

## THE DYNAMISM OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA - A GENERAL ASSESSMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Political transformation, to rectify the injustices of Apartheid, has been elevated to the only acceptable norm for change in South Africa and critique against transformation is seen as racism, disloyalty to the state, treason etc. Since 1994 political transformation became the official framework for political management and political change in South Africa. Despite many good things that happened in South Africa after 1994 (social upliftment, economic growth, relative political stability and international recognition), academics and politicians have voiced their concern about the "unexpected" dynamics related to the implementation of political transformation. The dynamism of political transformation as political phenomenon in South Africa can be distinguished from revolution, transition and development through criteria such as its nature, its rapidity, its direction and its extent. This article deals with the theoretical and empirical manifestation of transformation efforts to rid the South African society of its unacceptable political past. The dynamism of central planning (social and political engineering) to effect the desired transformation, the managing of the "national project" and the ensuing conflict, are assessed. This article shows the problems of political transformation, especially within the context of unsuccessful attempts in terms of the implementation of the national project.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the period from 1994 to date South Africa has experienced many positive developments such as the peaceful transfer of power, the new Constitution, economic stability, a sound fiscal policy, the limiting of inflation, the strong rand, low interest rates and many more. Against the background of these positive developments, it is necessary to look at the dynamism of political transformation in a political governance context in South Africa.

The post-apartheid era is characterised over the past decade by the legalisation and implementation of the “national project” of political transformation. The purpose is the facilitation of accelerated progress (in terms of planned development) with far-reaching implications on literally each and every sphere of the South African society (the state, church, school, university, civil society, corporative sector, etc.).

A number of factors (presented as societal tendencies) amongst others, the politicising of the South African society, the hegemonic character of the governing party, the disruption and restructuring of opposition politics and economic capacity problems, as well as escalating conflicts and violence creates serious doubts about the feasibility and realisation of the ideals related to the “national project” of political transformation.

Currently Free State politics has been disrupted by what may be referred to as “The September Revolution” – local government’s reaction against poor service delivery in parts of the Eastern and Northern Free State (cf. Duvenhage 2004: 10). Other patterns of political instability in other provinces, as well as the fact that 136 of the 284 municipalities are “chronically ill” contributed to critical questions about the “unexpected” and negative dynamism related to political transformation in South Africa.

In its academic context political transformation refers to a pattern of political change that must be handled in accordance with, but also distinguished from, other patterns of political change, viz. revolution, evolution, transition and political development. *The purpose of this article is to assess the dynamism of political transformation in South Africa. To do this, it is necessary to define the broad concept of political transformation in an academic context against the background of the characterisation of its related concepts.* The method used is a conceptual analysis with specific perspectives on the South African situation. The aim of the application on South Africa is only to determine the political-ideological content and not to submit it to a critical evaluation. (Aspects concerning the political dynamism of transformation may, however, be regarded as criticism). In order to ensure clarity, the following matters need attention:

- a general typification of political change
- political transformation as a pattern of political change
- a conceptual analysis of political transformation
- a South African application of relevant political dynamism.

## A TYPIIFICATION OF POLITICAL CHANGE

The concepts *change* and also *political change* often have broad and even complex meanings and this is not a definition, but an effort to explain change. Palmer (1989: 7) writes that "... any alteration of an existing state or condition. ... Change itself is neither good nor bad. It is merely an observed difference between a past and present condition." The same author describes political change as "... any alteration of existing political relationships, processes or institutions." The perspective then arises that political modernisation, institutionalisation, revolution and evolution all fit in under the term political change, although the terms may accommodate different, diverse and even opposing meanings.

It is, however, possible to classify the patterns of political change by concentrating on six variables, viz.:

- The nature of political change - accentuating the character of the change process, i.e. specific values and norms and even the presence of a specific political culture. The nature of change may differ from state to state.
- The tempo of political change – refers to the frequency of change within a specific time-frame. It is important when differentiating between revolutionary and evolutionary change.
- The manner of affecting political change – directly concerns the amount of conflict / violence that is manifested during the change process. The presence of political violence as a result of political change is only characteristic of certain patterns of political change such as a coup d'état and a revolution.
- The direction of the process of change – the direction may be progressive, i.e. the pursuit of a more favourable condition such as Huntington's (1991: xv) third wave of democratisation. It may also be retrogressive, i.e. the return to a previous historically confirmed condition.
- The extent of political change – it may take the form of decay or of development and may be limited to a specific part of the state, the political system or only the government, but in extreme cases may also imply the state as a whole. The extent of the process of political change may determine the pattern of political change. A coup d'état is much more limited than a revolution.
- The implications for the state – a revolution, a change of government due to an election or a *coup d'état*, or even the implementation of reforms have serious implications for the state. It has to be managed by providing proper policy guidelines and procedures to ensure stability, e.g. by ensuring a stable legal order and constant jurisprudence.

