Chapter 1

South African politics and collective action, 1994-2000

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Institutions, movements and identities have changed with the demise of apartheid. For a proper understanding of the survey findings described in the subsequent chapters we need a contextual frame of reference. This introduction is intended to supply such a framework by giving an overview of the historical developments during the years of our study, 1994 to 2000. It draws attention to the institutional and organisational changes in South African political life that can help to explain the changing ways in which people define their social identity, their relationship with their fellow citizens and their feelings about government. It also explores the demographic and cultural developments that influence shifts in popular propensities for collective action as well as the alterations in the repertoire of political participation that followed the achievement of representative democracy.

After reviewing developments in South African social structure, we consider the implications of the change from extra-parliamentary struggle to electoral activism. Subsequently, we examine the role of the social movements which were left behind as activists ascended to public office. These were influenced by profound changes in the institutional framework of local politics, and these changes are detailed here. Meanwhile, in central government, an initial vision of "people-driven" development was largely supplanted by less participatory and more managerial conceptions of public service. Finally, this chapter addresses the ways in which social mobility, electoral politics and new kinds of provincial authority complicated popular conceptions of political and social identity.

Demographic change and changing social structure

South Africa's population grew from 38.6 million in 1994 to 43 million in 1999, an annual rise of around 2%, reflecting a fertility rate falling from 4.6 children in 1982 to 2.9 in 1997 (Statistics South Africa, 2000; fertility figures from World Bank data cited in *The Star,* 17 November 1998).

Population growth is now the lowest on the African continent, an achievement demographers attribute to aggressive family-planning initiatives during the apartheid era and the high use of contraceptives by women since then. The 1996 census suggested that South Africa's 40.15 million people included 31.1 million Africans (77% of the total), 4.4 million Whites (11%), 3.6 million Coloureds (9%) and 1 million Indians (3%). In 1996, nearly half the African population (14.6 million) were aged 19 years or younger. Of Africans, 13.5 million (43%) were urbanised, and of Whites 4 million (91%), of Coloureds 3 million (83%) and of Indians 1 million (97%) were urbanised. Urbanisation rates especially affected Africans of whom only 35,4% were living in towns in 1991.

Social inequality amongst Africans is growing,[1] a reflection of greater absolute numbers and proportions of poor people on the one hand and enhanced social mobility on the other. In 1998, only 19% of Africans were living in households with per capita incomes of more than R370 per month (Hirschowitz, 2000). However, by 1996 the 700 000 Africans in managerial, professional and "associate professional" grades of employment represented about half the number of employees in these categories. In other words, Africans today are likely to predominate within the upper middle class. As a consequence, as will be evident from the survey findings described in Chapter 2, race has become less salient as a determinant of high income. Poverty is also distributed unevenly geographically. About 12% of the populations of Gauteng and the Western Cape are officially classified as impoverished, whereas poverty levels exceed 40% in the Eastern Cape and Free State.

[1] Within this group the "Gini coefficient" rose from 0.70 in 1995 to 0.81 in 1998.

Unemployment is a major cause of poverty. Between 1995 and 1996, the number of jobs increased by 500 000, although all of them were in the informal sector (including domestic service). Formal sector employment declined by 1%. Official figures suggest that unemployment rose from 1 811 000 to 3 158 000 (from 15.5% to 23.3%). Meanwhile, the working-age population increased by about 500 000 per year (Baskin, 2000). The main losses were recorded in the manufacturing, construction and mining sectors. Government-owned parastatal corporations were responsible for a major contribution to job losses—100 000 workers were retrenched by parastatals between 1994 and 1999 (*The Star*, 27 September 2000). Between 1988 and 1998, manufacturing employment fell from 1.5 million to 1.1 million (*The Star*, 31 December 1998). Between 1988 and 1993, the number of plants rose but their average workforce size fell from 75 employees to 60, a reflection of the growing use of sub-contractors. Meanwhile, since 1993, 500 000 farm workers left commercial farms to seek work elsewhere, taking with them 5 million dependents. The survey data cited later in this book will show how the geographical distribution of unemployment has been increasingly skewed towards the "periphery" (small rural towns and the countryside).

