

# **THE HISTORY OF TRANSFORMATION OF AN APARTHEID CAPITAL CITY INTO A DEMOCRATIC PROVINCIAL CAPITAL CITY: A CASE OF BISHO AS THE CAPITAL OF THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**

**Pakama Q Siyongwana and Shakespeare Mzikayise Binza<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The issue of capital cities has been an important research theme in political geography in many countries. The work on capital cities in former colonial states has been undertaken by several researchers on a variety of studies (Hamdam 1964; Best and Young 1972; Kearns 1973; Hoyle 1978; Scholler 1978; Irving 1981 and Maharaj 2001). Some scholars devoted their studies to the issue of relocation of capital cities when states became independent. For example, with the attainment of independence, the governments of many former colonies such as Botswana, Malawi, Nigeria and Tanzania moved their capital cities and built new centrally located cities free of colonial imprints (Pfaaf 1988; Kironde 1993; Hattingh 1994). Thus Botswana's new capital was relocated to Gaborone, while Lilongwe, Abuja and Dodoma became the capitals of their respective countries (Best 1970; Hoyle 1978; Nwafor 1980 and Potts 1985). Another group of scholars focussed on capital cities and the roles and functions they rendered in their respective states.

Hattingh (1994) writes that a capital city is considered as the “city that hosts the seat of the government, and contains the residence of the head of the government, the legislature and the higher echelons of the executive departments of government, usually the heads of the judiciary; a variety of the institutions finds it necessary to have speedy and frequent contact with the government agencies, and non-official bodies involved in the welfare of a state/province”. Hattingh's emphasis in his analysis of the capital city is that it is the venue for the palace and the executive, legislative and the judicial functions of the state. Moreover, government-related functions are often found in a capital city.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Geosciences and Department of Politics and Governmental Studies, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. E-mail: Pakama.Siyongwana@nmmu.ac.za and Mzikayise.binza@nmmu.ac.za

However, there are capital cities which have deviated from the trend that has been described by Hattingh (1994). It is possible to find in a state or province a capital city where functions are allocated to different cities. Glassner (1991) referred to this type of governmental arrangement as divided capital city functions. Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Malawi and South Africa are examples of countries with divided capital city functions. Hence, South Africa prior to 1994 had its executive, legislative and judicial functions allocated in different places, namely in Pretoria, Cape Town and Bloemfontein respectively. South Africa's unique situation of divided capital city functions was the result of the 1910 compromise between the South African English people and the Afrikaners. The compromise left South Africa with a divisive, unsatisfactory, costly and ineffective dispensation for more than 80 years (Du Preez 1995).

The ways in which capital cities are established vary. There are four different views worth considering by policy and decision makers when selecting a capital city, *viz*:

- There is a category of capital cities that developed from the core as reflected in many capital cities of Western Europe. With regard to this category of capital cities Febvre (1950) remarked: "There is no little provincial state which has not its germinal, its geographical starting point; there is no durable political formation in whose origin we cannot discover a combination of forces, a kind of armature around which other territories could build themselves up like the soft parts around the bones of the skeleton."
- There is a category of capital cities that owe their existence to the colonial powers. These cities were mainly established in order to facilitate administration in colonized countries, for example, Lagos, Livingstone, Mafeking, Luanda and Addis Ababa. Most of these capitals bear deep imprints of mother countries. As such this category of capital cities is described by Hamdan (1964) as "the most finger-prints of Europe on African life and the most solid palimpsests of colonial history". The capital cities falling in this category are generally more highly developed than the surrounding areas. For example, Addis Ababa, capital city of Ethiopia, has been described by Matthew (1947) as "a mask, behind which the rest of the country is hidden".
- There is a category of capital cities that was established by people in former colonized countries after the attainment of their independence. These include Dodoma, Abuja, Brazilia, Kigali and Lilongwe. They owe their origin and development to postcolonial government. They are also known as postcolonial government created capital cities. Moreover, in many respects they are small and unifunctional.
- There is a category of capital cities that have been the result of unification, for example, El Aaum in West Sahara.

