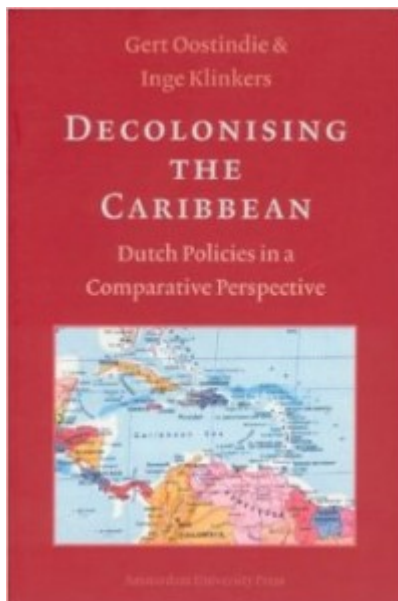# Gert Oostindie & Inge Klinkers ~ Decolonising The Caribbean ~ Dutch Policies In A Comparative Perspective

For over two centuries much of the Caribbean has been embroiled in heated,and initially violent, decolonisation. One may well date the beginnings of the process to the first recorded retreats of European colonisers, the conclusion of the eighteenth century peace treaties between the British and the Maroons of Jamaica, and then between the Dutch and the Maroons of Suriname – struggles for freedom which were, however, inconsequential in post-colonial history. So, Caribbean decolonisation formally began with the 1791 Haitian Revolution. With this seminal event came the dawning of a new era. Constitutional sovereignty was subsequently secured by the Dominican Republic (1844) and at the start of the twentieth century by Cuba (1901). Both were late in securing sovereignty by Latin American standards.

Whereas the three most populated Caribbean countries had now gained independence, the rest of the region remained firmly locked within colonialism, either dependent on the traditional metropolitan powers, the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands, or usurped by the ascending power of the United States. At the outbreak of World War ii most Caribbean territories were still bound in colonial tutelage.

A new wave of decolonisation swept the region in the 1960s and 1970s. Today most of the Caribbean is sovereign and some 85 per cent of the 37 million Caribbean people live in independent countries. However, it appears that independence was achieved at a high price. In general terms, standards of living in the non-sovereign Caribbean are significantly higher than they are in the independent countries. Furthermore, in a region that has witnessed many

dictatorial regimes and territorial disputes, and which
now faces the contemporary challenges of international crime, the remaining non-sovereign territories still continue to enjoy a higher degree of security and stability. Small wonder then that the urge for independence in these territories is weak, and indeed it seems that Caribbean decolonisation may well have reached its final dénouement with the present status quo.

Download the book (PDF-file): www.oapen.org/

Amsterdam University Press,Amsterdam, 2003

How Can Gov. McCrory's Proposal Work? Preliminary Thoughts And Policy Considerations

Map: www.secretary.state.nc.us

On Monday, March 30, the *Winston-Salem Journal* published a piece titled *"Economic development bill stalls in Senate"* starting with Gov. McCrory's proposal to "recruit an automobile manufacturer and create thousands of jobs and scores of companies". This is really an interesting development proposal that can boost production growth in North Carolina. The article **[i]** seeks to discuss the

developmental and industrial dimensions of this proposal and to offer policy considerations deemed absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of such an ambitious plan.

The Present Context

There has been much talk and debate on the recent economic downfall of the United States. Causes for concern include persistent fluctuations in output, job creation and productivity; massive federal budget and trade account deficits; and issues associated with "capital flight" and industrial decline (U.S. *National Economic Accounts*, various years). These fluctuations are closely linked to unutilized labor force, lost output, and social problems. Furthermore, the economic effects of the recent financial crisis are complicated and far-reaching because of simultaneous shocks in the housing, stock, and labor markets. Actual spending, unemployment, home equity, well-being, emotional and physical health, and expectations about the future have all been affected by a significant slowdown in endogenous productive activity and various problems associated with financial markets. Hence, it is argued here that three important themes need to come to the center stage:

1. A discourse on the "appropriate" policy interventions,
2. The importance of adopting a long-term perspective, and
3. Emphasis on strengthening local production lines.

An Alternative Development Paradigm

The US model of a *pluralist market economy* is strongly consumer and short-term oriented. Its strength is dynamism and flexibility; its dominant philosophy is private sector competition and minimal government. As a result, industrial policy has not been developed in a systematic or coherent fashion as an important piece of policy making, and the country has not generally seen itself as being involved in the promotion of specific sectors.

Moreover, contrary to current orthodoxy and the "post-industrial era" view, it would not suffice to continue emphasizing only certain services (e.g., ITC, financial services), which may benefit very narrow sectors and generate limited resources. These services by their very nature neither maximize benefits of economic activity to the economy as a whole nor impart the momentum necessary to drive other economic sectors up as they expand. In sharp contrast, the main problem here consists in delineating industrial sectors and products on the basis of dynamic criteria. By recognizing differentiation of new and promising activities,

particular branches and industrial sectors, thorough technically proficient policy can take care of the necessary human, material, and financial requisites and thus become effective. The aim should be to improve competency and efficiency of the economy of North Carolina, the quantity and quality of *industrial accelerators*, and the quality of workmanship and service, so that more activities may become increasingly competitive. Once the priorities are right, and with effective "policy spillovers", resources will increasingly be allocated efficiently, production, productivity and profitability will increase, and the propulsive and dynamic sectors will become increasingly attractive to the private sector.

Clearly, construction of an alternative development paradigm for the State of North Carolina will be a deeply political and social process. Effective statecraft and new state-societal alliances as well as a combination of plan and market are required. Although the obstacles are quite challenging, thorough technically proficient strategies have to take place. This is controversial and problematic in the context of North Carolina given constraints of elected sequential political leadership, the difficulty in establishing long-term planning, the absence of political will, and the difficulty in having such views channeled through political avenues. However, production growth needs to bring into power visionary political leadership, forward-looking entrepreneurs, progressive intellectuals, and competent technocrats. To effectively face problems that could arise, a sound development approach should complement short-run measures with a thorough plan for the future of North Carolina, which includes a long-term industrial strategy aimed at expanding production lines, strengthening technological capabilities, and promoting skills and innovation. A broad-based consensus is also imperative, and could afford scope for strategic planning that should be limited to selected policy arenas.

In the execution of this framework, strategic action incorporates investment-related policies, industrial human capital and technology policies, fiscal and financial policies, and trade-related measures. Devising the necessary policy interventions to stimulate local production growth and industrial rejuvenation seems to be a more sensible way to confront the future. Such an approach is a better one for sustained growth, competency upgrading and overall competitiveness of the NC economy than a frantic search for accelerated, neoliberal-type solutions. The alternative and more realistic development paradigm requires the pursuit of a thorough strategic industrial policy. This is

what the economy of North Carolina urgently needs. A successful implementation, however, will require wide consultation, broad consensus, focused policy intervention of high quality, realism, determination, and special emphasis on production-oriented growth.

Issues of Selection

The changes that have swept through the world economy during the last 30 years or so have had a profound impact on policy formulation requirements for economic restructuring and diversification. Consequently, construction of a purposeful development framework for North Carolina requires rigorous consideration of all the critical elements of a thorough long-term strategy (i.e., demand-based considerations; resource utilization, modern technology, and competitiveness considerations; competency upgrading and structural transformation factors; and realism and different or better policy choices). But such a policy change that places particular emphasis on a stronger economic structure could be in conflict with both short-run measures dictated by pressing problems and the adoption of an *ad hoc* approach to development.

In contrast to Porter's (1998) theory on "clusters" (geographic concentrations of inter-connected companies and institutions) and competition, and the supply-chain management analysis, based largely on microeconomic notions, an industrial targeting approach requires a detailed discussion of industrial planning and an accurate analysis of the selection process that clearly specifies benefits from certain economic engines: effective stimulus for industrial growth, rejuvenation, repositioning, and competitiveness. Targeting and support of the selected sectors also require detailed information on the quantity (*how much*) and quality (*what type*) of modern factors needed by these key sectors so as the quantitative and qualitative parameters of planned industrial investment are thoroughly taken care of.

Thus, it is imperative to aggressively pursue advancement of selected dynamic sectors of high potential and achievability (solar, renewable and alternative energy as well as automobiles that can use this alternative energy, biotechnology, pharmaceutical, information technology and computers, and food and beverage) as there is potential to market opportunities for their growth, and these can open up possibilities and set up incentives for a wide range of new industrial activities. These dynamic economic engines are expected to be supply-chain partners for other sectors. So long as these production lines are indigenous, product

differentiation will, more likely, prove successful. These key sectors will increase benefits to primary production and services since they can enhance complementarities and forward and backward linkages, and would allow for product differentiation.

Modern production techniques make it possible to manufacture in small series on a viable basis. Targeting and flexibility are also possible, especially if they can draw on modern industrial planning. Assuming predominance of clear focal areas and initiatives carried out by both a competent administrative machine and dynamic local firms, a large part of the additional goods produced will be devoted to exports. Given the growth of production of local industries and improvement of industrial competitiveness, demand for imported capital and goods could decline and exports of local products expand.

Policy Considerations
Given the importance of conducive macroeconomic policies along "functional finance" lines, local industrial growth is imperative. The expansion of industry represents a net addition to the effective use of local resources and contributes to a higher degree of capacity utilization. An industrial strategy seeks to link endogenous technological capabilities and technical progress occurring in the targeted sectors to growth and change in the economy of North Carolina. These prioritized sectors can rejuvenate the NC economy with essential forward and backward linkages in terms of material and knowledge inputs, and can transform this knowledge into new technologies and products. Since profitability depends upon continuous technological advancement and R&D, technical progress can influence the volume of investments and can open up new and more profitable opportunities.

Secondly, loans and financial schemes are seen to be unsuccessful policy measures. Traditional incentive policies offer only marginal solutions, often encourage rent-seeking, clientelism, favoritism and squandering, and usually recommend temporary assistance, without getting at the root of the problems. The answer is twofold: 1. special emphasis on capital accumulation and on finance and guidance of higher levels of investment; and 2. selective incentives to key favored firms and disincentives to disfavored industries and services.