What are the political implications of these statistics? Fertility decline will shortly produce an older population. Meanwhile, though, the number of young people arriving on the labour market every year expands while the workforce becomes progressively older. In other words, young people are increasingly unlikely to be employed after their schooling, a tendency which may account for their growing political disengagement. During the 1980s, inter-generational tensions were expressed through challenges to the political authority of elders, embodied, for example, in the vanguard role of organised youth movements. One decade later, crime may have replaced the activism that spearheaded the insurrectionary politics that helped to bring about transition to democracy. However, despite unemployment, trade union membership has grown—from 2 993 993 in 1992 to 3 801 388 in 1998, an increase of 31% (11% in 1997/1998)—to embrace 26% of the economically active population and 30% of economically active Africans. Nevertheless, the rise in the number of trade

unions from 194 to 463 reflects an increasingly fragmented workforce, one that is more difficult to organise. The incidence of strikes fell sharply. In 1994, 3.9 million man-days were lost in industrial disputes and in 1998, the most strike-affected year after 1994, man-days lost totalled 2.3 million. In 1998, two-thirds of the strike days was the consequence of wage disputes, mainly in the automobile and chemical industries (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1999). Farm retrenchments helped to accelerate urbanisation, with small towns in affected areas growing very quickly indeed. For example, farm worker evictions were believed to have doubled the populations of certain towns in Mpumalanga between 1994 and 1996. Rapid urbanisation led to an expansion of informal settlements (the government's housing programme notwithstanding). For example, in Johannesburg 33 000 people settled in shanties in Diepsloot between 1991 and 1994, many from the Northern Province in search of work, but others from nearby townships where they could no longer afford to pay service charges (*Sunday Independent*, 2 April 2000—Ray, M. "Johannesburg's urban renewal of apartheid").

A series of case studies by Janet Cherry (2000) suggests that the most stable and disciplined forms of political organisation are located in African communities in the older township neighbourhoods, which are characterised by government-built family housing. Social mobility may have weakened community organisation. The 700 000 strong African managerial class recorded in the 1996 census attests to recent and rapid social mobility, many of its members having moved out of townships and hence out of the ambit of working-class and community-based associational life. HIV/AIDS is another, less easily quantifiable, factor that may have begun to remove people from leadership positions during the period under review. Among teachers, for example, infection rates within certain communities are believed to be as high as 25%. The Human Development Index 2000 of the United Nations suggests that South Africa's life expectancy shrank by ten years between 1995 and 1998. Local estimates suggest that 3.8 million people may be infected with HIV/AIDS and that by 2004, the year of the next general election, 30% of the population could be HIV positive (*The Star*, 17 May 1999).

From struggle mobilisation to electoral politics

Notwithstanding a prolonged discussion among the ANC's strategic thinkers as to whether the organisation should attempt to retain the characteristics of a liberation movement, the most obvious ANC activism after 1994 occurred in the months preceding national and local elections, as is the pattern among conventional political parties. As an electoral party, the ANC was sometimes led by strategic imperatives of political marketing (Scammell, 1995) to invest much effort in "conversion" electioneering, directed at winning the loyalty of formerly hostile communities or perceived "swing" voters as well as increasingly defining its programme and ideology in centrist or consensual terms (Lodge, 1994).

What were the consequences of the ANC's transformation into a body primarily geared to contesting elections? Active membership declined by more than half overall between 1994 and 1999, from 1 000 000 to 400 589 (*Sunday Independent*, 9 July 2000) and in certain provinces the drop in membership was even more serious. In Gauteng, for example, by 1998, the organisation's adherents numbered 44 000, down from 120 000 in 1994.[2] In the southern ANC region of the Northern Province the number of active branches fell from 186 in 1998, before the provincial conference, to 15 in 2000 (*The Star*, 14 July 2000). For those who remained faithful, falling levels of branch activism signaled organisational atrophy. A provincial council in the Western Cape noted that "the organisation was generally weak at all levels, particularly at a branch level" (*The Star*, 28 July 2000). A list of prescribed branch activities given by the ANC secretary-general, Kgalema Mothlanthe, attempted to define the role that branches should play between election seasons: helping pensioners to obtain grants, encouraging communities to participate in school governance and housing programmes, and fostering links between parliamentarians and their "constituencies". However, Mothlanthe's list drew attention to what branches were not doing (Bernstein, 1999). By the end of 1997, the ANC's own officials were willing to concede that half the organisation's 1 000 or

[2] Figures given by the provincial secretary-general at a conference and cited in *The Citizen*, 30 March 1998.