However, South Africa, following its decolonization in 1994, experienced the following: Firstly, the reincorporation of South Africa's Bantustans into the greater South Africa; secondly, the rearranging of South African boundaries resulting in the establishment of nine provinces, namely Limpopo, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, the Free State, North-West, Northern Cape, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal; thirdly, the acceptance of modified federalism in South Africa as a consequence of the territorial restructuring and acceptance of a modified type of federalism. The issue of the provincial capitals became one of the priorities on the agenda of the new government (Nkwinti 1999). This has been greatly influenced by the urgent need for effective governance and political transformation in the country. Therefore, the selection of a provincial capital city for the Eastern Cape was a decision that could not be avoided. Moreover, it needed the participation of its citizens residing in the Eastern Cape. It is against this background that the article seeks to investigate how the capital city of the Eastern Cape Province was chosen (Maclean 1999).

## **2. FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR CHOOSING AND BUILDING CAPITAL CITIES**

### **2.1 Nation building and colonial rejection**

With decolonisation in many former colonial countries the freedom fighters opted for the relocation of the political administrative centres to other venues. There is a variety of reasons for the reshuffling of former colonial capitals. A reasonable number of the former colonial countries based the relocation of the capitals on the consideration of nation building (Dale 1969; Parnell 1986). For example, the relocation of Mauritania's capital city from St Louis to Nouakchott was because of the need for nation building. This is reflected in the statement made by Prime Minister Mokhtair Ould Daddah, that "I consider the transfer of our capital to Nouakchott an indispensable condition of the affirmation and unity of the Mauritanian nation" (Dale 1969). In Nigeria, the relocation of the central government functions from Lagos to Abuja is associated among other reasons, with colonial rejection. To the Nigerians one of the reasons for the relocation of the capital from the old venue was the need to do away with the bitter seeds of the past under colonial rule.

### **2.2 Economic and centrality factors**

Some former colonial countries relocated their capitals as a form of deconcentration of economic functions in the congested former colonial capital cities to less concentrated areas. The relocation of the central government functions from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma was based on economic considerations. In a similar vein regarding the relocation of capital city functions, Kironde (1993) states that the

action was an attempt not only to curb Dar es Salaam's excessive growth but also to act as a catalyst for regional expansion in the semi-arid central plateau which was historically lagging behind. Ironically this category of new capital cities could not promote growth and development as was envisaged; instead they became unproductive centres that consumed scarce resources that could be utilised more profitably to promote development elsewhere (Potts 1985). Other former colonial states relocated their capital cities to central areas (in terms of geographical areas) from a need for effective administration (Nwafor 1980).

### **2.3 Historical factors**

A handful of postcolonial countries retained their capitals throughout successive periods in the political history of their countries. For example, Delhi in India reflects the historical influence by the relocation of the capital city from Calcutta to Delhi. Prior to India's colonization by the British, Delhi was the capital city. Nevertheless with the intrusion of the British colonisers, Calcutta became the colonial capital city of India. With the decolonisation of India, the central government functions were brought back to Delhi (the pre-colonial site) due to the advantages of Delhi's historical significance to Indians as well as its centrality (Irving 1981).

## **3. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA: THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE**

The Eastern Cape Province is an amalgamation of the former "independent" homelands of Ciskei with its capital city Bisho and Transkei with its capital city Umtata, some parts of former Cape Province including the major cities of Port Elizabeth and East London. A small portion of Eastern Cape land (the Umzimkulu district) is landlocked in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

The Eastern Cape is the second largest province in the country with an area of 169 580 square kilometres. In terms of population, the province is the third largest in the country with approximately six million people. The population is concentrated in the major urban areas of the province, namely Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage, Grahamstown, Bisho/King William's Town, East London and Umtata. The main reason for demarcating the above areas to form the province was aimed at combining the underdeveloped areas of the former Ciskei and Transkei with wealthy areas from the former Republic of South Africa (Christopher 1995).

However, the recreation of the Eastern Cape Province after the onset of democracy, unifying the regions which differed considerably regarding stages of development met with considerable opposition from the white populations of the two cities (Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and East London). They did not want to merge

with the former homelands of Transkei and Ciskei, which were regarded as being unproductive, hence there were such phrases in the local newspapers as ‘Save us from the Wasteland’ (*Eastern Cape Herald*, 6 July 1994). The mean monthly household expenditure for the unified Eastern Cape region was estimated to be R1 588 (South Africa 1996), whereas if the region were to be divided, the Transkei and Ciskei would produce a mean monthly household expenditure of R930 compared with R3 051 per head in the Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage region. It would therefore be reasonable to suggest that the white community’s opposition was justifiable as were the political planning considerations to combine a severely poverty-stricken area with a wealthy and highly developed area. Moreover, the merger of the two former homelands with the former Eastern Cape Province meant that the province inherited vast areas where the people were poor.

