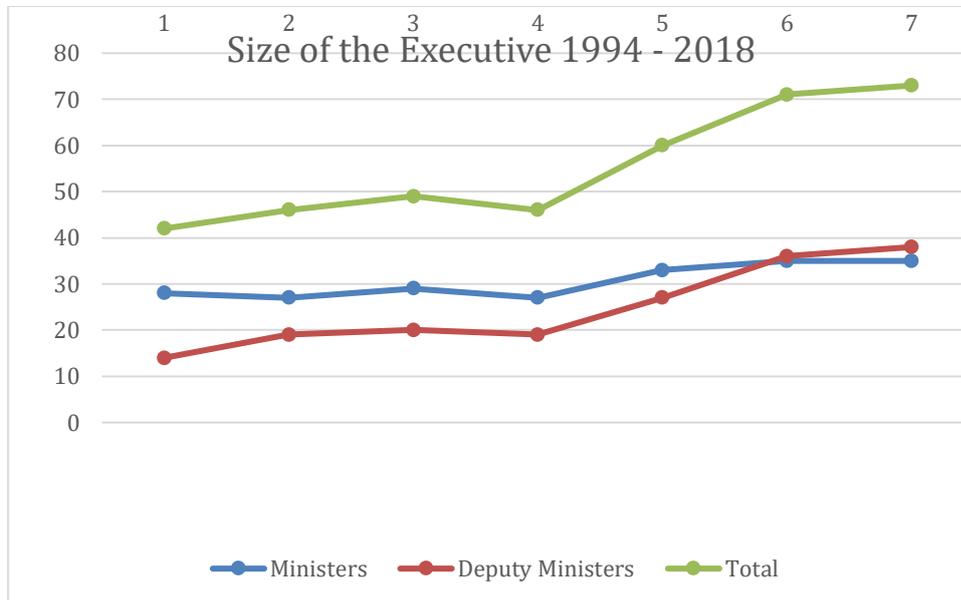
What is noticeable about the governments of Mandela and Mbeki is that they were overwhelmingly composed of national political figures. I mean by this last term, politicians whose experience has largely been in organisations whose presence and identity is not sub-national and territorial, that is, senior civil servants, senior figures or leaders trade-unions or social movements or political parties. In Mandela’s cabinet all ministers were such figures, with the exception of four former Bantustan politicians, Mangosuthu Buthelezi (KwaZulu), Ben Ngubane (KwaZulu), Stella Sigcau (Transkei), Bantu Holomisa (Transkei). In the first cabinet of Thabo Mbeki we first see the appearance of provincial politicians. Buthelezi and Sigcau are still there and they are now joined by the former Premiers of the Free State, Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri and Terror Lekota as well as Ben Ngubane, who, in between, has served a stint as the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal.

Matsepe-Casaburri was in exile for 25 years, returning to South Africa only in 1990. Terror Lekota was one of the founders and leaders of the United Democratic Front. Both, therefore, are national figures. Arguably, Mangosuthu Buthelezi too is such a figure. As the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party he, at one point, had national political ambitions.

In 2004, Marthinus Van Schalkwyk becomes the minister for Environment and Tourism. The former head of the (New) National Party has come to the national executive after first serving as the Premier of the Western Cape. Also, in 2004, Makhenkesi Stofile, the former Premier of the Eastern Cape joins cabinet. Musa Zondi from the IFP, formerly an official in the KwaZulu government, becomes Deputy Minister of Public Works. Public Works has become a homeland affair – Sigcau is Minister and Zondi is her deputy.