so branches might be "dysfunctional" (Bernstein (1999) citing Cheryl Carolus, p. 115). The stagnation at the ANC's grass roots was evident in the run-up to the 2000 local government elections when plans for a recruitment drive failed to materialise in many centres. According to the assistant general secretary, Thenjiwe Mthintso, this was partly because those in control of many branches were reluctant to surrender their function as "gatekeepers". In some cases, she said, families and friends had put together candidate lists in the name of branches that had become moribund (*Business Day,* 11 December 2000; *The Star,* 21 December 2000). Mothlanthe's report to the ANC's general council meeting in Port Elizabeth in July 2000 was even more disparaging; in North West, he noted, there were reportedly battles between councillors and branch executive members. There was limited "cadre development", and many party structures showed "a very low level of political consciousness". As a consequence membership declined.

The experience of individual branches offers revealing insights into the reasons for diminished local commitment to the ANC. In Hammanskraal, outside Pretoria, for example, the outbreak of tension between branch leaders and civic activists resulted in a protest march in early 2000 to local council offices and the subsequent expulsion from the branch of five "community activists", led by Virginia Mashamaile, a civic movement veteran. After the 1995 local elections, ANC branch leaders and their civic allies ran a number of poverty alleviation projects, although tension developed between local project managers and the councillors who controlled access to public funds. Decision making about how the projects should be run increasingly became "a top-down affair" and community involvement was short-circuited. The activist march was a direct consequence of growing suspicion that councillors were misusing funds, although support for the march was also attributable to a wider sense of disillusion among the ANC's local followers. Branch meetings, apparently, had merely become forums for supplying "rubber stamps for decisions already taken by ANC councillors", and whatever local standing ANC leaders retained was a consequence not of activism but of passive

receipt of "benefits distributed to the poor" (*Sunday Independent*, 11 June 2000).

Meanwhile, both within and beyond the ANC's traditional following, there was evidence of declining levels of political participation, at least with respect to elections. In 1999, 3.5 million fewer voters cast their ballots in the national election than five years earlier, a fall in turn-out from an estimated 90% to 68% (calculated as a proportion of the voting-age population). A comparative analysis of party gains and losses in the two elections suggests that about 1.1 million abstainers were white and mainly urban and 1.5 million were black and concentrated in the rural Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal; the remainder was Indian or Coloured, indicating especially high rates of abstention in those communities. African abstention may well have been frequently involuntary as a consequence of the organisational limitations in the voter registration process, but survey evidence suggests that white, Indian and coloured abstainers were especially susceptible to feelings of political dis-engagement, endorsing such sentiments as "political parties did not reflect the concerns of people like me" or citing disenchantment with corrupt office holders.[3] In the local government elections of 2000, voter turn-out at 48% (8.8 million voters) was only 1% below the level attained in the local government elections of 1995, but certainly represented a significant decline in electoral commitment since the national election the year before when almost twice as many people voted. In contrast to the 1999 general election, turn-out rates among Whites were believed to be high (estimates varied between 57% and 70%), but urban Blacks were least predisposed to voting. Responses to the Independent Electoral Commission's 2000 registration campaign were disappointing; in the 18-20 year old group only 280 000 people registered, although this cohort exceeded a million people according to South African demographic statistics. Evidence from monitoring reports during the electioneering and on polling day indicated

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[3] Findings from a survey commissioned by the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa and included in the HSRC's national omnibus survey in September - October 1999.

low interest among "youth" voters and, in many instances, their virtual absence from polling booths (Lodge, 2001).

Social movements and popular activism

Of course, electoral turn-out is only one indication of political participation. Moreover, the continuing resilience of local associational life suggests that voting abstention should not be equated with an end to popular activism. As the survey evidence in this publication suggests, public participation in township-based civic organisations maintained its vigour after 1994 and apparently became more widespread than active membership of political parties. The surveys also indicate that local youth and women's organisations remained popular. This may seem rather surprising. The national civic movement, SANCO, has been the focus of several scholarly studies and each of these suggest a pattern of decline and demoralisation. Since the 1994 and 1995 elections, civic associations were supposed to have lost their representative functions. After all, with the end of apartheid, social solidarity within communities, which had been engendered by anti-system politics, began to fragment, and the flow of external resources, upon which South African voluntary associations were so dependent, began to dwindle. The stresses attributable to these changes were evident in the high turn-over of SANCO leadership between 1992 and 1998, SANCO's financial indebtedness (R1.2 million by 1997) and the national body's increasing marginalisation in ANC "tripartite" alliance policy forums as well as in the re-organisation of local government (Lanegran, 1996; Seekings, 1997). However, top-down perspectives on national leadership structures may be misleading. As Jeremy Seekings notes, with respect to the advent of democratic local authorities, "if councillors neglect their constituency entirely then they allow SANCO space to organise a more or less loyal opposition". There is plenty of anecdotal evidence of such space opening up in certain centres as a consequence of councillors and councils performing badly in the eyes of their constituents.