#### **4. PARADOXES IN PROGRESS DURING THE DEMARCATION OF THE PROVINCE AND SELECTION OF ITS CAPITAL CITY**

Following the complete demarcation of all South African provinces there was a need for each new province to select its capital city. The decision as to which city should be the capital was left to the new political decision makers of the province. The opportunity was thus opened for each urban centre within the boundaries of the Eastern Cape to compete for the position of the capital of the province. The selection of the provincial capital was not an easy task. The demarcation challenges experienced by the Eastern Cape Province were also common to other provinces that have merged with homelands such as Mpumalanga, the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal (Hattingh 1994; Maharaj 2001).

The four Eastern Cape cities which wanted to be elevated to the rank of provincial capital city were Bisho-King William’s Town, Port Elizabeth, Umtata and Grahamstown. Bisho, as the capital city of the former Ciskei homeland, presents an interesting case. With the establishment of the homeland in South Africa, Bisho was built about three kilometres from a white established town, namely King William’s Town. Bisho became one of the “distinct” models of the achievements of apartheid policy in South Africa. In many instances it bore remarkable resemblances to a created city (Maharaj 2001). Next to Bisho is King William’s Town, and this close proximity makes it difficult for tourists to separate the two towns.

Nevertheless, Umtata was the capital city of the former Transkei homeland but departed substantially from the case of Bisho because it was established in an existing white colonial town. Moreover, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century until 1994, Umtata was an administrative centre of the former Transkei homeland (Siyongwana 1999).

Port Elizabeth was considered for capital city due to its developed infrastructure as compared to Bisho, Grahamstown and Umtata. Equally important about Port Elizabeth is that during the peak of the apartheid regime in the country it was the centre of many political activists in the eastern part of the former Cape Colony.

Grahamstown has always been linked with judicial matters in the Eastern Cape region and hence it withdrew from the competition. Its withdrawal was based on the fact that it wanted to retain the status of being the seat of the Supreme Court. Mr Z Titus, presenting the issue of selecting the Eastern Cape capital, remarked to the members of the Eastern Cape legal fraternity: "We do not know what the future holds for the three contenders. It is the people who must tell us" (*Daily Dispatch*, 2 August 1994). This implies that the selection of the Eastern Cape capital city should be in the hands of Eastern Cape people. Views from civil society movements such as the South African National Civil Organisation (SANCO), and citizens were solicited and this resulted in Bisho being selected to become the capital town of the Eastern Cape Province.

## **5. THE GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL CITIES OF SOUTH AFRICA SINCE THE ONSET OF DEMOCRACY**

In deciding which city was to be chosen as a provincial capital certain standards were to be adhered to (Hattingh 1994). The standards should take into consideration the role and the functions rendered by capital cities and whether they are provincial or national capital cities. The criteria that were taken into consideration as a basis for the selection of the provincial Eastern Cape capital city are as follows:

- The administrative capacity and infrastructure availability: The former relates to the availability of human resources in terms of administrative skills (that is largely qualified professionals). The latter is directed to such aspects as the office space, housing, hotels and conference centres available.
- Accessibility of the provincial capital city: This relates to geographical accessibility which encompasses communication and infrastructure connections, for example, air, land and water, transport and telecommunications.
- Centrality: This takes into consideration the geographical location of the capital city in relation to the distribution of the population of the province.
- Natural resource base: This relates to aspects including the availability of land for future expansion of the provincial capital city, water supply for domestic use, to mention but a few factors.

- Acceptability of the proposed provincial capital by the community at different levels: This relates to people's positive perceptions, attitudes, and feelings as well as aspirations with regard to the city. Cities which tend to bear deep imprints of the colonial past are not favoured to qualify as provincial capital cities of South Africa.
- The economic viability: In this regard the provincial capital city should have the potential for economic growth, especially the industrial sector.