Thirdly, as the United States in general, and North Carolina in particular, simply cannot compete in low-wage areas, there must be special emphasis on quality and

good value for the consumer. This must clearly be a recurrent theme throughout the supply chain, and requires constant retraining of workers, an emphasis on purchasing high-quality machinery, and having an adequate supply of labor to configure and maintain these machines. It also requires a rigorous quality control and testing in addition to an understanding of proper inventory control procedures and minimization of other related costs.

Finally, the following politico-institutional preconditions must be met:
1. the NC authorities must credibly commit to pursuing a production-oriented strategy;
2. a long-term view must replace the current focus on the short-run;
3. the NC bureaucracy must be streamlined and insulated from political and industrial pressure, and must be given greater responsibility for consequences of their activities;
4. the skill base of State employees must be upgraded; and
5. local industrial capabilities formation must encompass the effective cooperation of knowledge, financial, and technical supporting institutions.

Without these preconditions, such a radical development proposal will founder on short-term expedients, the deficiencies and conservatism of the civil service, the existing configuration of socio-economic power and certain interests, or the mindset of politicians and people. What really matters to the future success of the economy of North Carolina is not the "extent" of policy intervention but rather the "quality" of such intervention.

NOTE
[i] The article relies heavily on the author's writings and on-going research.

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Civil Domains and Arenas in Zimbabwean Settings. Democracy and Responsiveness Revisited – DPRN Five

Harare – goafrica.about.com

Introduction (written 2008 – first published 2010)
A popular remedy for Africa's predicament is the promotion of *'civil society'*. It is conventionally seen as a collection of various kinds of non-profit bodies separate from the state and business sector. It is framed within a consensual model of politics, and thus capable of working in *'partnership'* with both state and business sectors in pursuit of common interests, particularly *'development'* and *'democracy'* **[i]**. Since the late 1970s donors sought substitutes for the state in the private sector. In the 1980s they discovered the virtues of the non-profit branch of this sector. They tasked older entities such as mission hospitals and newly-arrived non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with providing a range of services, from schooling and healthcare to small enterprise promotion, that were once considered responsibilities of the public sector.

Under their neoliberal paradigm, donors have tried to raise the nonprofit sector's political status. Beyond service provision, its main task is to counter government power. Here civil society is cast as a hero, who routinely calls a villainous state to account. Yet this model of *'civil society'* has evoked controversy. Questions have arisen about the effects of NGOs not only as substitute providers of basic services, but also as vehicles of public politics, effectively substituting for opposition political parties **[ii]**. A number of writers have called attention to *'the obvious:*

that civil society is [largely] made up of international organisations'. Some argue that the whole concept of 'civil society' as promoted by outsiders does not match African sociological or political realities, and can ultimately weaken, rather than strengthen the power of common citizens. There are calls, in short, for a re-think.

Civil domains

How closely does the idea of civil society correspond to the ways Africans themselves go about their associational life and politics? How has it worked in the past? Can it foster robust citizenship in the future? At some times and places, answers to these questions have been affirmative. Where Africans could organize to transform the political order – the ending of minority rule in southern Africa being a major case in point – rights and collective self-esteem have advanced. In this stormy history, consensual politics of the conventional 'civil society' model are hard to detect. Hence the need for more realism. The concept of public space, as derived from the work on the foundations of democracy of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas **[iv]**, allows us not only to analyze players and issues at stake but also to pay attention to the history of the discourse in that space, which specifically is quite important in an African context with an authoritarian past, colonialism, and often Marxism-Leninism in the years behind.

Hence our preference for another conception of this public space, which we term the civil domain: A social realm or space apart from the state, familial bonds and for-profit firms, in which people associate together voluntarily to reproduce, promote or contest the character of social, cultural economic or political rules that concern them. Such a conception makes it possible to include other powers as well as a great variety of civil society players (including churches, trade unions, vernacular civil structures – like the sometimes powerful Chiefs in Zimbabwe – groups of intellectuals around universities and social movements).
Yet were this space to comprise the whole of what interests us, a glance at history would rapidly reveal its limitations. For where the interplay of global interests and national vulnerabilities has had the upper hand, the advance of public politics and citizenship has been halted or reversed. Coerced by or colluding with forces abroad, many African leaders have squandered public goods and public trust. Sovereign powers and surpluses have been transferred abroad, open political competition outlawed and space for active citizenship reduced to nothing. In much of Africa, public institutions have decayed. In some cases – Somalia, Congo, Sierra Leone – they have collapsed outright. Explaining why states fail is a

complex and disputed matter. Many homegrown villains from Mengistu to Mobutu to Mugabe are blameworthy. But as powers over fundamental political and economic choices have shifted even further upward and outward, to Western-based entities that make the rules – donor agencies, bankers, investors and policy think-tanks – external factors loom very large indeed.

Power in African settings is commonly constructed and deployed in spheres far wider than civil domains: the state, the armed forces, enterprises and the media. These have external as well as domestic dimensions; in a continent where power is highly extraverted **[v]**, relationships with foreign actors are commonly decisive. Hence when talking of governance, democracy, and respect for human rights it is important to keep in mind differing levels – global, national, regional and local – and the interplay among them.

Civil domains in the public arena

Habermas concluded that in the 18th and 19th century 'real' democracy developed in feudal Europe when independent public spaces (such as coffee houses, salons, reading rooms, the beginning of the independent press) emerged where issues at stake were debated, outside the influence of government structures. He argues that the independent media are also in the 'public space'. Their importance lives on in the articles on freedom of speech, opinion, association, assembly, freedom of the media, now cornerstones of the Universal declaration of Human Rights.

Today in Africa public space is not necessarily confined to the media. In Angola, the churches provided a public space for a discourse of peace to emerge in times of war, as Comerford has compellingly argued **[vi]**. Yet the public space transcends national frontiers. In the case of Zimbabwe, it is internationalized. Much space is today found outside the country, in the diaspora in South Africa, U.K. and beyond. Here we can expand the 'public space model' beyond civil domains to embrace the 'arena model'. A 'public arena' is a complex whole of 'antagonistic cooperation' **[vii]**. The scope of the 'civil domain' allows for conflict, but cannot account for its non-territorial, externalised dimensions. Those are of great importance in accounting for what is really going on in the complex African context.

The arena model allows analysis of the intrinsic power relations in day-to-day struggles. Power relations inside the different organisations figure in the arena model. Here organisations are seen as half-open systems interacting with other

organisations in the context but at the same time being influenced by them, which works out differently for different layers in the organisations.

Conventional civil society notions do not draw attention to this. Let us take an example. A large non-governmental organisation in Zimbabwe is dependent on international donors. At the same time it operates in the Zimbabwean political reality where it is dependent on the Zimbabwean Government. It faces further challenges posed by its beneficiaries, in the field where things are really happening. But: these three are in fact different organisations! Although the whole NGO is affected by the decisions of its donors, these are decisions mainly carried out on the level of the directors and the managers: they are judged mainly based on the needs of their donors who are all abroad and influenced by other political realities than that of Zimbabwe, while the organisation's field officers are dealing with the direct needs of the people: the organisation (as well as all others in the arena) is a half-open system. Its inner workings can be described as an arena, nested in the arenas of political reality in Zimbabwe but at the same time in the foreign aid system which in its turn is nested again in overall international relations systems.

This complex 'nesting' of arenas **[viii]** is an important part of the analytical model. International pressure cannot be omitted when analyzing Zimbabwe. This pressure is exerted on many levels. Simultaneously the organisation is a half-open system in the sense that the culture of the programme related officers inside the organisation is more geared towards the beneficiaries than that of the 'Zimbabwe or international related' managers and directors, while the organisation as a whole is more related to the beneficiaries than the Zimbabwean Government itself. At the same time all parties have a fragile relationship, based on conflict resolution and negotiation, and this relationship is reflected inside the organisation as well.

Thus in the organisation's internal arenas, different players confront each other and may become interdependent **[ix].** These are not in the 'public arena'. But if they are not taken into account, any analysis would overlook many things that drive relations in the 'public arena' and hence the complex power plays that are going on. This is *qualitate qua* of course also the case with media outlets and political parties etc. So it is not enough to analyse 'the' organisation: an analysis needs to be deeper and more encompassing.

It is the public arena in which battles (cold or hot) are fought by various players and powers, resulting eventually in more democracy – or less.

Democracy and state responsiveness

Official aid agencies have expressed their dismay at 'top-down' approaches; they now claim to be paid-up members of the 'participatory methods' club. Yet in practice, those new methods have often camouflaged old-fashioned autocratic power. Donors continue attaching coercive conditions to their loans and grants. Aid-givers' insistence on 'participation' in some places is experienced as manipulation, deception and unpaid local labour. Some now speak of the 'tyranny of participation', and discuss it only with adjectives: 'veneered participation' (going-through-the-motions); 'inequitable participation' (women and minorities marginalized), and 'bureaucratic participation' (planning-by-numbers, discussing-by-checklists)**[x]**

Some wish to drop the term participation altogether. Real citizenship is not served by cheap substitutes; rather it requires 'teeth' – concrete obligations and rights capable of being upheld in courts of law. Citizens should have real powers to 'throw the rascals out', but credible mechanisms (truly competitive elections, independent parliamentary inquires, independent public auditing) for downward accountability are scarce or weak.

In their approaches to the state in Africa, aid donors have shown ambivalence and mood swings. In the 1960s they favored the state and *'nation-building'*. By 1980 they had changed course, mounting an offensive to 'roll back' government through privatization, decentralization and de-legitimation of the public sector. Up to the mid-1990s, donors showed great optimism about the powers of private for-profit and non-profit sectors. This harmonized with prevailing neoliberal orthodoxies, namely that Greed is Good, and that horse-and-sparrow economics would be sufficient to tackle poverty – that is, *'feed the horse well and some benefits are sure to pass through for the sparrows to eat'*.

Where African governments poured public resources into such luxuries as four-star hotels and automobile assembly plants, cutting back state engagement in the economy was not a bad thing. But deligitimizing the public sector rapidly became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Schools, health services, police and other public sector services – especially those serving the politically weak – rapidly lost good staff and other means to meet citizen needs. Unable to deliver basic services of acceptable quality on a fair basis, and ravaged by corruption, the state lost legitimacy for citizens. Readiness to pay taxes and fees declined. The public sector lost whatever responsive character it may have had. The 'social contract'

between states and citizens lost any meaning.