In 1999, in KwaThema on the East Rand, a SANCO branch claiming "only" 1 000 "card carrying members", led a series of sometimes violent

protests (stoning and arson), culminating in a well-attended march against the council's treatment of electricity bill defaulters. (See reports in *Springs and Brakpan Advertiser*, 12 February 1999, 30 April 1999 and 8 October 1999.) In Tembisa, a SANCO branch president, Ali Tleane, was deposed from the mayorship of Kempton Park/Tembisa metropole for not paying his bills in protest against rate increases. Subsequently, SANCO led a programme of defiant reconnections of the electricity supply to residents who had been cut off (*The Star*, 22 August 1996). In Mdantsane, outside East London, a SANCO rally protesting on 22 March 1999 against the violent behaviour of taxi syndicates, was attended by 5 000 people supporting SANCO's call for a taxi boycott despite efforts by local ANC leaders to defer any action in favour of further negotiations (*East Cape Weekend*, 27 March 1999). In Witbank, in 1999, the SANCO branch campaigned for the removal of a corrupt councillor, vowing to "ensure that it will strengthen the alliance with the ANC so that no corrupt individuals are enlisted into leadership positions" (*Witbank News*, 16 April 1999). In Cathcart in the Eastern Cape, a SANCO/ANC rift, stemming partly from the SANCO branch's failure to consult the community about a housing scheme, prompted the withdrawal of the civic organisation from SANCO (because of SANCO's formal ANC affiliations) and its redesignation as the Cathcart Residents' Association, its name in the 1980s when it was a UDF affiliate (*Daily Despatch*, 4 March 1999 and 23 July 1999).

However, in the case of relatively effective councils, SANCO branches sometimes languished, with their community development/ mobilisation functions taken over by the ANC. For example, in Queenstown a busy ANC branch in Ezibeleni township had been engaged in the planning of housing delivery and the construction of local roads. In addition a revived chapter of the ANC Youth League was aiming to "make the youth participate in community development", linking this undertaking with a call to the council to improve the township stadium. Meanwhile, the Ezibeleni SANCO executive, at odds with the ANC branch over the previous three years, had failed to hold elections for three years and, according to its critics, functioned as a coterie of friends. (*Queenstown representative*, 13 November 1998 and 11 December 1998.) ANC

concerns about SANCO competing with its own branches for civic engagement were reflected in a proposal in its theoretical journal, *Umrabulo*, that the civic movement should be phased out through ANC branches taking up civic issues and acquiring local "hegemony". Of course such an approach might contain its own political risks. Such cases, though, may have represent the exception rather than the rule.

In certain cases, a strong local SANCO/ANC relationship allowed non-affiliated civic groups to emerge, sometimes in alliance with other political parties. In Tsakane, Brakpan, for instance, the Simunye in Christ Organisation, drawing support from public anger over the confiscation of property of service payment debtors, won 5 000 votes in the 2000 local election. On a happier note, the Community Police Forum's success in Ivory Park in Midrand in re-establishing street committees to contain vigilante action against suspected criminals, illustrates the continuing popular susceptibilities for collective action, outside the institutional framework supplied by procedural democracy (*The Star*, 17 February 1999—Mike Masipa, "Street committees returning to cut crime"). Both the police and development forums can provide an institutionalised procedure for partnerships between the state and civic society groups. For civics, though, the establishment of such bodies can lead to the dilution of their influence. In Edendale, outside Pietermaritzburg, home of a popular civic association, after the Edendale Development Forum was set up, the civic organisation found that it was just one voice among the 19 represented on the forum, and that funds from local donors that previously flowed to the civic to support development projects now went to the forum.[4]

Interviews with officials in civic organisations conducted as part of the HSRC Social Movements Project help to corroborate the impression of civic associations sustained by responsive followings and locally derived resources. Information collected in mid-2000 from officials in six SANCO civics in Gauteng townships (Kagiso, Tshepisong, Wattville,

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4 I am grateful to Alexius Amtaika of the Politics Department of Vista University's Soweto campus for allowing me to cite these insights from his doctoral research on local government in Pietermaritzburg.