## **6. THE PROCEDURES THAT WERE FOLLOWED IN THE SELECTION**

With regard to the procedures followed for the selection of the capital city for the Eastern Cape (EC) the first premier of the province, Raymond Mhlaba, made the following warning statement in the *Eastern Province Herald* (12 July 1994): "The capital of the region must be the subject of intense and very representative discussion across the whole spectrum of our society." To ensure community participation in this exercise three negotiating bodies representing Port Elizabeth, Bisho-King William's Town and Umtata were formed. The representatives from the three localities presented strong arguments as to why the respective cities should be selected as capital. The section that follows portrays how each negotiating body presented its case.

### **Case I: Port Elizabeth**

- Port Elizabeth and its surrounds rank as the fourth largest industrial region of South Africa (Hanekom 1982). Therefore, the city offers a strong economic base. This would be ideal for the capital, as it needs to be easily accessible to the national and international business sector.
- The city offers the necessary infrastructure, including office space, conference rooms and hotels which would help facilitate efficient and effective administration that would be the cornerstone of sound government.
- The city offers to meet the broad objectives of the National Assembly of bringing governance to the people because of its high concentration of inhabitants (about one million). Therefore, its selection as capital would bring government closer to the people as well as to skilled manpower.
- The city has a well-developed communication network including road, rail, water and air transport as well as telecommunications. This would enable the government to communicate effectively with national and international investors. Furthermore, the presence of a good communication network would attract tourists to the city.

- The city has been the “engine of transition” in the province and the first city in the country to have a Transitional Local Council (TLC) in place.

### **Case 2: Umtata**

- The capital city should be in Umtata in order to divert development from already well-developed areas such as Port Elizabeth, to the most poverty-stricken region.
- The city has a relatively good infrastructure that was built for the Transkei homeland government. For example, there is adequate office space, reasonable housing and a good communication network. The infrastructure available could be used by the new government and thereby reduce the cost of building infrastructure in the new provincial capital.
- The city has a pool of trained personnel from the former Transkei administration, which was still intact. The new government would then make use of such trained personnel and this would facilitate effective administration.
- The city has a long history of being an administrative centre since 1931 when the United Territories General Council agreed to meet annually in Umtata. In 1963, Umtata was made the capital of Transkei’s self-governing state. With the granting of Transkei’s Independence in 1976 it was agreed to retain Umtata as the capital city of Transkei.
- Umtata has enough land for the future development of the city. The prime land along the R67 route between the centre of the former South African embassy and the Efata institution was set aside for the future development of the city.

### **Case 3: Bisho-King William’s Town**

- Bisho-King William’s Town has an adequately developed infrastructure built for the former Ciskei homeland government. There is sufficient office space and a communication network. The existing infrastructure could be utilised by the new government and thus reduce the cost of building administrative facilities.
- The city is more or less geographically central to the whole region (Figure 1). Therefore, there can be no doubt that the provincial capital would be readily accessible to many of the Eastern Cape people and interest groups. This would facilitate effective delivery of service and enable the new government to sustain good governance.



**Figure 1: The location of the capital of the Eastern Cape Province**



- The city is accessible due to a developed communication network including road, rail, air and telecommunications. It is generally acknowledged that the degree of efficiency of government depends also upon linkages, most importantly on personal contact between the various role players.
- Bisho-King William's Town has sufficient space for future development, for example, between Bisho, built as the Ciskei capital, and King William's Town. This land is privately owned but with the selection of Bisho-King William's Town, as capital, the land would then be developed into infrastructure that would accommodate economic, industrial and administrative activities.

## 7. AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENTS

A closer scrutiny of the different arguments presented by contenders in support of their selection of a provincial capital is important. The analysis takes into consideration the guidelines that were proposed for the selection of the provincial capital as follows:

Firstly, *the economic base reasoning*. Experiences elsewhere regarding capital cities, be they national or provincial, without an economic base have shown that they soon become entrenched in an unbalanced economy. Such an experience occurred in Ulundi (KwaZulu-Natal), Mafikeng (Bophuthatswana), Livingstone (Zambia) and many others. The result is that the government and semi- government

activities become the source of the economy. Capital cities with an economic base show a balanced economy as in the case of Lagos in Nigeria and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Of the three contenders, Port Elizabeth has a strong economic base as it ranks fourth in the industrial classification of South Africa (Hanekom 1982). Besides Port Elizabeth's strong economic base, the recent developments at Coega would attract investors and would also be of interest to tourists. Therefore, Port Elizabeth as capital would boost the image of the entire province (*Eastern Cape Herald*, 24 August 1994). Moreover, in an ideal situation those who have economic power frequently cluster with those who have political power. Therefore, making Port Elizabeth the provincial capital, would be an additional advantage, as this would make the city economically viable or economically sustainable. Bisho-King William's Town and Umtata lacked the industrial base and for their economy they depended on government and government-related activities. Indeed attempts to make Umtata and King William's Town South Africa's growth points during the apartheid era, failed.