From the above it may be concluded that political change may be regarded as *political adjustment or alteration (structural or procedural) that influences the status quo in*

*which the change process brings its peculiarity to the fore in terms of its nature (character and quality), quick or incremental, progressive, regressive or retrogressive); the range which the change process embraces; and the political implications for the state.*

### **POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION AS A PATTERN OF POLITICAL CHANGE**

It is necessary to identify the specific meaning (terminological content) of political transformation as a pattern of political change and to differentiate it from other concepts with comparable but different meanings.

In its broadest sense political development is associated with progressive political change to the institutional framework of the state and the accompanying political value systems (cf. Palmer 1989: 6-19). Although the end result of political change may be derived from a specific, already established political practice (like the British democracy), it is more often normatively qualified and connected to specific political value systems that are related to political freedom (democratisation), effective political institutions (institutionalisation), political well-being (the welfare state) and political independence in several forms.

The extent of political development may be limited or very extensive due to, for example, a political revolution which according to Huntington (1968: 264) means "... *rapid, fundamental and violent domestic change ... in its political institutions, social structure, leadership and government activity and policies.*" Revolutionary and evolutionary political change may be related to political development with little or extreme implications for the state in which time-scales may be a determining factor. Political transformation is aimed at progressive change that implies extensive change to the existing political order.

Political revolution is associated with the violent overthrow of the existing political order and sometimes replacing it with a new order (Petee 1971: 3). Political transformation has the same aim, but the time-scale may be longer and conflict management and change management will replace violence. The tempo of change is fast and the implications for the state are extensive. Evolutionary political reform is, according to Huntington (1968: 344), "... *a change in the direction of greater social, economic or political equality, a broadening of participation in society and polity.*" The success depends on political leadership, strategic planning and timing of initiatives over the medium to long term. Political transformation will result in more drastic changes over a shorter period of time. Human (1998: 23) states that: "*Transformation requires extraordinary effort and insight ... it is unnatural; it goes against the grain of ... creatures of habit.*"

Transformation is often used to describe the transition of one political dispensation to another. It may refer to a change in leadership or in political, economic and social policy. There were many minor transformation efforts in the history of South Africa, but after 1994 transformation really accelerated, especially in the national political sphere.

## POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Political transformation may be defined as *rapid, progressive, comprehensive and fundamental political change of society (stemming from an unacceptable political past) in the form of central planning (social and political engineering) accentuating the managing of political change in general and of conflict management in particular.*

Political transformation, as mode for political change in South Africa, is a compromise (in other words a transient phase) of the revolutionary mode of the ANC during the liberation struggle and the evolutionary reform mode of the "political establishment" before 1994. The assessment of the application of the concept of the dynamism of political transformation will be done in terms of the conceptual analysis with specific reference to reactive, progressive, fundamental and planned change. It will also be focussed on the importance of strategic political planning as part of political transformation.

- *Reactive change:* The political transformation process is strongly motivated by reaction with regard to the country's political past. This runs like a golden thread through nearly all documents and legislation of government and the ruling party that address the transformation process (see RDP-White Paper 1994: 5-6; ANC 1996: 1-3; GEAR 1996: 1-10; ANC 1997: 2-3; ANC 2002: 1-4). The reaction is mainly against colonisation, apartheid and various types of discrimination. Apartheid is regarded as "*... a social mechanism for the promotion of the defence of a system of white minority domination, enrichment and super exploitation of the black majority*" (ANC 1996: 1).

In political transformation in South Africa the progressive ideal is "*...a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa*" (ANC 1997:3).