Meadowlands, Spruitview and Katorus) indicates a range of local membership numbers between 25 and “more than a thousand”, with three of the associations claiming more than 500 members. With the exception of the Kagiso civic, which received a small grant from SASOL, all depended for their finances on membership fees and donations from within their respective communities. The two largest branches, Tsepisong and Wattville, employed paid officials, as did Meadowlands with its 200 members. With membership subscriptions ranging between R15 and R35, at best these officials would have been remunerated very modestly. Five claimed to hold meetings for their members more than once a month and to be quite frequently involved in the more decorous forms of “mass action” (meetings, rallies, demonstrations, petitions and, rarely, boycotts—the emphasis on forms of protest that suggest engagement with political authority itself being suggestive). Members were perceived by the officials interviewed to be largely unemployed and mainly in the 20-55 age range.[5] The testimony from these interviews does not substantiate contentions about “civil society in decline”. Nor does popular support for the civic movement necessarily indicate deep-seated political alienation, notwithstanding the emphasis in press reports on protest and SANCO/ANC dissent.

Of course, civic associations do not represent the sum of the social movement activism that evolved in South Africa between 1976 and 1994. Also, other sectoral kinds of organisation may not replicate the same trends. The apparent fragmentation in the civic movement as external resources were being redirected to government and more experienced leaders moved out into public office (or private business) belies local vitality, resilient community associations and continued preoccupation with the unemployed and the very poor. Indeed, local activism since 1994 was prompted by local concerns rather than the larger loyalties of the “national democratic” offensive against apartheid.

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5 HSRC Social Movement Project: interviews conducted in June -July 2000 with Thabang Mokoena, Xoliswa Sobekwa, Richard Maluleka, Thabiso Mphachake, Ludwig Shange and Alfred Phaweni.

Whether this picture holds for other movements such as the classroom and students' organisations or township women's groups has yet to be researched thoroughly. With respect to students and school children, a receding tide of classroom disruptions and low turn-outs in college SRC elections may reflect a demobilised constituency. The few instances of teenage activism since 1994 suggest at best an ambiguous social commitment. In March 2001, a rare demonstration led by COSAS, supposedly to protest against the government's continued willingness to fund private schools, managed to attract several thousand uniformed children into Johannesburg's central business district. However, the occasion quickly degenerated into a riot when badly disciplined participants began looting the pavement stalls lining the streets elected for the march. In general, though, politically motivated violent collective action was unusual in cities.

As suggested above, the favoured forms of civic protest (demonstrations, rallies and petitions) imply recognition of authority's legitimacy. Since 1994, political violence has been concentrated mainly among Islamic militants in Cape Town, who were responsible for 400 bombings. Here the anti-crime movement, People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) initially represented a powerful expression of the vigilante tradition, which in South African townships was fostered by the police's disinclination under apartheid to undertake criminal investigation as well as their occasional role as patrons to local gangsters. PAGAD's leaders, though, are strongly influenced by their experiences during the 1980s in an Islamic guerilla organisation, Qibla, and they appear to have become involved in terrorist attacks directed at both gangsters and facilities emblematic of the American consumption culture. Another vein of insurgent militancy is evident on White-owned farms, where attacks on proprietors and their households are believed by some analysts to have been fueled by the social antipathy of evicted farm workers. During 2000 the first land occupations in the commercial farming sector suggested that agrarian social tension may be growing.

Municipal reform

The resilience of civic activism is easier to explain when one considers the performance of local government since 1994. Municipal reform preceded the 1994 general election. In 1993, after lengthy negotiations, amalgamated local councils were created from black townships and the historically segregated white, Indian and coloured neighbourhoods, with different parties nominating representatives to sit on the new non-racial councils. In 1995 and 1996 elections were held for these bodies. The ANC won a majority of seats (6 032 out of 11 368), enough to win control over each of the main cities (metros) though not over all of their "sub-structures". The ANC also predominated in smaller centres, except in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. Despite a relatively low turn-out among black voters, survey evidence suggests that the new authorities started their work with substantial public support. An HSRC survey conducted before the poll indicated considerable trust among newly enfranchised citizens (HSRC, 1995). Of the black respondents, 40% agreed that "popular participation is not necessary if decision making is left in the hands of a few competent leaders" (with 38% disagreeing and 21% uncertain). More than half of the black respondents agreed that as a democratic system of local government existed, "we no longer have a need for organisations like civics and street committees".