Donors and lenders sped up the decay of African public sectors simply by choosing to by-pass them. They channeled aid via special project units, consulting firms – and nonprofits. NGOs became aid vehicles of choice, and their supply both in the North and the South boomed in response to donor demand. The resulting organizational islands could deliver their agricultural extension, health care and training project services for a while. But disconnected from public institutions and local taxes and fees, those services stopped when the stream of aid dried up. Institutional decay, combined with low and declining reciprocity between political classes and citizens, have made states dangerously fragile. There has been no lack of disaffected politicians or disgruntled army officers ready to spark a coup or a war. The sequel has collapsed, sometimes with unspeakable violence. Victims have been chiefly civilians. In the case of Rwanda, the system of foreign aid – including that helping to create 'civil society'- set the stage for genocide **[xi]**.

After 11 September 2001, strategists at the centre of world power began paying more attention to the periphery. People in supposedly secure Western countries have turned out to be vulnerable to the breakdown of public order and security in faraway non-Western places. Washington DC today regards weak and failed states as among its top security priorities. Its main development agencies are re-tooling themselves to promote *'nation building'* – a theme of the 1960s. The task is no longer to shrink the state but to reshape it in ways assumed to secure Western interests.

That is not a bad idea. Contrary to some conventional thinking about civil society, stronger states can advance anti-poverty and human rights agendas. Weak and poorly institutionalized states hardly favour emancipatory associational life. But where there are robust public institutions to provide basic services and enable open politics, many things become possible. Citizen action in South Africa, for example, has scored victories for landless people and those living with HIV-AIDS because special courts and official commissions have grown (partially as a result of civil society pressures) to promote provisions of the Constitution's bill of rights. In Mozambique, an important pre-condition for achievement of smallholder land rights was the rehabilitation of the public cadastre (land title office).

Charitable giving and government subsidies to NGOs are commonly justified by claims about their responsiveness in combating poverty. Indeed in many African settings, a lot seems to be happening: sewing circles, street children centres, HIV-

AIDS counseling, kitchen garden and small livestock efforts, micro-lending, literacy, and many other instances of NGO intervention. Africa seems abuzz with little projects supported from abroad. But does this add up to anything people can count on? For many citizens such beehives of activity can be a 'tyranny of structurelessness' – a situation in which benefits are indeed flowing to some, but not according to any priorities or plans ratified by wide popular consent. Nonprofits claiming to be more responsive than the state in service provision seem to have a point when people flock to their clinics and schools. But in the absence of public steering and comprehensive coverage, overall outcomes can add up to fragmentation, instability, unequal access and no reliable ways for citizens to call service providers to account and get what they are entitled to.

Yet it appears that neither *'building civil society'*, nor *'building the state'* are in themselves the answer to public issues. Rather, viable answers may be better sought in the *'public arena'* where the question is not one of shrinking or developing substitutes for the state, but challenging it to become more responsive while at the same time helping it gain the capacities to respond.

In this framework an interesting study has been conducted in the Balkans **[xii]** where the authors ask themselves: *'Why is economic growth not generating support for market capitalism and why is state weakness reproduced in the Balkans?'* Their study shows that economic growth is not sufficient to create a social base for a market society and that state building in the Balkans cannot and should not be simply reduced to an EU-guided reform of public administrations (both of which are assumptions underlying the actual discourse on 'reconstruction' of the Balkans, mainly driven by EU-forces.) The answer of the researchers in the Balkans is that state building should be viewed primarily as a constituency building. The paradigm shift proposed here (a shift from emphasis on the state to one on the constituency of the state, including different civil domains) is a virtual reversal of the neoliberal paradigm shift from state building to civil society.

As the authors of the Balkans study say:

What is needed is a new generation of democratization policies that focus on the quality of political representation. What we see as a priority is a shift from the normative approach to democratization that focuses on democratic institutions (elections, courts, and media) and which is most often expressed with the idea of 'accountable government' or 'good government' to the idea of 'responsive government' that underlines not the state's autonomy from civil society but the

influence of major social constituencies over state decisions

In our view that synthesizes the approaches we described in our theoretical notes: a concept of civil domains is more useful than that of civil society. But that in itself is not sufficient. For in the end it is all about the 'balance of powers' in the public arena. This nested constellation of public and private entities has non-territorial, global dimensions; in a place like Zimbabwe, where so many citizens are now 'offshore', it is a crucial concept. A functioning public arena is a precondition for a functioning state as well as functioning constituencies of that state. It makes responsiveness possible, as a first requisite for genuine democracy. To understand the actual situation in Zimbabwe, these mechanisms need to be better understood.

Part II. From model to practice – The public arena in Zimbabwe.
Which institutions, rules and incentives are driving or blocking change? Which ones are shaping the civil domain and public arena in today's Zimbabwe? The following sections consider these questions on several terrains: economic and state-party (including military and justice, section 4); and the 'civil domains': church, civil, vernacular and the media (section 5). Section 6 offers concluding observations.

Zimbabwe's public arena

Economic power
After independence in 1980 Zimbabwe started with one of the best regulated – be it settler-colonialist – regimes in Africa. It was then already a corporatist economic regime, but it worked, generating a relatively high per-capita income and a basis for extending social as well as economic infrastructure. The main sources of income were agriculture, mining and industry. In the first decade of independence the ZANU government effectively maintained this structure, adding important redistributive measures like a minimum wage, increasing expenditure on health and education **[xiv]**. The ruling party did not immediately begin to seek the maximum benefits for themselves out of the system; its rule could be described as 'enlightened dictatorship'. For most Zimbabweans, welfare improved, especially in rural areas where agricultural

output boomed.

However powerful outside interests, led by the World Bank and IMF, had concluded that Zimbabwe's economy was underperforming. Therefore, like in the case of virtually every other African economy (never mind the differences) it had to be overhauled. The ensuing Economical Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) began in 1991. Six years later, the World Bank lauded the programme, bestowing on it the Bank's highest rating: 'highly satisfactory'. Yet as a World Bank senior economist, William Easterly, has recently noted, this coercively-imposed economic programme set Zimbabwe on the path to predatory capitalism and economic and political ruin **[xv]**. The massive wave of privatization and deregulation accelerated the creation of a class of politician-owners and well-connected business people whose main interest was in extracting rents, not building up enterprises. Hence the job creation boom promised by ESAP's architects failed to materialize. Instead Zimbabwe saw worsening poverty and inequality. Salaried and wage-earning classes – the social bases of formal associational life – suffered grave setbacks. Some of these were caused by factors beyond the control of the regime (drought, collapsing commodity prices) but most stemmed from the logic of the programme and the interests of the class it empowered: lowered social sector spending, increases in military outlays, and especially moves to redistribute assets to a small elite. Clientelism grew and along with it, a *'political economy of disorder'* **[xvi]**.

Zimbabwe's fall and those who pushed it into the abyss have been vividly documented **[xvii]**. Among others the study by Gunning and Oostendorp **[xviii]** shows how an over-rapid liberalization leads to grave accidents and poor outcomes, especially the explosive increase of poverty. This deterioration, and the emergence of protest toward the end of the 1990s, showed that the support for the ZANU regime was dwindling. Political decisions to maintain this support by all means (from large payments to war veterans in 1997 through land appropriation to outright violent repression after 2002) in order to keep power in the hands of the ruling ZANU elites did the rest. Land grabs, military plunder in the Congo, hyperinflation and the collapse of formal sector employment have led to radical impoverishment, public squalour and private accumulation in the hands of a tiny elite. Eighty percent of the people live below the poverty line and are in fact only kept alive by the remittances from the quarter of the 12 million inhabitants that fled the country….**[xix]**

Zimbabwe is one of the clearest examples of how *political* developments (international as well as national) impacted directly on *economic* policy formulas (corporatism in the 1980s and liberalism in the 1990s) thus backfiring to politics and the society as a whole again in the first decade of the 21st century. As Brett puts it: '*... its continuing need to pay its political debts made it impossible for [the regime] to cut the budget deficit, and this ... produced unsustainable threats to its ability to buy political support*' **[xx]**. It finally led to a rampant inflation, destroying most of what was left of the Zimbabwean economy.

Mugabe – en.wikipedia.org

State and party power, military and justice
Up to the year 2000 Zimbabwe could still be considered a '*one party elected state*' **[xxi]**: the power of the ruling party was overwhelming, but it was always more or less legitimized by elections, at least nominally. In February 2000 the ruling party decisively lost a national referendum on a new constitution; later it recouped its standing in the 2000 and 2005 parliamentary elections, the 2002 presidential election and the 2005 senate elections. At the time this chapter was being written in 2008, Zimbabwean politics had been on a roller-coaster ride taking citizens from orderly parliamentary and first-round presidential elections to a period of such intense violence that a second round of voting for president was effectively nullified.

A military junta operating behind the figure of an aging President today essentially runs Zimbabwe. The military has been purged of all possible

sympathizers with any form of opposition. The military is thus a trustworthy base for the ruling party, for which it undertakes open and active propaganda. In 2002 the chief of staff solemnly declared that the army would not accept an electoral defeat of the ruling party. Ex-soldiers have been appointed to administer elections from voter registration to the announcement of election results. Militarization of the police and the systematic intimidation of magistrates to force their resignation and replacement by party men make the life of anyone who dares to oppose the ruling party a complete misery. If you are beaten up by the mobs (including a newly formed *'youth league'*) of the ZANU-PF, you cannot go to the police or if you do you'll be beaten again (as happened to opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai). When you lodge a complaint to the judiciary you will be arrested yourself, and so forth.

Thus Zimbabwean politics has evolved from a 'one party elected state' to a one party military dictatorship. Party members such as former Finance Minister Simba Makoni, who dare to challenge the candidature of Robert Mugabe *inside* the party quickly find themselves thrown out of the party.