- *Progressive change:* The progressive nature of transformation lies in the projection of the future as the ideal condition to be achieved. The following terms describe this condition: 'National Democratic Revolution', 'the deracialisation of the South African society', 'black empowerment' and a 'people centred society'. The purpose is the creation of "*... a people centred society which measures progress by the extent to which it has succeeded in securing for each citizen liberty, prosperity and happiness*" (RDP-White Paper 1994: 5; ANC 1997: 5).

The following is also emphasised in the RDP-White Paper (1994: 5):

- institutionalised democratic institutions focusing on participation and representation
- a non-racial democratic dispensation
- a prosperous society taking cognisance of an environmental friendly approach, sustainability and a development orientation, and
- community development in terms of moral and ethical approaches.

This progressive vision for a future South Africa accentuates the importance of extensive fundamental change.

- *Fundamental and extensive change*: In order to obtain the above extensive ideals profound “surgery” will be required – surgery that will not only change the outward appearance, but also the whole society including the underlying value systems. The aims are comparable with that envisaged by Nyerere for Tanzania and by Nasser for Egypt. The challenge for South Africa in this regard is “... to meet the mass revolutionary challenge” (ANC 1996: 2). To achieve this “national project”, there is a number of closely related aspects, viz.:
  - the institutionalising of democratic values, a culture of human rights and the mobilisation of individuals with regard to political transformation
  - the ANC as the leading organisation to realise the above ideals
  - the strengthening of the democratic movement’s grip on the state machinery for the purposes of political transformation
  - political control as an instrument for transformation in all spheres of the community, and
  - the mobilisation of regional and international powers for achieving the above ideals, but also the ideals concerning the Africa Union and the African Renaissance (ANC 1997: 17).

On national level the envisaged changes may be presented as: “*Our programme for social transformation must therefore ensure ... a better life by providing land and houses, comprehensive health and social security, basic resources which include water and sanitation, human resource and capacity building, clean and safe environment, food security and an improvement in the health profile ...*” (ANC 2002: 1). To achieve it, implies strategic political planning.

- *Planned political change*. The present planned change in South Africa originates from documents such as *The Freedom Charter*, *The Harare Declaration*, *The RDP*, *The Constitution (1996)* and 871 other acts. These documents provided a strategic direction for many amendments to legislation in the sphere of matters such as education, labour, land redistribution, sport, taxation, empowerment and local government. Legislation is thoroughly planned in terms of documentation prepared in party context before it is promulgated. (cf. *The state and social transformation (1996)*; *GEAR (1996)*; *Draft strategy and tactics of the ANC (1997)*; *Transforming state and governance (2002)*; *Economic transformation (2002A)*; and *Social transformation (2002B)*).

Political leadership stands central in planned change and in South Africa ANC-affiliation and cadre policy provide the guiding light for the development of structures

on all levels of society; structures that may ensure the necessary service delivery; structures for capacity building where necessary (policy formulation, intervention, co-ordination, planning, etc.) and for establishing a culture in line with Batho Pele principles to ensure a basis for successful transformation (see ANC 2002: 2). (The Batho Pele framework for political management accentuates matters such as consultation, high levels of service, accessibility of services and information, transparency and service to communities and value for taxes paid (ANC 2002: 4)). A serious problem with political transformation is the high levels of administrative and bureaucratic 'inflation' as a result of the measure of social and political engineering within the South African post-apartheid society (This society includes civil society, institutional frameworks and the state that is subjected to administrative and bureaucratic inflation).

The above requires extensive strategic political planning to give expression to ideals of political transformation and the accompanying social and political engineering.

- *Strategic political planning.* In political transformation central strategic planning is essential (Human 1998: 111). It concerns the analysis of the environment, the developing of strategies and the implementation of those strategies (Human 1998: 116-117). The ANC is pivotal to the process of strategic planning in South Africa as " ... a broad multi-class, mass organisation, uniting the motive forces on the basis of a programme for transformation" and " ... the revolutionary movement needs to act with resolution in transforming the state machinery" (ANC 1997: 7,11). For the governing party to obtain the political power and to establish it to include civil society, the negotiations with the apartheid regime were only a platform for the ANC "... to find a resolution to the conflict as a terrain of struggle to shift the balance of forces ... and by assuming the leading position in government, the democratic movement took formal control of the state machinery, with the possibility of starting in earnest to transform the social order" (ANC 1997: 3, 4). This perspective, as well as its application strongly reminds us of Stalin's so-called "revolution from above", where the political party applies the revolutionary idea in terms of the transformation mode, as was the case with the former Eastern Block states. (According to Laqueur (1968: 506), the above implies "... the reshaping of society by a dictatorial regime controlling a centralised state apparatus and an all prevailing party organization".) Nasser was of the same opinion with regard to the execution of his national project, described by Migdal (1988: 188) as: "... substantive institutional change ... and the (provision of) loyal cadres within the organs of state who could guard against reaction and initiate such institutional change." [Within the South African context, multiparty elections were conducted and although an inclination towards one-party domination was obvious, no drastic change is expected. (cf. Welsch's (2003: 5-7) viewpoint in this regard: "South Africa is staring down a slippery slope to a Zimbabwe-style one-party dominant state")].