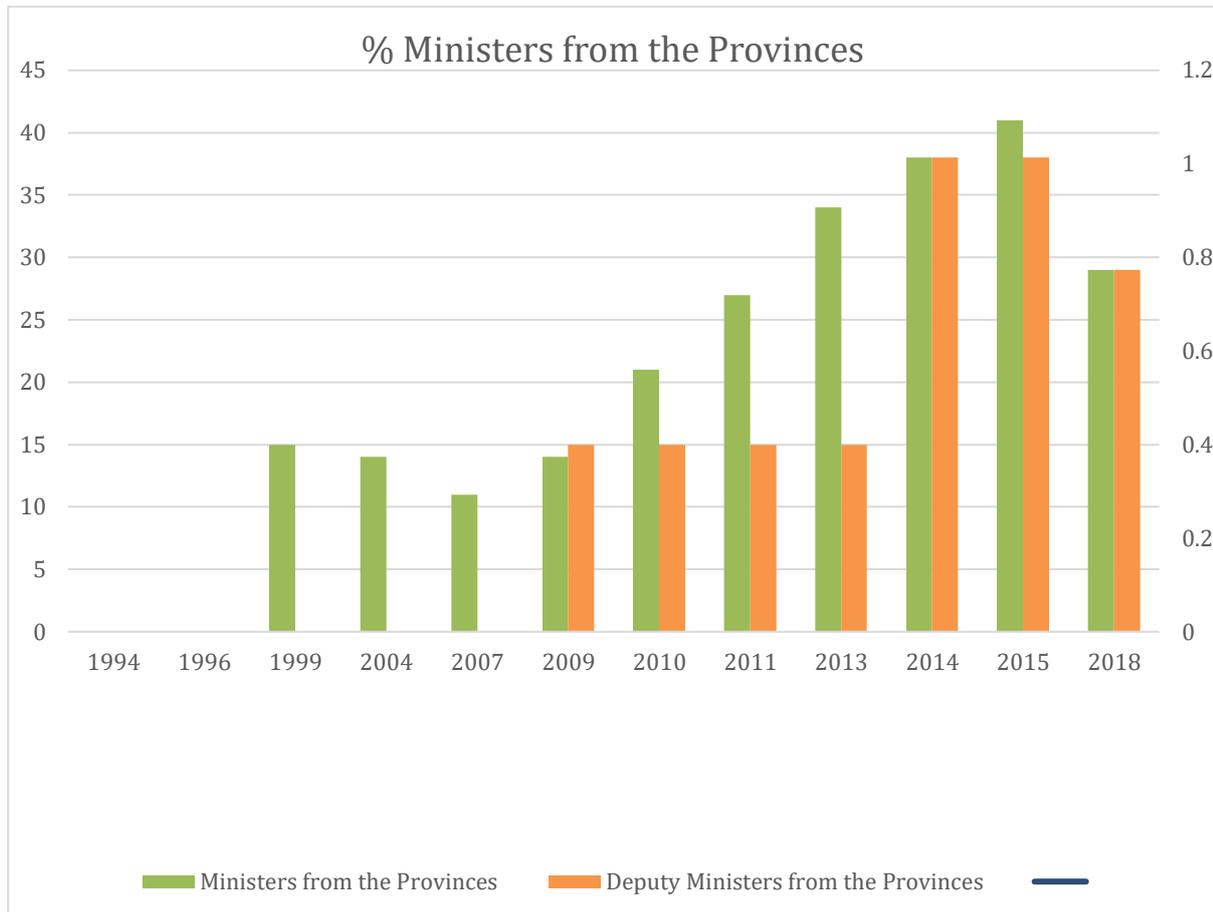
The provincial and regional presence in cabinet is still, nonetheless, small. Of the 49 ministers and deputy ministers only six had homeland and/or provincial government experience. This represented 12% of the cabinet. During the interim administration of Kgalema Motlanthe this percentage declined by half to just over 6%. Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri remained minister of Communications and Marthinus Van Schalkwyk stayed as Minister for Environment and Tourism. Stella Sigcau had since died of heart failure. Sicelo Shiceka became Minister of Provincial and Local Government. Before that he was MEC for Local Government in Gauteng. His is appointment will begin a new trend.

President Jacob Zuma’s first cabinet in 2009 marks a dramatic change. Firstly, the size of the executive jumps noticeably. He has 33 ministers and 27 deputy ministers (60 in total), compared with Motlanthe’s 27 ministers and 20 deputy ministers (47 in total). Between 1994 and 2007 the size of cabinet was actually relatively stable, remaining in a range of between 26 to 29 ministers and between 12 to 19 deputy ministers. By the end of his term Zuma’s executive had grown to 71, comprising 35 ministers and 36 deputy ministers. Compared to the 1994 cabinet, the number of deputy ministers had doubled and then some.



Apart from these numerical and organisational changes in the structure of government, there is an important change in the composition of the cabinet. Nine of the new cabinet ministers are former provincial politicians. Seven of the Deputy Ministers have a similar provenance. Moreover, the trend of appointing former provincial ministers and not only Premiers accelerates. For the first time, officials that served in local government positions are hoisted into the executive. In 2009, 16 members of the executive came from provincial or local government. This represented

a whopping 26%, or more than a quarter of the cabinet. By 2014 the number of provincial and local government figures had risen to 26, or 37% of the cabinet.