Secondly, *the administrative argument and its acceptance by the community*. Umtata's representatives were adamant in terms of the administrative experience. The same factor was also put forward by the Bisho representatives. Umtata had been an administrative town from colonial times until 1994 with the phasing out of the Transkei independence, planned by the Government of National Unity. Bisho also had administrative experience since it was the capital city of the then Ciskei State. But the question that needed to be raised about the administrative function of either Umtata or Bisho is whether this move would be accepted by the new government. In this context, how the outside world perceived the Bantustan policy and Bantustans was one of the points for consideration in the selection of provincial capitals as well. Indeed, many South African freedom fighters regarded the homelands as "pseudo states" and the homeland capitals as "puppets" of apartheid planning.

The factor of Umtata and Bisho-King William's Town's administrative legacy would probably be a sore point to the ANC government whose main concern was to eradicate apartheid in South Africa. It would thus be reasonable to suggest that the administrative factor for the two contenders would in fact discredit them, as would also the fact that they had trained personnel. Moreover, Umtata gained its capital status from a compromise, which was not reached by negotiations between representatives of popular opinion. Umtata was selected as the capital in 1976 by white colonial officials, who did not want to favour any of the Transkei major tribal groups. Best and Young (1972), in support of this, maintained that Umtata had been made the capital city of the then Transkei state despite the fact that it had met three out of five of the preferred requirements for the capital status of a homeland. Its regaining of capital status would greatly harm the Xhosa people, since it would

underline the division between the two major branches of the tribe (*Eastern Cape Herald*, 26 August 1994).

Thirdly, *the accessibility and infrastructure arguments*. The three contenders argued that they were accessible because they have well developed communication networks including rail, air and telecommunications, but Port Elizabeth has an additional advantage of having access to the sea. The accessibility of the provincial city would be an advantage in the facilitation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Moreover, all three contenders maintained that they had the necessary infrastructure but in this regard Bisho-King William's Town ranked last. To overcome the problem of the inadequate infrastructure in Bisho, for example in regard to housing, conference halls and hotels, the representatives of Bisho-King William's Town suggested that government officials would make use of the infrastructure facilities in East London which is about 60 kilometres away from Bisho-King William's Town.

Fourthly, *the decentralisation argument*. This factor was proposed by the Umtata representatives for they maintained that the capital city should be in Umtata in order to divert development from well established areas, for example, Port Elizabeth and East London, to the most poverty-stricken region, in this case Umtata. This philosophical view was advocated by many former colonial states in their selection or relocation of the capital functions since their attainment of independence. Such examples of capital cities are Lilongwe in Malawi and Abuja in Nigeria (Kearns 1973; Nwafor 1980). This argument was also in line with the principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) whose aim is to channel resources where they are needed most, that is, to the less developed or the outer periphery areas of South Africa. Moreover, the implementation of this view would facilitate the spreading of wealth throughout the province and this would thus be a saving of the RDP funds for additional development projects. Comparing the three contenders Umtata is located in the outer periphery or the less developed areas of South Africa, further away from South Africa's industrial core, and therefore it is where development is needed most (Hanekom 1982).

Fifthly, *the centrality argument*. The centrality argument was presented by Bisho-King William's Town representatives and was merely focused on the geographical location of the place in relation to other parts of the province. No efforts were made to check the population density of the surrounding areas. The consideration was that Bisho-King William's Town was more centrally located compared with the other two contenders. The argument was that the centrality of the Eastern Cape capital city would make it easier to implement government programmes and would bring efficiency in the process of service delivery. In addition, the centrality argument is important for the social cohesion of the population of the province and

for democracy that provides people with jobs, security and welfare safety nets. The centrality argument was also used by the government of Malawi when selecting Lilongwe as capital. Cornell (1972:90) *inter alia* writes that “Lilongwe became a capital because of its central position in Malawi, with the view that it would assist in bringing development north from the southern regions to spread economic development more generally throughout the country.”