The implementation of political transformation must be properly controlled and that implies that opponents of transformation have to be identified and neutralised. In this connection it may be mentioned that "... *counter revolution can be defined as a combination of aims and forms of action that are mainly unconstitutional and illegal to subvert transformation*" (ANC 1997: 7). For that reason opponents of political transformation must be replaced by people of the cadres of the political party, i.e.: "... *a cadre policy ensuring that the ANC plays a leading role in all centres of power*" in the interest of the success of the "national project" of transformation (ANC 1997: 11).

Affirmative action also plays a role in giving expression to *representativeness* where the demographical profile of society, in terms of social, economical and political institutions, must be determined (ANC wy: 5-11). The aim is to 'South Africanise South Africa'.

Accordingly, all transformation legislation concerning matters such as employment equity, black economic empowerment, land restitution and even unwritten rules on sport quotas, is promulgated to give expression to a new society in terms of the vision of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

To recapitulate, the logic of the ideology of political transformation lies in a reaction against the apartheid past and the rapid and extensive readjustment of political forces in the society and may be judged in accordance with a blueprint as very progressive. Accordingly it is necessary to give expression to a united, non-racial and non-discriminatory society in which the political leaders take the lead to ensure political change on social and economic spheres of life. It means that control mechanisms for the application of the representativeness formula, as determinant, is in place. The implementation of political transformation has taken a dualistic form that fixes the attention on the dynamism of political transformation.

### **THE DYNAMISM OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION**

It may be concluded that South African politics is through the phenomenon of political transformation involved with an extremely dynamic process of changing society. The conceptualising of political transformation would be incomplete unless a few broad perspectives of the dynamism of the change mode are not elucidated further.

Up to the turn of the last century, the focus of the transformation process was on strategic analysis and the development of strategies. At first initiatives were limited to decision making inside the governing party and the state and non-government sectors were in the background. Consolidation of political power in government got preference with control of the state as the logical result from which other spheres of society were identified for political transformation (ANC 1997: 3-5). Political trends which were prominent in the original phase of political transformation are: establishing the political hegemony of the ANC; establishing of the ANC as vehicle for political transformation; provision and establishment of a new set of political and economical values and value systems as a basis for political transformation; formulating and providing a new set of



political rules; delegitimising of opposition politics; establishing a strong political orientation; the mobilisation of a political support base on strong political grounds and a relative strong and stable state (cf. Duvenhage 2002: 9). Recently (after 1999) implementation of transformation has been accentuated. The political dynamism may be presented in two phases:

During the first phase, the period 1994 to 2003, there was general consensus on the relative untouchable position of the ANC. The ANC as government had to establish new political, economical and social value systems through the formulation of political rules – legislation – to be promulgated by Parliament.

At the same time, while opposition politics had to be delegitimised, the ANC government was busy with top-down strategic planning to ensure political control and empowerment through strategic planning for top-down social and political engineering. The overriding impression is that of a strong state where strong political stability is obvious.

During the second phase, 2004 to 2009, there are indications of political erosion of the hegemony, the levelling off of support, whilst discontent with the ANC, especially on provincial and local government sphere, is becoming more obvious. Continuous restructuring and implementation of new rules in terms of newly defined value systems are given preference.

Opposition politics are also busy with restructuring, while the ANC becomes more pragmatic, but is persistent in their efforts to obtain complete social and economic control. In a bottom-up approach the tactical and operational actions are planned and aimed at the mobilisation of social powers to cripple opposition politics.