Such sanguine expectations were soon to be disappointed, though, especially in smaller towns in which locally generated revenues from White-owned businesses now needed to be expended over a much more extensive and even needier set of areas than previously. The incorporation of badly indebted townships into former "white" councils and the decline in central government funding for support services in the townships soon resulted in a fiscal crisis. In the smaller rural centres the financial crisis was especially serious. The bankruptcy of Ogies in Mpumalanga, for example, resulted in the entire town being denied electricity by ESKOM in November 1998 and on several occasions subsequently, as a consequence of the council's failing to pay for the supply it had resold to residents (*Witbank News*, 8 July 1999). In the Eastern Cape, 26 municipalities were perceived to require "intervention" by the provincial government by mid-

1999 (*Eastern Province Herald*, 17 June 1999). In one of them, Sterkstroom, the local ANC branch rebelled against its own council representatives for "non-delivery", while in nearby Dordrecht two people were shot dead in anti-council riots (*The Representative*, 22 January 1999 and 18 June 1999). Comparable difficulties typified the experience of small towns in Mpumalanga. In Machadodorp, SANCO succeeded in persuading a divided and insecure group of ANC councillors against taking action against tax boycotters (who included poor township dwellers as well as conservative white rate payers opposed to cross-subsidisation). Visiting researchers noted the absence of any civic culture in the township and a mood of "passive expectation". ANC leadership weakness was compounded by the personal conflict that followed the removal of the first ANC mayor, a "struggle" veteran who could neither read nor write (Frankel, Louw & Stacey, 1997).

Even with respect to the larger towns the first five years as democratically constituted authorities was very challenging for municipal managers and their political leaders. The case of Johannesburg is illustrative. Like most of the newly integrated local authorities, Johannesburg was in dire financial straits in 1995. The metro was owed R900 million in unpaid bills and taxes at the beginning of 1996, while it was borrowing money from banks to finance its recurrent expenditure. Meanwhile there were huge inequities in service provision between the different racially segregated neighbourhoods. For example, before 1995 the Johannesburg City Council spent R3 000 per year on each resident in the Northern Suburbs—whereas municipal expenditure per capita in Soweto was R500. With the introduction of a common voter's roll for municipalities—and with the ANC ascendant—there were now powerful political compulsions to reduce these inequities. In addition the infrastructure desperately needed a cash injection—housing, roads, water supplies, drainage, sewerage, electrical supplies and transport had deteriorated in black settlements as a consequence of very rapid urbanisation during the 1980s and 1990s. The new shack settlements put existing services under tremendous strain.

Johannesburg's new managers attempted to address these challenges in several ways, none of them very popular. The first approach was to try and increase revenues to enable investment in better services to deprived areas. This required increasing taxation levels and introducing cross-subsidisation from wealthier areas to poorer areas. People living in the poorest neighbourhoods were required to pay a "flat rate" basic tax in return for very simple services (public taps and common-container refuse removal); people elsewhere were expected to pay taxes or rates linked to the reassessed land value of their residential property. Meanwhile, a central government programme, Masakhane, was instituted to encourage boycotters to resume payment of their rates and service charges and electricity and water bills. Masakhane was conceived of as a programme of public education—its approach to defaulting township residents was meant to be exhortative and persuasive—but by late 1996 the Johannesburg council, like many other councils, was resorting to more forceful methods of encouraging payment (cutting off household electricity supplies, for instance).