Typology of civil domains in Zimbabwe

Vernacular ways of associating
Chiefs and spirit mediums hold considerable authority, especially in rural areas. Although often underestimated, they form powerful (sub-)elites that cannot be ignored. When Zimbabwe was colonized during the 19th and 20th century, black inhabitants were – as in so many colonies – pushed onto 'communal lands' and put under the supervision of 'traditional' leaders in fact appointed by the colonial authority. Despite the illegitimacy of their imposition, these chiefs formed the heart of colonial control over rural people and the lands allocated to them. Local cults were thriving (and often still are) in these areas: chiefs and spirit mediums form a 'state in the state' together representing vernacular power. Spirit mediums and chiefs played an important role in many areas in the guerilla war, 'providing a mythic base for the alliance between the people and the guerillas' **[xxii]**, sometimes in happy alliance with the local Catholic missionaries. But in light of many chiefs' active collaboration with the white minority regime, their formal role in land allocation after independence was taken over by the ruling party. Nevertheless inhabitants *de facto* went on to refer land matters to traditional leaders **[xxiii]**.

Today, as central governmental performance deteriorates, local chiefs are again gaining influence.The ruling party's authoritarianism is expressed in the power relations in the 'communal areas', which are often adjacent to commercial farms. The politics of 'traditional' leadership, here and there combined with 'war veterans' (a grouping in civil society revived around 1997 as a useful rent-a-mob in the service of the ruling party) thus helped drive a wave of violent takeovers of commercial farmland beginning in 2000.

But the power of the vernacular 'systems' is real power: in order to get permission to work a certain piece of land in the communal areas people must turn to the chief. Land is collectively owned, or in some places even totally appropriated by the chief. In that way a complicated political economical balance in the rural areas exists, where the chief holds the formal power, the spirit medium the religious and historical power, and the elected (sometimes MDC, not just ZANU) rural councilors hold the formal power, but where the executive power is divided between the ZANU party system and local NGOs, since the latter command (foreign) funding. Quite often a nightmare for a (subsistence) farmer in rural areas! **[xxiv]**

The churches

In Zimbabwe the churches have been divided for many years as far as their answer to the political crisis is concerned. Individuals like Archbishop Ncube of the Bulawayo diocese have been taking a stance against repression and in favour of the needs of the common people. Other church leaders (especially the Anglicans) are staunch supporters of the regime. All together the churches have been quite inert for a long time, since they withdrew when the *'Movement for Democratic Change'*, which was a genuine movement at the time of its inception, developed itself into a political party under Morgan Tsvangirai **[xxv]**.

The Christian Alliance (CA) was formed in 2005 to formulate a joint strategy of the younger clergymen. When in 2005 the government launched a campaign of forced eviction of 700.000 shack dwellers ('operation Murambatsvina' meaning 'throw out the rubbish') the church response reflected growing civil preparedness to defend the people. At that time the churches led civil condemnations of government action and organised practical support for the evicted. These churches' activities have intensified in recent years. Today the Christian Alliance is one of the 'umbrella' organizations trying to (re-)unite non-profit organizations. In 2006 they launched a 'Save Zimbabwe' campaign, a successor to the (older) civil society coalition 'Crisis in Zimbabwe'. In this way, the church has again

become a force of its own but also may be a powerful ally for other (civil society) activists.

Formal organisations

In 2000 ZANU-PF was rudely awakened from its slumber of political security when the government soundly lost a referendum to change the country's constitution to give the president far more executive powers and to confiscate commercial (white-owned) land for black resettlement. Leading the opposition to these reforms was a predominantly black civil society organisation, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), which was itself an umbrella of several civil society organisations. It demanded reforms along lines of Western liberal and human rights. Shortly thereafter, a key NCA member, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) with others seized the momentum and established a new political party – the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). That development followed closely on the launch in 1999 of the *Daily News* – a privately owned daily newspaper that intended to promote public demands for a new democratic and human rights order. It rapidly became the prime communication vehicle of the MDC. For the first time, state-owned and controlled media faced serious challenges from a paper with extensive national distribution capacity. The *Daily News* helped MDC come close to winning the 2000 parliamentary election and the 2002 presidential election. Many believe that the MDC did indeed win these elections, but that government control and manipulation resulted in the rigging of the election, giving ZANU-PF a narrow victory in both instances. Both the Commonwealth and the SADC Parliamentary Forum found these elections to be substantially unfree and unfair **[xxvi]**.

NGOs have tried to gain clout by working more closely together. Many NGO umbrellas and networks have sprung up. Examples include the formation of the Crisis Coalition – a grouping of about 250 Zimbabwean NGOs from all sectors, including the media sector. Both the NCA and the ZCTU also remain as strong forces for change in the country. From 2005 onward, these NGO groupings, plus churches and the MDC opposition, started combining their efforts in planning strategies towards the elections. They initiated new rounds of mass protests, court cases and other challenges to the dictatorship.

Action in this domain, however, never overcame a culture of personality-driven organisations and resulting in inter- and intra-organisational rivalries. These dynamics seriously destabilised the democratic struggle. Strategic unity of

division and purpose is needed, and is frequently lacking. We could call this the 'umbrella dilemma': cooperation is necessary but over the last years in Zimbabwe cooperation became an end in itself. A main motivation was commonly to qualify for foreign donor support. The attraction of umbrella organisations for donors and for ambitious leaders is well known **[xxvii]**, but the frequency of collapse and other negative outcomes would suggest that donors have yet to show much respect for lessons learned on this terrain of 'civil society building'.

There are many formal NGOs in Zimbabwe, and almost as many umbrella organizations 'uniting' them. NGOs have been surveyed and critically described on many occasions as for example by Moyo, Makumbe and Raftopoulos **[xxviii]**. They conclude: '*This has led to the pursuit of individualistic NGO survival strategies and power brokerage as instruments of NGO sustainability. The manipulation of this situation by some donors, government officials and NGO leaders has thus generated a hostile context for coordination. In this situation, the result has been that NGOs remain scattered in their development work, lacking an effective development strategy and lacking any significant influence on government policies*' **[xxix]**. NGOs range from simple, very local, (subsistence) farmer associations, through largely a-political service delivery organizations up to the 'chattering class' **[xxx]** formed by many human rights and political NGOs (including those in defense of media freedom etc.) *and* their umbrellas. A Zimbabwean lawyer lecturing in the Netherlands explained: '*It's not uncommon that once a leader loses office in an NGO he goes on to form another one. Unfortunately donors buy into their project proposal and consequently Zimbabwe has a lot of organizations doing the same things*' **[xxxi]**.

Masvingo Bus Terminus

Many Zimbabwean civilians are all too aware of the need for political change; they are mostly also willing to participate in it. Zimbabwean civil domains have

witnessed what could be termed an *overproduction* of awareness, in no small part due to the interest and investments by donors, driven by the best intentions. But a result has been increased competition among NGOs in a shrinking political space, with resulting disappointing outcomes. In short, investments in civil society by donors *lacking adequate knowledge of the public arena* has had counterproductive effects in Zimbabwe. At the moment we see, to a great extent thanks to Western donors, civil society organizations *de facto* taking the place of political organizations that lack the legitimacy, knowledge and member-based structure of political parties.

Sarah Rich Dorman provides us with a 'thick description' of the Rise and Fall of ZimRights, a human rights NGO between 1992 and 2001 **[xxxii]**. She shows how a devastating growth rate (caused by *overinvestment* by donors) from two to forty staff members in seven years, combined with the politically volatile situation in which it operated, brought about the demise of the organization. The most courageous project of ZimRights was the systematic documentation of the 'operation gukurahundi', the slaughter of Matabeleland in 1982-83. The eventual publication of the book in 1999 was delayed for two years by internal infighting; ZimRights was a 'half open organization'. The study details the organization's evolution from a 'volunteer' to an employment base thanks to donor funding; its internal infighting between 'big men'; its infiltration by the secret service CIO; its taking the brunt of government attacks; and its subsequent labeling as a 'sell-out' by the ruling party.

This case (and that of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network – ZESN, studied by the same author **[xxxiii]** are good illustrations of 'operating in the public arena'. Studies of such things within a wider arena can avoid the common traps of over-praising or of rubbishing NGOs. By placing NGOs into wider terrains in which national and international forces are at work, such studies allow realistic understandings to develop. We hold in any case that staying with limited and often romanticizing narratives of 'Civil Society' is not a valid way forward.

Social movements
Zimbabwean resistance to settler takeovers in the 1890s was arguably the country's first national socio-political movement in the modern era. Sixty years later, African nationalism crystallized in two rival political movements, pursuing much the same goal: an end to white minority domination. Led by intellectuals and a few trade unionists, those movements drew on and mobilized discontent in

the countryside, including that expressed through vernacular religious groupings. Trade unions emerged in the 1920s under both local and foreign inspiration, but never posed serious threats to the colonial order, which had systematically repressed them and especially their attempts to associate with movements of political nationalism. As a result, Zimbabwe's traditions of social movements as conventionally defined have been weaker than in neighbouring Zambia or South Africa.

In the post-independence period, claims by the ruling party over terrains of public action on the one hand, and NGO-ization on the other, tended to confine civic domains where social movements might have been expected to develop. The authorities moved to organize public action in rural areas through Village and Ward Development Committees; later something called the National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe emerged, but it represented a small fraction of the African farming population, mainly those using advanced technologies and possessing ample land. Something resembling a movement of the urban poor emerged in 1998 when the Zimbabwe Homeless Peoples Federation was founded. Based on a model developed in India and South Africa, this constellation of member-based organizations grew rapidly, supported by an NGO, Dialogue on Shelter. By 2003 it included about 50 thousand households in poor settlements on the edges of 27 Zimbabwean cities and towns. The Federation had carefully avoided taking party political positions, but was nevertheless one of the targets of the state violence unleashed against the urban poor in May 2005.

The media
'The creation and sustaining of independent media is central to theories of democratisation. However, in the case of fragile states, it may also be misguided and potentially dangerous to assume that encouraging the creation of free and independent media will automatically strengthen civil society, or help establish a democratic system that will hold governments accountable. This approach underestimates the complexity of the contexts of fragile states' **[xxxiv].** Alas, Zimbabwe was not one of the case studies that have led to this report and the conclusions drawn from a workshop held in March 2005; it would have presented quite a challenge to categorise the Zimbabwean (Media) experience. For the sake of clarity, Zimbabwe does not fall under the definition of a 'fragile state'; it deserves a category of its own. *'Zimbabwe is ruled by the law'* is one of Robert Mugabe's favourite phrases countering critics. And it is; if the media is too critical

and if bombing and arresting journalists does not work, then you just change the law.