The overall impression is that of weak state with recurring patterns of political decay. This is evident from the continuous and growing resistance to the extent of becoming violent and reactionary to show indignation with the status quo (continuous failure to deliver services and related violent reactions throughout South Africa).

Some of the aspects mentioned above under Phase II, that may have an impact on successful transformation in South Africa, will be briefly discussed.

### **The politicisation of the South African society**

In a 1997 ANC discussion document it is indicated that the transformation of the state "...entails, first and foremost, extending the power of the NLM [National Liberation Movement, i.e. the party] overall the levels 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" (ANC 1997).

In order to institutionalise their power, after the acceptance of the 1996 Constitution, the old police force was transformed to a police service. The whole transformation included affirmative action, where a large percentage (up to 90%) of the experienced officers were replaced (Malan 2005: 8). In this process the quality of services rendered has deteriorated to the extent that at two precincts just outside the limits of Cape Town

city centre, approximately 4 200 murder dockets are piled up with no possibility to be completed in the near future (Malan 2005: 8).

The face of the public service has also been changed by affirmative action. "Many thousands of blacks have been hired as public servants or managers at state owned firms" (Guest 2004: 235). These new appointees replaced experienced whites, mainly white males. "Progress has been the fastest in the civil service where the proportion of managerial jobs filled by blacks has soared ...now more than 60% are black" (Guest 2004: 133).

At the same time "...government has also tried to create a black business class in record time". (Guest 2004: 235) Banks were coerced to provide money to influential black ANC businessmen to buy shares in white-owned conglomerates. It was expected that these enterprises would prosper under black control. In spite of the fact that it was easier for these businesses to obtain government contracts and easier relations with trade unions, as well as the expected improved support of the black consumers, it did not materialise. Few new factories have been built and very few new jobs were created. Even street vendors are absent unless they are controlled by "outside" owners. White-owned businesses are being compelled by government pressure to draw up black empowerment charters, promising the percentage of the firm that will be in black hands by, say 2010 (Guest 2004: 234-238).

To take control of health services medical students, dentists, pharmacists, physiotherapists and many other are forced to a community service stint in rural areas. This has caused much unhappiness within the medical fraternity and has contributed to the emigration of many young doctors and other health workers. Other push factors, cited by emigrating medical professionals that contribute to the emigration of health workers are the standard of public services, the high crime rate, the decline in the standards of living, dissatisfaction with the cost of living, affirmative action and the level of taxation. Health personnel can also expect to, at least, double their income in many other developed countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada (Thom 2004: 182).

In the period 1998 to 2002 a total of 527 doctors and specialists emigrated. During the same period 728 nurses, 194 pharmacists, 97 dentists and 46 veterinarians emigrated. That is not even the exact figures, as many professionals do not inform the relevant authorities of their intentions to emigrate (Coetzee 2005: 1). Some 3 334 joined the British medical register during 2003. In Canada 1 953 and in New Zealand 831 South African doctors are practicing (Keeton 2004:1).

The next step was to take control of the pharmaceutical services and the tool was the regulation of the dispensing tariffs. In the process medical services expenditure increased as pharmacists took a stand. After a number of court cases, it would appear that the situation is back to where it was before.

The labour market was also targeted and labour laws, prescribing anything from service conditions of minimum wages, were promulgated. To ensure that black advancement is

not blocked by “white racist bosses”, the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act no 55 of 1998) was also promulgated. The act obliges firms above a certain size to report on efforts to make the workforce representative of the South African population. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000 (Act no 4 of 2000) was passed and that forbids discrimination on grounds of race, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, belief or culture. In the process of taking control, the growth in the labour market is limited and firms are even closing down due to over-control.

In education, the intervention to control started with the Outcome Based Education system that was implemented without ensuring that the teachers were trained; without providing the schools with the resources; and in the process totally overloading teachers with paperwork to the extent that dedicated teachers work an average of 12 hours per day. Forcing schools to become parallel medium schools has led to a number of court cases – a few are presently being heard [e.g. Seodin Primary School and Kalahari High School, both of Kuruman and Agricultural School, Jan Kempdorp, Northern Cape (Coetzee & Rademeyer 2005: 1)].