## 8. MAKING THE FINAL DECISION

After much debate the three different negotiating bodies of the Port Elizabeth, Umtata and Bisho-King William’s Town regions formed a Tripartite Alliance in order to settle the capital city question for the Eastern Cape Province. The Tripartite Alliance made a final decision that the capital for the Eastern Cape Province would be Bisho-King William’s Town. In announcing the capital of the Eastern Cape, Bisho-King William’s Town, the former Premier of the Eastern Cape, Mr Raymond Mhlaba, said that the decision had been influenced by the availability of the infrastructure that the administration and the legislature could use. Furthermore the centrality of Bisho-King William’s Town in relation to the other parts of the province served as Bisho’s strong point. Its centrality would facilitate effective governance and the implementation of Reconstruction and Development Programmes - one of the keystones of the Government of National Unity’s planning vision. Moreover, the accessibility of the town due to its proximity to the railway and the national road (N2) which passes Bisho-King William’s Town from Durban through Port Elizabeth to Cape Town, was important. Lastly, the availability of land for future development, especially the “Greenfields” between Bisho and King William’s Town was also instrumental in the selection of Bisho-King William’s Town as capital of the Eastern Cape (*Eastern Province Herald*, 15 October 1994).

Surprisingly, the opposition party leader in the provincial legislature, Mr Eddie Trent of the dissolved Democratic Party (now called the Democratic Alliance) in support of Bisho-King William’s Town to be the capital of the Province, said that “if the Eastern Cape Province was to remain a single region then Bisho-King William’s Town was the correct choice”. Even more surprisingly Tertius Delpont, the former National Party provincial leader, revealed that his first choice for the capital city of the Eastern Cape was Port Elizabeth but he was happy with Bisho - his second choice (*ibid.*).

Following the Premier’s announcement of the capital, the chapter on the choice of Eastern Cape capital was closed. Equally important and worth stating is that public speculations that Umtata would become the executive capital came to an end. Indeed, the move made the residents of the former Transkei pseudo state unhappy with an attitude of denial of Umtata’s relegation to being an ordinary city. As a consequence of their denial, they lobbied for a tenth province for the Xhosa

speaking people consisting of the former Transkei, the border (East London and its surroundings), Ciskei and East Griqualand. This request was turned down by the Government of National Unity (GNU) with reasonable arguments that it was not prepared to accept a province that was based on ethnic considerations. To the GNU the ethnic differentiation of the South African population formed the cornerstone of the apartheid policy which was anathema to the liberation movements fighting the apartheid government. The issue of the judicial capital was left to the Eastern Cape legal fraternity who later recommended that Grahamstown should be the Eastern Cape judicial capital (Hoexter *et al.* 1997).

## 9. CONCLUSION

Several arguments were given by the representatives of the three cities (Port Elizabeth, Bisho-King William's Town and Umtata) justifying why their respective cities should be selected as the provincial capital of the Eastern Cape Province. The arguments included availability of natural resources, administrative capacity, availability of infrastructure, accessibility, centrality, a long history of being the administrative centre and being an engine of transition and economic viability. Based on the arguments given by the representatives of each province it was evident that centrality outweighed other factors. Bisho-King William's Town's victory as capital city of the Eastern Cape presented an interesting event in South Africa, namely that of being a model of apartheid planning becoming a model of non-racial South Africa. Two schools of thought can be used to explain this phenomenon. From one angle, the freedom fighters resented this model because it had been used as vehicle to perpetuate a divide and rule policy. It was an imposition by a white South African government (therefore externally initiated) to fulfil its hidden agenda and in many instances it violated human rights. Read from the other angle, the model is a positive one and endorsed by the GNU because it came from within (not externally initiated). The conclusion was arrived at through consultation with and the participation of the citizens in all matters affecting the development of their 'own areas'. This consultative and participatory process was a cornerstone of the GNU's policy, with the human rights component forming an integral part of the choice of Bisho-King William's Town as capital. This choice was endorsed by the ruling party (ANC) despite its former links with the apartheid ideology.

Last but not least worth mentioning is that the Eastern Cape region has divided its capital city functions between Bisho-King William's Town as the executive and legislative capital and Grahamstown as the judicial capital. Umtata and Port Elizabeth lost the competition. Whether Bisho-King William's Town was the correct choice for the Eastern Cape capital and whether there are any administrative problems caused by the splitting of the capital's functions is a subject for further research.

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