Following the reasoning of the authors of the abovementioned report, Zimbabwe is probably a 'crisis state' where legitimacy and (the lack of) responsiveness of the state has been challenged over and over again, by Civil Society and the Media. It made sense to support Zimbabwe's mainstream media as it contributed to the building of a countervailing power in the struggle for the democratisation of Zimbabwe, specifically in the 1990s. There was a time when Zimbabwe held the promise for the future. Not only was it exporting food to the rest of the region; it was also successful in institutionalising democracy; indeed, there was a time when Zimbabwe was ruled by laws that had a broad consensus within society...

Soon after 2000 the continuous attacks on the private media started and journalism in Zimbabwe was on the defensive, engaged in dogfights with the state Media; uncovering official lies; trying to fence off the vicious misinformation campaigns and black-ops. And it never recovered from this. If there are lessons to be learned with regard to media development in Zimbabwe with the aim of strengthening democratic processes (which is not the same as following the 'liberal agenda') they probably lie in the field of taking a critical look at the kind of support that was rendered.

First of all most of the support went to the private print media. And although Zimbabwe held one of the highest literacy rates in Africa, the private print media never had the capacity to become mass media because of the limited distribution of newspapers and a reduced purchasing power of people in the marginalised neighbourhoods and outside the mayor cities. It could never comply with the right to information of the population and was not able to compete with the State (Broadcast) Media. This way the private print media had a reduced audience and was contained to the towns and upper echelons of civil society.

Secondly Media development was too narrowly defined. It did not sufficiently address or support other media outlets such as Community Communications projects (which were certainly existing in various forms in the country). Initiatives are being developed to get licenses for Community Radios, but it is an uphill struggle to get these licenses.

Other Radio initiatives such as The Voice of the People and Short Wave Africa suffer from serious financial constraints and Chinese-backed radio interference on the frequencies they are broadcasting on. But as well as 'The Zimbabwean' paper

and several on-line publications these 'offshore' media illustrate the enormous potential of the Zimbabwean Diaspora: large part of the Zimbabwean *public arena* is based outside the country.

MISA's **[xxxv]** campaign to transform State Media into Public Media is a strategic campaign on the longer term. Given the political landscape in Zimbabwe there is little chance the Mugabe government will accept such a transformation.

Zimbabwean civic domains and public arenas
ZANU-PF's strategies in recent years are clearly geared towards taking control of all facets of society to ensure its political hegemony. Effectively, the separation of powers among the Executive, the Parliament and the Judiciary has been abolished except in formal appearance. The party has also extended its control over the civil domain including the non-state media, trade unions, human rights and development organisations, the business sector and the agricultural sector. ZANU-PF also controls the traditional chiefs: 'They bought the chiefs, where that did not work they brought in the War Veterans (who were bought a few years ago with high pensions) and generally speaking they had over 25 years to establish a completely closed system of patronage, thus establishing a powerful military-party-state complex' **[xxxvi]**. Continued support from the state (including all-important food support provided by international donors) to individual chiefs is dependent on the political loyalty of the chiefs including the loyalty of all persons who fall under the control of chiefs. The notorious youth brigades, enrolment into which is now compulsory for all school leavers and a condition of admission to tertiary education, are deployed in these villages (but also in townships). Their role is to observe and ensure that all villages and residents attend ZANU-PF meetings, obtain ZANU-PF cards, do not listen to or read any independent or 'anti-government' media, and to visit violence on those individuals who do not comply. These 'examples' also serve the purpose of warning others about their fate if they deviate from the party line **[xxxvii]**.

Operating in such an environment is extremely difficult, heavily complicated as it is by its setting in the international arena, in which the Zimbabwean ruling party and its president Robert Mugabe managed to manipulate especially African public opinion against Western Governments (happily supported by the stupidities and undiplomatic behaviour of especially the British former colonisers).

Meanwhile African governments have their own reasons to back Mugabe. Recently Moeletsi Mbeki (South African entrepreneur and brother of President

Thabo Mbeki) published an article about them: 'short-sighted leadership, *coupled with fear of emerging more democratic political forces in Zimbabwe*' (italics by the authors of this paper). Moeletsi Mbeki sees it in the light of political emancipation ('African Renaissance' in his view) in Zimbabwe: citizens 'demanded a greater say in how their country was run', they are interested in the 'accountability of governance'. Here we meet the cry for *responsiveness* we described earlier in this paper. But unfortunately it is exactly because the majority of the actual ruling nationalist parties *fears* the new wave of democracy, of which the opposition in Zimbabwe (MDC, formed by the newly emancipated business, mass media, organised labour and civil society in general) is the very forebode for the whole of Southern Africa and is as such a new type of party. And that is the reason they are such fierce backers of the old guard, that beat the colonialists out of Africa, but thrives in the (neo-) colonial structures they inherited **[xxxviii]**.

Inside Zimbabwe there is a paradox: the further the political-economical situation worsens, the more 'impotent and demobilized the people directly effected become' **[xxxix]**. Eldred Maunungurure (University of Zimbabwe) argues that the 'fear thesis' is not sufficient to explain this; he concludes that 'reckless elites', headed by President Robert Mugabe himself, are prepared to take any risk to oppress any form of opposition. Apart from the fact that over one third of the population (over three million mostly educated professionals) have now decided not to risk their lives and their families and have left the country for greener pastures, risk-averseness is according to Masunungurure now the predominant characteristic of the Zimbabwean masses, having been produced by three historical layers of authoritarianism: traditional political, settler colonial and commandist liberation war discourses and practices **[xl]**.

All this does not make Zimbabwe into a *'failed state'*. It has indeed failed in delivering the most needed public goods to its constituency, but *'it is far from failing with regard to the delivery of coercion'*. He further argues that given this political culture it would be best to resort to decentralized, passive resistance, not confronting, but eroding the state. In this sense 'stay-aways' (e.g. from work), rent boycotts, etc. have been already more successful than street protests **[xli]**.

Needed now are alternative strategies and donors who are willing to invest in them: from 'guerilla media' up to 'local uprisings' in order to erode the legitimacy of the actual state. The point is not to replace the state by civil society, but to

make the state and its rulers accountable to their citizens. That will take a lot of time and effort; it will by no means be a 'walk over', given the enormous coercive apparatus of the same state.

Conclusions
Can public 'arenas' be restored *inside* Zimbabwe? Current surviving (micro-)initiatives at community levels and with regard to the media offer no immediate prospects for rapid scaling-up, given the level of repression. But at least they have established precedents. The 'public arena' in Zimbabwe is far from being a reality, but is not an impossibility. *Outside* Zimbabwe in any case, in the diaspora in surrounding countries, USA and UK, as well on the Internet, the civil domain is lively, though not kicking enough.

Up until recently, elections appeared to be a way of claiming what little public space there is; but this is far from providing robust ways forward. Supporting organizations of the diasporas in UK, South Africa and elsewhere may have to suffice for the time being. Newspapers, websites and e-publishing flourish outside the country and are imported, becoming part of the public space; radio from London and SMS messages contribute further to public debate.

The public *arena*, though, has to be fought in Zimbabwe itself: to this end supporting links between the *outside* public space and the *inside* public arena deserve attention. Of course many funders (especially in the media, and funders of organizations like Crisis in Zimbabwe) are already doing these things: we hope to provide them with some more (theoretical) notions that can bring about new ideas and initiatives if worked out well with different (inside and outside) actors.

To sum up:
Zimbabwe illustrates the limitations of the conventional civil society story. NGOs are far newer and far less rooted and effective politically than are many institutions of vernacular associational life, and some large, established churches.

Being anchored in global flows and arrangements with powerful actors in (Southern) Africa, and therefore operating with no public accountability, the decisive institutions of power in Zimbabwe are beyond the reach of most citizens

and their organisations. Furthermore, given the level of oppression by the regime and the level of control by the state of the vernacular and even some churches, a simple solution like 'whom to support in order to get more leverage' is hard to find: it will be a painstaking process, where sideways and internal discrepancies (the Simba Makoni factor?) need to be explored and exploited.

Investment in conventionally defined civil society, NGOs as independent agents of 'countervailing power' is in many cases still provided under terms (scale, duration, level, apolitical intent and disconnection to actual political processes) that make it incommensurate with the challenges. Initiatives like 'Zimbabwe Watch' in the Netherlands (where a group of donors tries to exchange views and align actions) may have contributed to public knowledge; these kinds of efforts should be brought to a world level, with more active following of the process, and more active adaptation of policies and investments: the 'free for all' mentality where new groups consisting of old players always seem to find new donors has done more harm than good.

In the end the heart of the matter is a responsive state: A functioning set of formal political institutions (constitution, openly and freely chosen political representations at all levels, an independent judiciary, independent powers of public inquiry etc.) certainly merits pursuit. Public space for associational life is also without question a good thing. But a responsive state, built around public services and the active pressure of their constituents (users and producers) to make them work well, seems to us to be an even more pressing and probably more feasible objective in the middle run. Therefore a chief priority for foreign support should be geared more and more towards those types of organisations which are actively enlarging public space and fighting in the public arena, as well as towards the means (e.g. media, communication) that de facto enlarge and protect the public domain.

We believe that the insight our approach allows into the interplay of various powers suggests pointers for future international politics in cases of self-destructive regimes. As this article was being prepared, developments in Zimbabwe took a dramatic course, possibly signalling the endgame for Mugabe and his cronies. The conceptual approach presented in this paper appears to be validated in that a solution to the crisis could not come from inside the country alone; rather, it had to be sought in the wider international arena, especially among Zimbabwe's neighbouring African states. Now that mining is becoming a

factor again improvements in corporate responsibility also regarding Zimbabwe will require confronting corporations in their global settings, where politics and governance are still weak and unresponsive to publics at large.

To go on supporting civil society (e.g. in providing services) as if nothing has happened, while the state is seriously weakened is a highly doubtful strategy. Aid in the future should be focused on restoring a responsive state, restoring the rule of law and other mechanisms that will restore and strengthen citizen-state reciprocity.

Support to civil society should aim to restore a balance in the public arena, to bring back a much needed public debate about the future of the country. Experience elsewhere suggests that vultures are ready to swoop at moments of regime change to advance their private interests in non-transparent ways. Open, public discussion is the main defense against new kinds of internationalised domination.