The latest, that has only recently been announced, is the limiting of the powers of school governing bodies. This is directly in opposition to the government’s approach to involve the people in managing the country – local governments are impelled by law to consult the public in integrated development plans; proposed legislation is usually circulated for opinions in White Papers and Green Papers. Government prides itself in its consultation with the public and now has taken this action to limit the powers of school governing bodies (Joubert 2005: 1).

Sport, that one would expect to be outside the political domain, finds itself right in the centre of the political arena in South Africa. The prescription of representativeness has resulted in a comedy of errors. Suffice it to provide only one example. South African rugby participates in the Super-12 rugby competition with four teams against five teams from New Zealand and three from Australia. Both South Africa and Australia have requested that one further team be allowed into the competition to make it a Super-14. It has now been agreed to and SA Rugby has asked all regions to make representations, even the existing teams, to be evaluated by SA Rugby. This was done and a rugby decision was taken. Immediately after the decision, politicians insisted that the decision was not acceptable and it was even mentioned that, if the decision was not rectified according to the government’s views, government might reconsider its support for 2011 World Cup bid of SA Rugby (Du Plessis 2005: 1). It is on the one hand strengthening the hegemony of the ANC, but on the other hand, the inability to deliver creates problems for the hegemony.

### **The political hegemony of the ANC**

Measured against the success of the 1994/1999-elections, the local government elections and the 2004-election, the ANC obtained a two third majority and political control over all nine provinces (cf. Duvenhage 2005: 20-22). Lodge (2003: 29) described the ANC before their 2004-election success as having “... a hegemonic or absolutist conception of politics in which the mission of the party is the highest value,

*excluding state, nation, family or other groups and in which formal government is merely an instrument of achievement”.*

In spite of its unquestionable support base, it is a fact that political differences seated in personal conflicts and ambitions, serious conflicts on provincial and local government levels, as well as conflicting viewpoints of its alliance partners are undermining the hegemony of the ANC. These conflicts are incited by factionalism, corruption, problems with the compiling of party lists and the collapse of local government and poor service delivery. Dissention has already increased to the level of riots, - stone throwing, blockades and violence (cf. Duvenhage 2004: 10).

### **The restructuring of opposition politics**

A change of government after the fall of an unpopular regime with the aim of fundamental change coupled with a large support base indicate an extremely negative scenario for opposition politics. In South Africa, according to Schlemmer (2003: 19) *“Opposition is at a low ebb in terms of popular support at present. More potential voters seem to have lost interest in party politics than the members supporting all parties combined.”* After the 1994 success of the ANC, opposition politics was in a period of delegitimising and reorganisation. This reorganisation is now, after the 2004 election, even more obvious.

The success of opposition politics and the impact thereof on political transformation will be determined by the following:

- the creation of strong, contrasting policy alternatives for that of the ANC, to enable voters to make a meaningful choice
- establishing party structures, organising and mobilising of grass roots level support
- improved cooperation between opposition groups in order to consolidate the support base
- election strategies that involve more than poster politics and writing letters to the media
- better cooperation between civil society and opposition groupings, and
- the ability to interpret and understand political change so that the party leadership is enabled to take proactive decisions (cf. Duvenhage 2003A: 9).

### **Political and economic capacities**

The execution of political transformation, specifically during the implementation phase implies the importance of political control together with the accompanying capacity, as well as the economic infrastructure and capabilities to administer the ‘political plan’. Human (1998: 2) indicates that *“... only a strong state can shape a new society as only a state with strong institutions can truly revolutionize society”*. The success of transformation will be determined at grass roots level.

Serious signs of political decay are becoming more obvious and are indicating weak state syndrome more and more, e.g.:

- vigilantism is becoming stronger (Compare the activities of so-called Peoples Courts, PAGAD and Mapogo-A-Mathamaga within the South African political context.)
- the exorbitant corruption, especially with social grants and the obvious inability of government to stop it at its start
- the inability to deliver services at all spheres of government
- the growing abdication of responsibilities to the private sector
- the collapse of local government to the effect that central government had to intervene, and
- the indecision as far as the traditional leadership and local government relationship goes.