In general, the efforts to increase local revenues by municipal administrations engendered considerable resistance. In Sandton, in protest against very high rate increases, local (white) residents' associations began a boycott—paying rates at the old level into a trust account. The boycott movement received a boost when it was endorsed by Liberty Life, the insurance company with its corporate headquarters in Sandton and the Eastern Sub Structure's biggest tax payer. The boycott dragged on for two years (eventually a court case found in favour of the metro), but by then the city had lost about R200 million in unpaid and unrecovered revenues. However, wealthy suburbanites were not the only people to protest against local tax increases. In Western Johannesburg, inhabitants of coloured townships, led by a new civic organisation, SOWEJOCA, rioted during January 1997 because they were angered that the poorer coloured neighbourhoods were not included in those areas that were allowed to pay the lowest "flat rate". (Three people were killed in the course of these disturbances.) People were also enraged by electricity cut-offs for bad debts and the expulsion of illegal occupants from a new council-built

housing project. In black townships, SANCO branches were a prime force in the organisation of resistance against rate increases and service cut-offs. In July 1996, 45 SANCO branches in Soweto led protests against rate hikes, which averaged 50%.

In general, though, resistance to the rates increases tailed off in the course of 1997, particularly when the exhortatory Masakhane approach was replaced with a tougher set of sanctions against defaulters. Johannesburg's cut-off policy was reported by March 1997 to have achieved impressive rises in payment levels, despite criticism from civic associations. However, even if everybody had paid what they owed, no council could have financed the kinds of improvements to infrastructure that were needed in the townships. In many of the poorer areas services continued to deteriorate as councils saved money. To be sure, with respect to its financial management, Johannesburg represented a success story, with its council reducing an accumulated deficit of R338 million to zero in three years from 1997, and achieving high levels of payment for service. However, the savings resulted in a sharp reduction of money spent on maintaining infrastructure, which in turn resulted in power cuts in suburban neighbourhoods, leaking water pipes, crumbling pavements, potholed roads, non-functioning traffic and street lights, library closures and, just before the 2000 election campaign, the virtual collapse of emergency services (ambulances and fire engines), despite the services being largely staffed by volunteers. Johannesburg's capital expenditure was cut from R1.7 billion in 1995 to R500 million in 1999. Not all cities were as willing to engender the popular antipathy that a tough approach to tax and service payment defaulters would arouse, and low rates of payment remained very widespread. However, they were not necessarily the consequence of activism or the expression of political defiance, as a study by University of the Free State researchers found that simple poverty was the most commonly cited reason for the failure to pay rates (*The Star*, 22 March 2001).

Predictably, rate hikes were unpopular, especially in former white neighbourhoods in which there was widespread opposition to cross-subsidisation (confirmed by opinion polls) and where rate increases

sometimes coincided with deterioration in the quality of services (an inevitable consequence of sharing revenues and the efforts by councils to save money). The unpopularity of increases was accentuated by well-publicised instances of councillors not paying their rates and service charges, as well as the announcement of very substantial pay and allowance increases for the newly elected representatives (in many of the former white municipalities councillors before 1994 had been paid only token attendance fees). In fact, most councils, through the amalgamations that had brought about their formation, succeeded in shedding jobs and reducing money spent on salaries. Shedding labour could also have added to council unpopularity, though, particularly if it resulted in reduced services. Moreover, most councils lost people whose skills have been hard to replace.

Balancing the books (and many of the smaller councils remained hopelessly bankrupt and almost dysfunctional) did not usually bring about better services. Instead, city managers invested their hopes in the "mobilisation of private sector capital resources". In the past, of course, municipalities financed major projects through loans from banks, but in many cases their recent history of bankruptcy made it difficult to secure such loans after 1995. Rather, South African municipalities attempted to attract private capital investment through privatisation. Johannesburg's Igoli 2002 is one of the most sophisticated of these. Planning Igoli 2002 began at the end of 1998. Basically the strategy involves the division of the council's responsibilities into three categories. First, there will be "core functions" that include health, environmental care (cleaning, litter, etc.), museums, libraries and community facilities (including elderly care). These will continue to be performed by council staff. Second, a range of functions will be "corporatised", namely electricity and water provision, road maintenance, parks, cemeteries, the civic theatre, the zoo and the bus service. These corporatised functions will each be run by separate "utilities"—publicly owned entities that will nevertheless operate according to business principles, selling to the council and to citizens an increasing range of their services at market rates, attracting private sector lending through carefully regulated financial management systems and

having separate corporate legal status to facilitate debt recovery. In some cases the new corporations might involve private-public partnerships. Finally, a range of council undertakings will be sold off to private enterprise. Though implementation of these plans only began to affect council operations in 2000, they attracted vehement opposition from trade unions and SANCO as soon as they were announced, as did similar ventures elsewhere. For example, trade union hostility delayed the contracting out of water reticulation in Nelspruit for three years after the council had decided in its favour.