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Post-Apartheid South Africa And The Crisis Of Expectation – DPRN Four

Nelson Mandela
en.wikipedia.org

The collapse of the apartheid state and the ushering in of democratic rule in 1994 represented a new beginning for the new South Africa and the Southern African region. There were widespread expectations and hopes that the elaboration of

democratic institutions would also inaugurate policies that would progressively alleviate poverty and inequality.

Fourteen years into the momentous events that saw Nelson Mandela become the president of South Africa, critical questions are being asked about the country's transition, especially about its performance in meeting the targets laid down in its own macro-economic programmes in terms of poverty and inequality, and the consequences of the fact that the expectations of South Africans have not been met.

At a general level the euphoria of 1994 has come up against deepening inequality, rising unemployment, the HIV pandemic and bourgeoning violent crime. The latter has led one writer to conclude that South Africa is *'a country at war with itself'* (Altbeker 2007).

South Africans have trusted democracy with the hard task to deliver jobs, wealth, healthcare, better housing and services to the people. But now that all of this is slow in arriving, there is growing disquiet and increased community protests that have sought to challenge the government on the pace of service delivery.

It is the level of what we have labelled a crisis of expectation that this paper speaks to. It looks at what under lies this crisis of expectation and what are the potential consequences.

The crisis of expectation and the political context

Whilst it can be said that under Mbeki's leadership, efforts were made to develop and adopt some forward thinking policies and that his major contribution was his policy on modernizing the state, it can also be said that under his leadership several state institutions were set up to ensure good governance, the effectiveness of which is being contested at the moment. The relevance and the efficacy of these initiatives of the Mbeki government have taken precedence in the debate on the declining human development index in South Africa and in the run up to the *'changing of the guard of the ruling party'*.

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the ANC has dominated the South African political scene and has shaped the way this country is today. The first term of ANC government was largely characterized by legislative developments with the purpose of creating a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic country. The government provided democratic policies and practices in order to ensure a checks-and-balances system of powers. This basically meant the independence of the judiciary, the promotion and protection of media freedom and the

accountability of political institutions.

At the same time, during this decade of democracy, the ANC political leadership earned international recognition, and the reputation of being a good reconciler, mediator and peace-maker in relation to the political turmoil afflicting some African governments (DRC, Burundi and Zimbabwe). South Africa has taken the lead of African pan-unionism.The significance of its political leadership in the continent has been underlined by granting South Africa the chairpersonship of the African Union Commission on the occasion of the inauguration of the first session of the Pan-African Parliament, on 18 March 2004.

However, while the institutions of democracy have been elaborated and South Africa's role in the continent enhanced, the challenge of economic upliftment of the poorest South Africans remains fundamental to the success of the transition.

This side of the mandate with which voters have trusted the ANC for three consecutive terms cannot be disputed. Since 1994, the ANC government has passed a significant amount of social legislation that claims to help address the inequities of the past. Starting from 1992-1993, spending on social services has grown from 44.4% of general government expenditure to 56.7% in 2002-2003. The government has facilitated the construction of 1.6 million new houses, supplied water to nine million households and sanitation to 6.4 million, and created two million net new jobs. Government also embarked on policies and programmes geared toward ensuring economic development.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) sought to address the issue of economic development and sustainable growth. The efficacy of these programmes remains debatable. While on one hand the recent sound performance of South Africa's macro-economy is attributed to the implementation of the fundamentals underlying GEAR, on the other hand GEAR has had negative consequences for the poor in South Africa.

This combination of social policies in some areas and of a conservative macroeconomic programme in others led to a sort of de-racialisation of the apex of the class structure but left the largest part of the population exactly where it was: marginalised, poor and overwhelmingly black.

Miceli (2007) is of the opinion that the fundamental challenge facing South Africa is the need to find sustainable means to overcome the apartheid legacy of racial division, poverty, and inequality; to reverse decades of distortionary political, social, and economic policies that disfavoured, rather than promoted,

development. Seekings in 2000 argued in the same vein when he said that the end of apartheid may not have seen extensive racial desegregation, but it has seen the emergence of a clear class division in South African populace including the African populations. More importantly, the authors argue that if people have sufficient stake in their country, they will not destroy it and their fellow citizens.

The crisis of expectation and crime
Crime and violence have dominated South Africa's transformation over the past two decades. High crime rates cause widespread feelings of insecurity and fear which undermine popular confidence in the democratisation process. Considering both trends and public perceptions, this paper explores changing crime levels over the past decade, elaborating on the problems associated with crime statistics in South Africa, and the salience of the transition for current crime levels. Data is drawn from official police statistics and from victimisation and other surveys. Crime has been increasing gradually in South Africa since 1980. It is, however, since 1990 – and not more recently, as popular belief has it – that levels have risen sharply. An examination of the statistics shows that despite general increases, not all crimes have been committed with equal frequency and not all areas of the country are similarly affected. These trends are a product of the political transition and are associated with the effects of apartheid and political violence, the breakdown in the criminal justice system and more recently, the growth in organised crime. High crime levels are taking their toll on South Africans. Surveys show that crime rather than socio-economic issues now dominates people's concerns, and that fear of crime is increasing. Currently, fewer people feel safe and believe the government has the situation under control than in previous years. Faced with widespread unemployment on the one hand, and the prospects of development on the other, the levels of property crimes will probably continue to increase. While violent crime levels should decline over the medium term, improved relations with the police and a culture of reporting crimes like rape and assault may result in more crime being recorded.

The crisis of expectation and the declining human development trajectory
There is no doubt that the policies and RDP agenda of Government over the past 14 years have attempted to address the legacy of apartheid, but its

implementation and the resultant outcomes were not 'in sinc' with these intentions. The declining Human development index is indicative of this reality.

According to Ul Haq, the objective of development is 'to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives'.**[i]** In this regard, South Africa's stated commitment in its constitution to the attainment of 'a better life for all', not just a better life for small pockets of this once-divided nation, should drive whatever we do to promote sustainable development. Mbeki in responding to the Human Development Report 2006 agreed that

… development and security complement mutually reinforce each other. It is clear that one simply cannot be achieved without the other, and neither is sustainable without respect for human rights, which empowers individuals and communities with the freedom to make better choices.

Yet, the statistics reflect otherwise.

In June 2006, the Presidency released its *A nation in the making: A discussion document on macro-social trends in South Africa*. The study found that between 1995 and 2000, the rural share of income poverty declined by approximately 5%, while it increased by 5% in the urban areas. In 1995, 28% of households lived below the estimated poverty datum line of R322 per month, while the figure for 2000 was just under 33%.

In terms of inequality, data shows that in 2000, the poorest 20% of households accounted for 2,8%. In contrast, the wealthiest 20% of households accounted for 64,5% of all expenditure. The income and expenditure Gini coefficients point to a rising inequality amongst Africans.

In terms of unemployment, the 2001 Labour Force Survey shows that that the distribution of those aged 15-65 by labour market status is as follows: 35,9% of Africans, 21,8% of Coloureds; 18,4% of Indians, and 6% of whites were unemployed. In September 2005, the figures were as follows: the unemployment rate amongst Blacks was 31,5%, 22,4% amongst Coloureds, and 5,1% amongst whites.

A further racial imbalance is that 50% of Africans live in households of four or more people, compared with 30% of whites. Yet, in terms of number of rooms available to households, 73% of Africans have four rooms or less to live in, including kitchens and toilets, while 86% of white households have four or more rooms in the household.

In terms of electricity, 40% of Africans use it as the energy source for cooking,

while for whites this percentage is 96,6%. Of all the top management positions in the country, white males constitute 77,3%, compared to 5% Black males, 2% Coloured males, and 3.3% Indian males. For females, the percentages are 10,2% white females, 1,2% Blacks, 0,7% Coloureds, and 0,5% Indians.

Research shows that 51% of Black matriculates are still looking for employment, compared to 14% of Whites; 30% of Coloureds, and 28% of Indians. The less skilled are also caught in a poverty trap. As the Macro-social Report puts it: *'The lack of knowledge is linked to social status'*. In terms of gender, some 52,2% of the country's population is female, but the male gender dominates political, economic and social life in the country.

Moving now to causes of death and social demographics, research shows that young Blacks and Coloureds are more likely to die of unnatural causes of death – mainly violence and car accidents – than other sections of the population. The macro-social report states that AIDS-related causes of death increased from about 15% of all deaths in 1997 to about 25% in 2001. It also states that *'central in determining social behaviour is the system of ownership and distribution of resources, Coloured – in the South African setting – by race'*.

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The crisis of expectation and poverty
Poverty is inseparable from politics in South Africa, whether looking at origins and causes, its current form, or solutions. Since the turn of the century, a growing literature has sprung up attempting to answer the burning question of whether the South African income distribution has improved in terms of a reduction in poverty and inequality since political transition. In per capita terms South Africa is an upper-middle-income country, but notwithstanding this relative wealth, the experience of most South African households is one of absolute poverty or of continuing vulnerability to being poor. In addition, the distribution of income and

wealth in South Africa is among the most unequal in the world, and many households still have unsatisfactory access to education, health care, energy and clean water. This triggered the famous quote in the 1998 parliamentary debate on reconciliation and nation-building, when then deputy president Thabo Mbeki (Mbeki 1998) famously argued that

Material conditions ... have divided our country into two nations, the one black, and the other white. ... [the latter] is relatively prosperous and has ready access to a developed economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure ... The second, and larger, nation of South Africa is black and poor, with the worst affected being women in the rural areas, the black rural population in general and the disabled.

This nation lives under conditions of a grossly underdeveloped economic, physical, educational, communication and other infrastructure. It has virtually no possibility to exercise what in reality amounts to a theoretical right to equal opportunity.

Measuring poverty is not a straightforward matter, as it depends on a critical assumption: what level of income constitutes the poverty line? Despite being considered an upper-middle income country, South Africa is a country of stark contrasts. The extreme inequality evident in South Africa means that one sees destitution, hunger and overcrowding side-by-side with affluence.