The transformation efforts of Nasser (Egypt) and Nyerere (Tanzania) were unsuccessful due to insufficient political capacities and/or economic sustainability [cf. Migdal (1988: 183-205); Jennings (2002: 519-530) for the reasons for the failure of these national projects]. In South Africa the success of implementing transformation relies heavily on local government which will have to refocus on 'integrated development planning'. They have to ensure "... *(the) rebuilding (of) local communities and environments as a basis for a democratic, integrated, prosperous and truly non-racial society*" (Youens 2003: 18). To facilitate this plan, local government consolidation was effected. The consolidation unfortunately caused the loss of expertise, as well as an escalating burden of debt which in turn resulted in the inability to render services and the inhibition of an orientation towards development.

In December 2000, monies owed to local governments amounted to R24 billion (a billion = a thousand million) on outstanding payments for basic services. On provincial level it is as follows:

* Eastern Cape	:	R 1,79 billion
* Free State	:	R 1,8 billion
* Gauteng	:	R12,18 billion
* Kwa-Zulu Natal:		R 3,05 billion
* Limpopo	:	R 0,33 billion
* Mpumalanga	:	R 0,8 billion
* Northern Cape	:	R 0,553 billion

* North West	:	R 0,923 billion
* Western Cape	:	<u>R 2.23 billion</u>
TOTAL		<u>R23.7 billion</u>

The total money owed to the six metropolises amounts to R15,6 billion – 60% is owed by home owners, 30% by businesses, 6% by government and 4% by others (Youens 2003: 20).

The latest indication is that the situation has deteriorated to the point where more than R40 billion is owed to local governments over the country (Leuvennink, 2005: 2).

The election promise of the provision of potable water to all South Africans are under serious threat due to the inability to maintain the quality of water provided in the past.

South African Government Information states that national government transfers to the local sphere of government rose by 26% per year from 2001/2002 to 2004/2005 (from R6,6 billion in 2001/2002 to R13,2 billion in 2004/2005). Transfers for infrastructure development rose from R3,4 billion in 2002/2003 to R4,6 billion in 2004/2005. Poverty relief took even more out of central government coffers. In spite of this, local government is in a state of total chaos – in spite of the fact that some local government officials are being paid more than what our State President is earning – services are deteriorating or are not being delivered (<http://www.info.gov.za.aboutgovt/locgovt/intro.htm> 2005:1).

If local government is the key to the successful accomplishment of political transformation, then it is essential to take due note of the signs of decay. If it is ignored, a scenario of failure comparable to the experiences of Egypt and Tanzania may be expected.

### **Political conflict and patterns of violence**

Political change and patterns of political violence are not unfamiliar sleeping partners. Change threatens vested interests, but also creates expectations which, if it does not come to fruition may result in radical resistance. When the demand for political transformation exceeds the ability of the state, it may lead to transformation of the state by society. When this happens, serious legitimacy problems develop for the state, as was the case in Egypt, as well as in Tanzania. Migdal (1988: 205) describes the Egyptian situation as follows: *“What started as one of the most idealistic political revolutions in the post-war period, ended in a rash of charges of torture, arbitrary arrest, and the like”*. The same happened in Tanzania.

Very often directional political developments come from apparent minute and sometimes isolated political incidents and actions. Minute incidents may be the key to much more important events.

The minor events in the Eastern Free State are also not to be underestimated. Concerned citizens from the Harrismith environment blockaded the streets to protest the lack of service delivery in the area. It was not a spur of the moment incident. It was the start of

an explosive chapter, referred to as the September Revolution where a 17-year-old schoolboy was killed by police buckshot.

This grassroots revolution spread through the whole Eastern Free State area.

The revolutionary political instability is presently not only limited to the Free State. Riots have taken place in North West, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, the peaceful Northern Cape, Western Cape and in Natal. The main theme is non-delivery of promises, with the refrain of poor service delivery within an election environment.

When the management of political transformation crumbles, it is followed by spontaneous political mobilisation and physical political violence on grassroots level, and then it may be regarded as a revolution or at least as a form of revolutionary political instability. It was caused by:

- unrealised expectations created by the pre-2004 election promises such as promises of job creation, democratic political management, service delivery, housing and an improved standard of living. The people are convinced that too little has been achieved and their standard of life even deteriorated
- poor management of the service delivery
- failure of management to account on progress
- complete inaccessibility of management
- elite conflict within the ANC on a provincial level, and
- low levels of political institutionalisation of local governments in the province.