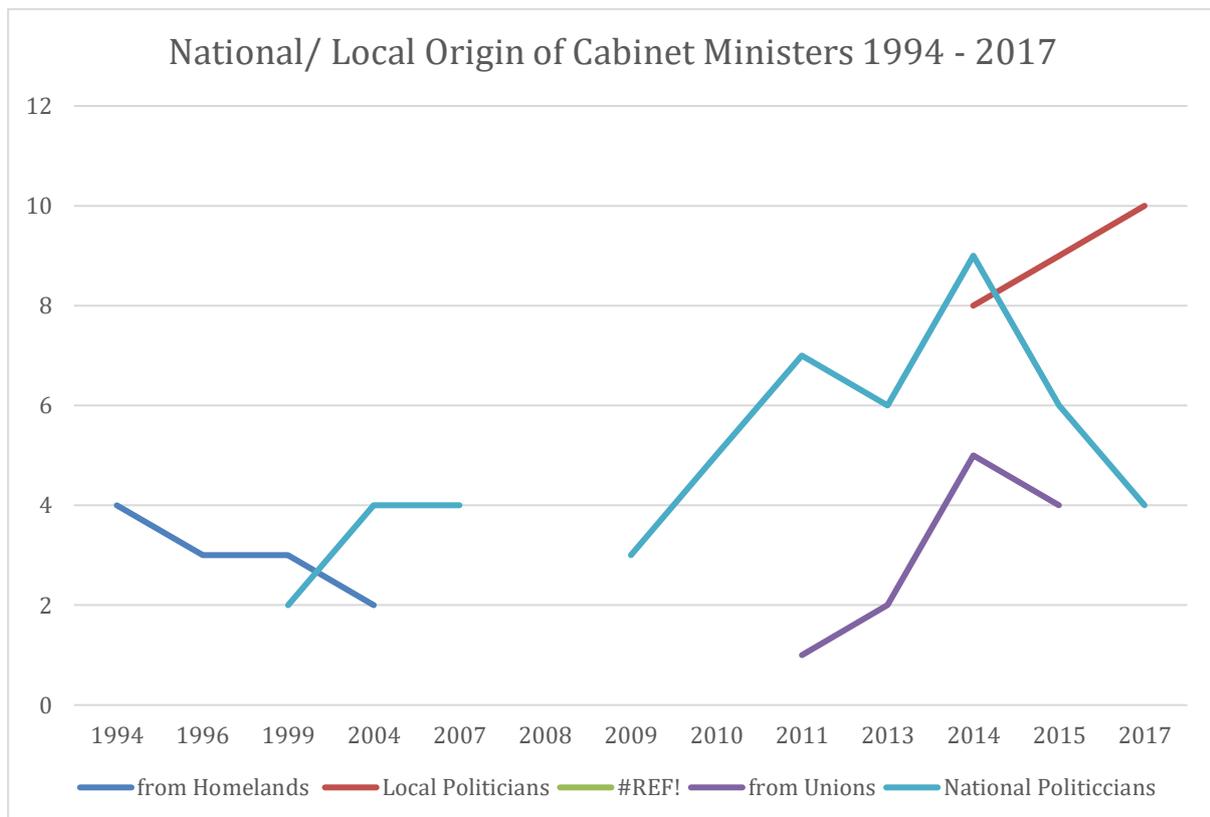


As dramatic as the figures above are, is this less surprising than it seems? Does it not show that some of the many national political figures who were deployed to provincial and local government over the last twenty years, are simply rising back into the national executive?

I distinguish *national political figures* from regional and *local politicians*. The latter are politicians who started either as municipal officials or as public servants in a provincial department and who, until they were catapulted into cabinet, never occupied a senior position in a national, political, civil or state body. There is also an interim category. These are political figures that occupied senior positions in national organisations but at a regional level. I will call them Regional Politicians.

If we apply this typology to the category of ministers and deputy ministers discussed above as provincial and local ones, a dramatic trend emerges.

In the table below, we see that there is a definite rise of national political figures back into national government from 2010. The pattern stabilises during cabinet reshuffles between 2011 and 2013 and then surges again in 2014. After that it falls sharply. At roughly this time there is a dramatic increase in the number of local politicians appointed to cabinet. It stabilises at a very high level between 2014 and 2017. This creates a near perfect 'V'-shaped dynamic in cabinet, as national figures drop almost in proportion to the rise of local politicians.



I will follow-up this demonstration by briefly considering appointment trends in the police. They show that deliberate efforts to bring the police under African leadership has gone hand in hand with the regionalisation of its leadership, in particular, of the rise of KwaZulu-Natal persona – often without any policing experience.