Poverty in South Africa has racial, gender and spatial dimensions, a direct result of the policies of the successive colonial, segregationist and apartheid regimes. Poverty is distributed unequally among the nine provinces. Provincial poverty rates are highest for the Eastern Cape (71%), Free State (63%), North-West (62%), Northern Province (59%) and Mpumalanga (57%), and lowest for Gauteng (17%) and the Western Cape (28%). Three children in five live in poor households, and many children are exposed to public and domestic violence, malnutrition, and inconsistent parenting and schooling. Redistribution of income in South Africa in order to address disparities is not a story of only the post-apartheid era. From the late 1970s, expenditure on Africans began to rise, first in response to increasing political instability from 1976, which led to rising education spending. Between 1990 and 1993, expenditure on Africans accelerated sharply as the apartheid government desperately tried to buy black support during the constitutional negotiations for the forthcoming universal franchise election (Gelb 2003: 11). In the post-apartheid era robust measures ranging from slowing down population

growth in the black community to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) have been initiated to address issues of poverty and inequality.

By the beginning of the new century the South African government had increased the social grants, which form the safety net for the poor, to 22 Billion Rand (Berg et al. 2006: 23). May (1998) points out that by early 1996 it had become clear that without new macroeconomic initiatives by the government, economic growth rates could not be attained that were both sustainable and high enough for effective poverty alleviation, income redistribution, employment creation and financing of essential social services. The government then formulated the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. GEAR reiterated government's commitment to the existing economic policy framework, identified many of the structural weaknesses inhibiting economic growth and employment, and focused attention on market-based policies to address them. This helped to address employment creation, public works programmes, equity and discrimination, labour standards and job security, minimum wages and training for skilled labour. In order to address inequality in the health sector, the government also introduced universal access to primary health care in South Africa. In the Education sector the government gives leniency to Black South Africans' access to tertiary education, allowing them to be enrolled despite having low academic grades.

Last but not least, the South African government needs to keep an eye on corruption which seems to be working against some of the initiatives like Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). Instead of tackling inequality, BEE has created a clique of very rich Black South Africans, thus causing more intra-racial inequalities.

The crisis of expectation and a de-racialised democracy
The radicalised and class-divided spaces created by the apartheid state did not automatically disappear after democratisation but have in fact become even further entrenched. The social structure of post-apartheid cities remains a neglected subject and in order to address some of the inequalities equitable allocation of housing should be made a priority. Government policies and the strategies of organised social actors with which these policies interact are fundamental, for they provide a framework through which change is enabled. It is the grinding together of different South Africans at grassroots levels, the white residents in the edges of the mountains in Cape Town, the black proletariat in the

shacks in Khayelitsha and those eking a living at the edges, which will shape their common future (Dickinson 2002: 11). Some critics argue that this has become further entrenched by the very economic and developmental policies that were to prevent this from happening. Others still argue that these poverty-ravaged spaces have become fertile ground for crime and to some extent, pre-determine criminal behaviour amongst its residents. Government in its planning did not envisage the impact of the chain reaction that the instability in neighbouring states and the resultant migration of refugees would have on development in South Africa. The influx of refugees and migrants seeking a better life in South Africa resulted in heaping poverty on poverty, which has created a self-reinforcing cycle in which levels of crime within certain regions of the country have fostered a climate that favoured the current xenophobic behaviour of people within these areas.

The year 2009 is likely to see president Mbeki's successor being confronted with the same harsh human development realities which confronted his predecessors Mandela and Mbeki. South Africa during the last ten years has dropped 35 places to being 120th on the UN's global Human Development Index (HDI), mostly due to the AIDS pandemic.**[ii]** The main opposition however holds the government responsible for increasing *'the gulf between the rich and poor'* to levels far higher than during apartheid through failed economic policies **[iii].**

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Social policies and expenditure on people
Since 1994, there has been a qualitative shift in how government addresses the problems of poverty. In aid-dependent countries like Mozambique and Malawi, the governments enjoy little policy autonomy to set their countries' development agendas. Post-settlement South Africa found itself in the fortunate position that it enjoyed almost total control of its agenda, and the development path it would

pursue.

Anybody who would like to understand post-apartheid South Africa's social policy landscape would be well-advised to consult a range of policy instruments and strategic documents which capture the country's approach to social and development policy. Government's goals are spelt out in the Constitution; the White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP); Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR); State of the Nation Addresses of the President; the Annual Budget of the Minister of Finance; the Strategies of national departments; the Ten-Year Review; the Medium Term Expenditure Framework; the Medium Term Strategic Framework; Integrated Development Plans (IDPs); and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA)**[iv]**.

Whereas the apartheid state and government were committed to guarantee the security and the prosperity of the white population first and foremost, the post-apartheid government took its leave firstly from the 1996 Constitution, which calls for a *'progressive realization of rights'*, therefore calling for the incremental redress of poverty and inequality. Specifically the Constitution places an onus of responsibility on the state. In the words of the Constitution, *'The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right'*. The Constitution is thus clear in that the state must act reasonably and decisively in the sphere of addressing socio-economic inequalities, namely redressing inequalities, and unequal access to housing, electricity, water, health, and other sectors **[v]**.

From a policy perspective, government adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994, a development vision cutting across all spheres of societal development. The RDP was accepted as the de facto policy framework of the new government, functioning as a 'blueprint' for social and political transformation in South Africa.**[vi]** The RDP was institutionalized in the form of the RDP Ministry and the RDP Fund. The erstwhile RDP office formed a focal point of donor support from 1994 to early 1996. The RDP sought to facilitate cross-cutting policy approaches and encouraged new approaches to public sector management and budgeting to meet government's overall reconstruction objectives.

Critiques of the RDP's institutional arrangements and operational mechanisms broadly centred on the increasing understanding within the state that the RDP

was not a full strategy for governance and development and was open to wide interpretation.

Government subsequently developed what it said was a more comprehensive macro-economic policy, Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR); there was recognition that RDP priorities would only take place in the context of economic growth.**[vii]** Thus GEAR is predicated on the need for economic growth and provides a strategic framework within which decisions on monetary, fiscal and labour market policy have been taken since 1996. It involves, *inter alia*, liberalization of the economy, privatization of government assets and a reduction of state spending. GEAR is a key driver of the government's trade strategy and has been recognized by the private sector both locally and internationally as a sound economic framework.

But outside these constituencies, GEAR has been consistently criticized by among others, the labour movement and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The view held by these parties is that, even if GEAR does facilitate growth, it will do so in such a way that income redistribution will remain unaffected, resulting in a widening of the gap between rich and poor. These critics argue that poverty is on the increase and the country lacks a comprehensive framework on poverty alleviation.

One response from the state to articulate a comprehensive poverty alleviation framework has been the introduction in 1998 of a three-year budget cycle, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).**[viii]**

The MTEF's priorities are as follows:

– Meeting basic needs – principally in education, health, water and sanitation, social services, welfare, land reform and housing;

– Accelerating infrastructure development – ensuring investment in infrastructure, upgrading of roads, undertaking of spatial development initiatives (Spatial Development Initiatives), and addressing urban renewal – principally via private-public partnerships;

– Economic growth, development and job creation – the stimulated building of the economy to achieve sustainable, accelerated growth with correspondent redistribution in opportunities and income;

– Human resource development – the education and training of citizens in pre-primary, formative, tertiary, technical institutions and lifelong education and training for adults, the unemployed and out-of-school youth;

– Safety and security – the transformation of the criminal justice, police and prisons administration and the improvement in national defence and disaster management;

– Transformation of government – the strengthening of administration and good governance and the implementation of a code of conduct (*Batho Pele – People First*) for service delivery by the public sector.

In terms of funding its national development programmes, South Africa raises the bulk of its resources itself. Donor funding constitutes less than 0,5% of the national consolidated revenue of the country. From around 1998, the social security safety net expanded with the introduction of the Child Support Grant for children between the ages 0 and 7.**[ix]** In 2003, this increased to cover children 7 to 8 years old. From 2005/06, all children up to the age of 14 would qualify for grants.**[x]**

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The extension of the post-apartheid social security net is one of the greatest successes of post-apartheid South Africa.**[xi]** The number of beneficiaries increased from 2,5 million in 1997 to 5,6 million in 2003. By 2004, the social grants system delivered about 7,4 million grants; spending on social grants increased to over R40 billion in 2004.**[xii]** By 2005, there was a further increase in the numbers, with an estimated 9,2 million beneficiaries of the system.**[xiii]**

In 2003, Cabinet approved the Operational Plan for Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Care, Management and Treatment for South Africa.**[xiv]** This combined a progressive anti-retroviral roll-out.

More recently, government adopted the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGI-SA), a broad framework of steps that need to be taken to raise growth to much higher levels.**[xv]** ASGISA grew out of the 2003 Growth and

Development Summit and the Micro-economic Reform Strategy (MERS).

The main focus of ASGI-SA is to deal with a set of binding constraints that inhibit faster growth. These constraints are currency volatility and macro-economic stability; cost and efficiency of the national logistics system; skills shortages; high levels of inequality; barriers to compete in the sector; the regulatory environment for small and medium sized enterprises; and deficiencies in the capacities of government and parastatals.**[xvi]** A key proposal is to increase infrastructure spending to over R370 billion over the medium term expenditure period, fast track skills development, reducing the regulatory burden on small enterprises and improving capacity at the local and international level.**[xvii]**

As a development strategy, ASGI-SA does have specific sections on poverty eradication, equity, and distributional issues. First, there is a key Poverty Reduction dimension; this includes budget reform and reprioritisation, increasing access to income and employment opportunities for the poor, including the Extended Public Works Programme, ensuring food security and providing nutrition, meeting the demand of housing, providing comprehensive free primary health care, building and upgrading clinics, and revitalising hospitals and expanding the immunisation programme.**[xviii]**

Expenditure on HIV and AIDS programmes has increased incrementally over the cause of the past decade. Expenditure across national departments has increased from about R30 million in 1994 to R342 million in 2001/02. Expenditure is set to increase to R3,6 billion in 2006/07, and focuses on prevention, care and treatment.**[xix]**

In the areas of TB, malaria control, medicine supply, and human resources are priorities. At a broader level, broadening access to, and improving the quality of education, land reform, water and sanitation, universal access to electricity and improving transport are all chief priorities.**[xx]**

Over the past twelve years, education and health gradually emerged as the two sectors getting most of the budget allocation. This is very important if South Africa is to become a developmental state. Such a state typically prioritises social sectors such as health and education.