The problems experienced in the local government sphere are due to poor and incompetent management and the absence of service delivery (e.g. water provision, electricity supply and sewage disposal), corruption and nepotism. Unemployment of up to 80% at some places does not contribute to stability in local government.

The national Department of Local Government has identified 139 municipalities described as chronically ill and in need of urgent assistance. In spite of the above, the dissatisfied citizens have been threatened with "the full force of the law" and accused of not understanding local government. The lack of infrastructure and the involvement of and instigation by elements of the far right have been blamed (cf. Mohale 2005: 19; Rademeyer 2005: 1; Duvenhage 2004:1). In spite of large amounts being pumped into local government, very little satisfaction has been seen amongst the recipients of local government services. In the Free State, the provision of potable water has caused great health risks. Complaints of foul smelling, off-colour water were at the order of the day. Ms Sonica, Minister for Water Affairs and Forestry stated in her budget speech in parliament that 63% of all municipalities do not know whether the drinking water supplied to their consumers comply with the minimum quality standards (Bonthuys 2005: 3).

The dynamism of the South African transformation process is presently experiencing a political fermentation process which, in some important aspects, may be a forerunner for a dynamism similar to that of Egypt and Tanzania.

### **The regional dimension**

ANC policy documents indicate that, within a regional and international context the aim should be: "... to address the complex issue of all-round regional cooperation and development as one of the fundamental objectives of our revolution" (ANC 1996: 15). This is the origin of the Africa renaissance idea, of the NEPAD and the Africa Union initiatives. Political transformation and 'political revolution' in Africa and South Africa in particular, must serve as a framework on a Pan African level for the reconstruction and development of the South African success story. South Africa is involved all over Africa to ensure peace and stability in and between a number of AU members, at considerable expense to the taxpayer.

Southern Africa, and the African continent in general, is described as a "hopeless continent" where political instability, economic decline and social decay are at the order of the day [cf. Ramsammy 2000: 19-23; Abbas & Eldain 2000: 23-25 for particulars on the political and economic problems of the (sub) continent]. South Africa, as the leading exponent of NEPAD, is totally incapable to influence or to promote action against Zimbabwe, who is obviously guilty of the rape of all NEPAD ideals.

The appeal of the regional and continental claims on existing capacities is becoming a serious problem in the execution of political transformation in South Africa. Any further pressure on political and economic capacities may force South Africa into a political and economic quagmire where political decay rather than political transformation prevails. The number of illegal immigrants from Zimbabwe is threatening to derail South Africa's plans of job creation and housing.

### **SUMMARY PERSPECTIVE**

The dynamism of political change, a political phenomenon, due to the persistence of a unique pattern, could be identified in terms of criteria such as its nature, rapidity, direction and extent of the process, as well as of its implications for the state. Political transformation is a specific form of political change that differs from revolution, evolution, transition and development. In political transformation central planning, strategic management, change management and conflict management are of paramount importance for managing fundamental political change.

Furthermore political transformation, contrary to other change modes, is unique in its mixture of reactionary and progressive change; its centralisation of political power; its fundamental and rapid change in society, as well as its non-violent approach to change.

Since 1994 South African politics has experienced fundamental change that is driven by government and other role players as political transformation. Transformation is a compromise between the revolutionary strategy of the ANC and the evolutionary approach of the previous government. Political transformation, as the "national



project", is aimed at obtaining a unified, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. It started with the establishing of the political hegemony of the ANC, the establishing of the ANC as vehicle for political transformation, the consolidation of political control over the resources of the state, policy formulation and implementation, as well as the operationalisation of all areas of civil society.

It would appear that the dynamics of political transformation in South Africa will be determined by the political hegemony of the ANC, but there are already many negative factors on the social, economic and political spheres of society that will be inhibiting the successful implementation of the "national project".

The reasons for the dismal South African transformational effort may be found in:

- lack of cooperation at grassroots level;
- lack of social and political control;
- limited political, administrative and management capacities;
- unsuccessful institutionalisation;
- the "weak state" syndrome;
- poor service delivery;
- inertia;
- incompetence; and
- lack of professional integrity.

In spite of all the positive observations in the new South Africa, the above negative factors are a sure indication of premonitory systems and if it is not managed timeously and with circumspect, political transformation may implode. As Nelson Mandela said when he received his LLD (h.c.) from UNISA in 1999: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure".

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