Some important work has been done showing the restructuring of ministries and departments under Jacob Zuma and the reshuffling of personnel – extraordinary compared with earlier periods and other Presidencies.

What has not been observed is that the changes in cabinet have brought to the fore a very particular trend: more and more cabinet ministers and deputy cabinet ministers are local politicians from the provinces or the regions. This becomes clear if we gather even basic biographic information on cabinet ministers and deputy cabinet ministers from 1994.

The Nelson Mandela cabinet of 1994 is exceptional in that it

Conclusion

One of the hallmarks of the Zuma period was the assertion of local, regional and provincial forces, supplemented by elements in the State-Owned Enterprises, against the national centre. In this regard, State Capture took the form of elites in decentralised locations in the state weaken the capacity and authority of national institutions, including parliament and the cabinet, and key state departments (National Treasury, SARS, the Police, the National Prosecuting Authority). The ANC itself is not in a position to resolve or at least institutionalise and stabilise elite competition within itself. In this sense South Africa has not been able to overcome its Apartheid and colonial legacy of bifurcation and state fragmentation. Indeed, the Zuma years may have entrenched these colonial tendencies. As discussed earlier, this also represents a major constraint on economic growth and development in South Africa.

What elites exist in South Africa today, what are their sizes, their social origins, their relations to each other. What arguments do they make and what are their ideologies? How do they organise and mobilise? Is there a governing elite in South Africa or even a ruling class?

Is there a developmental elite in South Africa today? That is, is there a political elite committed to state-building in South Africa today?

While the election of Cyril Ramaphosa as President of the ANC and of the country has been celebrated as a 'new dawn', it is not obvious that his administration appreciates the reciprocal relationship between development and building public institutions. There is strong evidence that in key parts of the state the Ramaphosa government is acting firmly against corruption. Pravin Gordhan is overseeing the restructuring of the boards of State-Owned Enterprises and the Nugent Commission has already seen the removal of Tom Moyane as Commissioner of the South African Revenue Services. Yet it is not obvious that such a drive is being matched by efforts to professionalise government administrations more generally. Indeed, the Ramaphosa government may share with its Mbeki predecessor a profound scepticism of the state and of its ability to be an agent of growth and development. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that Ramaphosa will look to large corporates to play the leading developmental role. Yet without capable administrations there are likely not to be developmental consequences of economic growth.

In recent years the Democratic Alliance, especially when under the leadership of Helen Zille, made 'good governance' central to its political platform. In the City of Cape Town and in the Western Cape this took the form of building and strengthening the bureaucratic aspects of these administrations. Brian Levy's new, comparative study of the education systems of the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape suggest that bureaucratic rationalisation in the case of the former is well developed. Yet the party's own liberalism has mitigated against the DA becoming a major force for state-building in post-Apartheid context. Recent internal conflicts have also damaged its reputation and potentially forestalled its further electoral growth.

Compounding South Africa's current developmental paradox is that the Economic Freedom Fighter, for all its rhetoric of nationalisation and of land expropriation, has strong anti-state tendencies. It is not so much interested in building institutions and government administrations as in a politics of disruption. We get a sense of this anti-institutional instinct in the excellent thesis of Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, the EFF spokesperson. In a work that seeks to conceptualise 'black freedom' and to discuss the role of the black youth in particular of realising it, he rejects traditional nationalism as too backward looking. He also rejects institutions in favour of a politics of resistance and disruption.

"With Black youth politics we learn that politics in the colony is a war against time, and it is not possible to return to an African past [...]. Freedom rejects institutions: once black emancipation is relegated to institutions, being black as being nothing becomes trapped in them [...] To put time on the move, critique must also live on the critical picket lines of freedom fighters; it is here that we ought to assess creative modes of self-making and the social practices they inspire" (Ndlozi, p. 219).

It is far from obvious that President Ramaphosa will be able to build a stable governing coalition and ultimately a governing elite. As we have seen the task is an enormous one and the institutional resources for doing so are meagre. The danger is that South Africa will succumb to the endless circulation of elites, each seeking their advantage by capturing this or that part of the state. Moreover, even if it is possible it is not obvious that such a governing elite will be developmental in character, that is, in favour of building autonomous, professional and meritocratic administrations. The political discourse in South Africa today does not favour it. This is why it is so important to study and analyse the formation, competition and circulation of elites in South Africa today. This is what we intend to do here.