It is important to point out here that since the 1997/98 budget, government started to provide for special poverty relief programmes. In 1998/99 these allocations were broadened to include a focus on temporary poverty relief, and extended in 1999/00 to include commitment at the Presidential Job Summit.

Programmes funded through this source complemented other key poverty alleviation interventions such as social security grants, and the delivery of basic services to communities like education, health, welfare, housing, water and sanitation, electricity, waste removal and municipal roads.

The 2006 national budget was a balance between addressing the needs and wants of various economic actors. That year's budget represented an increase in social grants and spending. 60% of the budget went towards social spending.**[xxi]** In 2008/09, social spending declined to 49,5%, from 51,7% in the previous year's budget.**[xxii]** This was mainly because of massive expenditure in energy and infrastructural development.

Institutional arrangements to South Africa's HDI

In South Africa, several institutional actors play roles in crafting development and social policy in the country. These range from Cabinet, National Ministers and their various Departments, Provincial Premiers, Members of the Executive Councils in provinces, Mayors and local councils, Working Groups, and others.**[xxiii]** But the Department of Social Development is the pivotal player in the area of social policy, social protection, social security and social affairs. The aim of the Department of Social Development is to ensure the provision of comprehensive social protection services against vulnerability and poverty within the constitutional and legislative framework, and create an enabling environment for sustainable development.**[xxiv]** The Department further aims to deliver integrated, sustainable and quality services in partnership with all those committed to creating a caring society.**[xxv]** The Department is responsible for policy and oversight in the critical areas of social assistance and social welfare assistance. Social assistance refers to means-tested cash benefits to vulnerable groups in South Africa, whereas social welfare services refer to probation and adoption services, child and family counselling and support services, and secure centres.**[xxvi]**

The Department runs approximately nine (9) programmes.

Programme 1 is Administration, and its goal is to provide for policy formulation by the ministry and top management, and for overall management and support services.

Programme 2 is Social Security Policy and Planning. The purpose of this programme is to develop, coordinate and facilitate the implementation of policies and strategies, and facilitate financial planning for social security in line with the

national macro-economic goals and development objectives.

Programme 3 is Grant systems and service delivery assurance. This programme designs operational systems to ensure that services are provided to social assistance and disaster relief beneficiaries; it also monitors and evaluates service delivery and compliance to minimize fraud and assess the impact of policies.

Programme 4 is that of Social Assistance. This programme makes funds available to provinces to administer and pay social assistance in terms of the Social Assistance Act (1992), and fund and manage the establishment and development of the South African Social Security Agency.

Programme 5 is Welfare Services Transformation, a programme with the purpose of facilitating the transformation of development-oriented social welfare services to vulnerable individuals, households and communities.

Programme 6 is Children, Families and Youth Development. This programme seeks to ensure the protection and empowerment of vulnerable children, youth and families.

Programme 7 is Development Implementation Support. Its purpose is to develop, implement and monitor strategies to promote the delivery of integrated and well-co-ordinated and well-structured poverty alleviation and community development services to vulnerable groups, households and individuals.

Programme 8 is HIV and AIDS, with the express purpose of developing policies, strategies and programmes aimed at mitigating the social impact of HIV and AIDS. It also seeks to develop and implement strategies for children and families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, and facilitate the rollout of home community-based care and support programmes.

So, judging from the above, the Department of Social Development is a key, if not the most pivotal player in the area of social development in South Africa. But we have to appreciate that South Africa takes the question of cooperative and integrated governance seriously; thus Social Development was also part of a Cluster System in South Africa. The Social Cluster, which includes the Departments of Social Develop¬ment, Education, Labour, Health, Housing, Arts and Culture, and Sports and Recreation, also plays a crucial role in terms of social policy in the country.

Thus, the question of overseeing the impact of policy-making on poverty, ensuring that the different sectors from transport to health serve the needs of the majority of citizens, involves a number of actors. So, while the Ministry of Social

Development is the lead agent in dealing with social affairs, policy and governance in South Africa has become a shared responsibility.

Turning now to the important question of partnerships that exist between public–private sector or civil society organizations, it is important to point out that it has a key responsibility in working with a key civil society partner, and overseeing it, the National Development Agency (NDA). The Department is also busy setting up South African Social Security Agency, a schedule 3 Agency or public entity that will be responsible for administering social assistance grants, and relating to provinces.

Why is South Africa's HDI so poor?

It is very easy and very tempting to do what many analysts do and blame South Africa's poor human development record just on policies, and to lay the blame especially on 'policies as pursued by the Mbeki administration'. It has indeed become fashionable to go for such single factor explanations. We are however going to break with what is clearly becoming a trend out there; instead of this quixotic rationale we are instead going to opt for a multi-causal set of explanations and variables that could help to shed light on South Africa's human development conundrum. This is not to shrug off the centrality of policies adopted by government, and their impact on the human development in the country. It is conceivable that the growth trajectory embedded in South Africa's policy positions played a key role. It has been said that South Africa has pursued something of a neo-classical, modernisationist economic model during the course of the past decade. Timothy Murithi reminds us that *'neo-liberal economics'* represent a *'type of laissez faire capitalism'* which *'undermines social welfare programmes and creates a fictional perception of a free-market system'* **[xxvii]**. One of Africa's most respected development thinkers, Adebayo Adedeji said about South Africa's GEAR strategy:

*Just as the rest of black Africa has failed to deconstruct its inherited colonial political economy, so post-apartheid South Africa, in deference to a compromise based on sufficient consensus, has not chosen the path of fundamental socio-economic transformation.***[xxviii]**

But the problem was not just policy per se, the problem was also how policy was

arrived at, or the policy style, to use a different phrase. In spite of its stated commitment to bring about a Developmental State, government has consistently struggled to mobilise social partners behind an all-encompassing interest – a Social Compact. Government dominated policy-making and social partners, and even those close to the ruling ANC like COSATU, the SACP, and SANCO felt excluded and marginalised from policy processes. Many of them held the view that the Presidency, especially the Policy and Advisory Services (PCAS) unit, dominated policy-making and coordination efforts. Government has to understand that it cannot tackle the country's vast socio-economic challenges on its own. It needs the efforts of social partners and should therefore democratise the policy, development and governance processes.

The third explanation we have to advance here is that of the enduring legacies of apartheid. It is easily forgotten that the apartheid state left a trail of human misery in its wake, and it will take decades, maybe even centuries to overcome these legacies.

Conclusion: Way forward

South Africa is going through some important changes at a political level. The recall of President Thabo Mbeki, talk of a breakaway party and the increased influence of COSATU and SACP within the ANC are some indicators of these changes. These changes have also brought in their wake an increased sense that there has to be a renewed debate about the way in which the state is challenging and confronting poverty and inequality.

One of the central lessons to be learnt from the last decade is that changes cannot be a top-down process while civil society has to develop strategies to engage with the state. Civil society actors should appreciate their pivotal role in engaging providers of services at local, provincial and national levels, and their place in creating opportunities and space for communities to influence policy and development processes. So, the participatory opportunities for communities to get more directly involved in policy, planning and governance should be broadened.

A partnership and participatory approach presupposes that the skills levels of local government and municipal levels would become more strategic. Skills at this level have been poorly developed and many of them have reached a state of crisis over the course of the last decade.

The capacity of local and provincial government to integrate HDI issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS, the rural question, and other key aspects, into policy needs to

be enhanced.

It is absolutely critical that that the service delivery capacity of the state in general, and of local and provincial government in particular be bolstered. At a minimum, the interface between national, provincial and local government spheres must become tighter and better coordinated so as to have maximum impact on the delivery of services.

While the quest to create a more equal society in South Africa has come up against numerous problems and is now faced with a crisis of expectation, there exists an opportunity to put right past mistakes and accelerate the delivery of basic services.

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Notes

i. Discourse is defined as 'a set of meanings embodied in metaphors, representations, images, narratives and statements that advance a particular version of *'the truth'* about objects, persons, events and the relation between them' (Long 2002: 52). Institutions and actors may have 'their own' discourse and way of thinking about development, which may conflict with the discourse owned by others.

ii. See United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2007-08, UNDP, New York, 2008.

iii. AFROLNews, 'Human Development Report Shocks South Africa', 7 April 2008.

iv. African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Country Self-Assessment: Government's Submission, Third Draft, March 2006.

v. Ibid.

vi. For an assessment of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, see Tobie Schmitz and Claude Kabemba, Enhancing policy implementation: Lessons from the Reconstruction and Development Programme, Research report no 89, Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg, September 2001.

vii. See Zondie Masiza and Xolela Mangcu, Understanding policy implementation: An exploration of research areas surrounding growth, employment and redistribution (GEAR) strategy, Centre for Policy Studies, Research Report no. 78, Johannesburg May 2001.

viii. This information is borrowed from government's 10-year review process in which this author is a participant.

ix. Republic of South Africa, National Treasury, Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 2003, April 2003, p. 95.

x. Ibid.

xi. Ibid.

xii. Republic of South Africa, National Treasury, Budget Review 2004, 18 February 2004, p. 121.

xiii. Republic Of South Africa, National Treasury, Estimates of National Expenditure 2005, February 2005, p. 403.

xiv. Republic of South Africa, National Treasury, Budget Review 2004, op. cit, p. 122.

xv. See Government's perspective on issues raised in the APRM Country Self-Assessment Questionnaire, January 2006.

xvi. Ibid.

xvii. Ibid.

xviii. Ibid.

xix. Ibid.

xx. Ibid.

xxi. See Global Insight Perspective, 18 February 2006.

xxii. See Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), The 2008/09 National Budget, Weather the Storm, Invest for Growth, IDC, Sandton, 21 February 2008.

xxiii. African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Country Self-Assessment: Government's Submission, Third Draft, March 2006.

xxiv. Republic Of South Africa, National Treasury, Estimates of National Expenditure 2005, op. cit., p. 403.

xxv. Ibid.

xxvi. Ibid.

xxvii. Timothy Murithi, The African Union, Pan-Africanism, peace-building and development, Ashgate Publishing, 2005, p. 145.

xxviii. Adebayo Adedeji, 'South Africa and Africa's political economy: Looking inside from the outside', in Adekeye Adebajo, Adebayo Adedeji and Chris Landsberg (eds.), South Africa in Africa: The post-apartheid era, University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2006, p. 55.

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