Government policy shifts

These developments in local government reflected general trends in government policy at national level. In 1994, the Government of National Unity (a coalition administration in which the ANC shared cabinet positions with the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party, the two minority partners) was committed to the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP was initially prepared by COSATU, and its adoption by the ANC as an election manifesto was an expression of the "accord" between the ANC and its trade union ally in which COSATU support during an election would be conditional on the ANC accepting worker-friendly policy commitments. The RDP progressed through five drafts before its final version in which some of the more radical economic prescriptions were toned down. Its language became increasingly ambiguous during the drafting procedure, but even so in its official adopted version the clauses on economic reconstruction allowed COSATU analysts to interpret the programme as a prescription for an increasingly regulated economy in which the public sector would play a key role in alleviating inequality and promoting "structural transformation". With respect to developmental concerns, the RDP's vision favoured a participatory approach, in which "development (should not be) just about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry". Instead it should be "people driven", it should be an all-embracing effort in which "development forums" will bring together "all major stakeholders" in formulating and implementing RDP development

projects. Indeed, RDP initiatives should not be a state prerogative; organisations in civil society "must be encouraged to develop their own RDP programmes of action and campaigns within their own sectors".

Though a government White Paper on the RDP published in November 1994 displeased the trade unions with its commitment to restraining public sector growth as well as its coded references to privatisation, it endorsed the RDP's vision of a "stakeholder-driven" development process and called upon provincial and local governments to establish development forums to solicit project proposals from civil society and work with government in formulating public initiatives. The former COSATU secretary-general, Jay Naidoo, was appointed as minister with special responsibility for the RDP, and a number of provinces created the comparable position of RDP commissioner, to play an interdepartmental co-ordinating role, and to sanction development proposals.

During its first two years, the GNU was quite seriously committed to its goal of eliciting public participation in development projects. For example, in the extension of water reticulation, considered to be one of the more successful government undertakings, community management of pumping systems after their installation was recognised as vital to the programme's success. RDP forums were established in many townships and played a significant role in initiating projects or attracting public participation in the planning and implementation of publicly funded initiatives. One of the "Presidential Lead Projects", the school feeding programme, was administered through locally chosen committees. A programme of rural clinic building reflected the RDP's emphasis on redirecting public expenditure to address "basic needs", in this case favouring rural primary health care as opposed to the predominantly urban located hospital system; again, clinic construction could supply opportunities for local community participation. However, the measurable achievements of the government within the "delivery" domain were quite modest; the 250 000 houses completed by the beginning of 1997 suggested that the administration would fall well short of its target of one million in 1999. A programme of land redistribution had succeeded in the

resettlement of 50 000 households on 150 000 hectares by 1998—quite impressive until the original five-year target of a shift in ownership of 30% of cultivable land is recalled. The most successful "delivery" programme with respect to public perceptions was probably health. Opinion polls suggested that poor people felt they had better access to health facilities.[6] This perception was well founded. In Gauteng, for example, the usage of free health care facilities doubled in 1996 and 1997, and 3.5 million children had been vaccinated nationally against Polio and Hepatitis B by the end of 1996. The extension in public health care was not especially "people driven", though; in fact, the ministry acquired a certain notoriety for its cavalier approach to consultation and the way in which it sidelined specialist NGO groups in, for example, the field of AIDS education.

Official impatience with the notion of people-driven project implementation arising from the costs and delays attendant upon consensual decision making and civil society partnerships may have been a factor in the decision to close down the national and provincial RDP offices in March 1996. The shift in emphasis in government developmental rhetoric from popular participation to the "rolling out" of mass programmes since 1997, often conceived of on a very large scale, and the adoption of quantitative "output" criteria for evaluating success were other factors in the closing down of these RDP offices. Whatever its motivation, the closure of the RDP offices was widely perceived as linked to the government's announcement in June 1996 of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Programme, a statement about economic objectives, which the government's left-wing critics charged to be a switch from the "growth through redistribution" orientation of the RDP to a more conservative "trickle-down" approach to poverty alleviation. Certainly, through viewing job creation in the private sector rather than Keynesian public expenditure as the "primary source of income distribution", GEAR appeared to favour growth concerns instead of the

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[6] Both the EISA/IDASA/SABC/Markinor *Opinion 99#2* poll and the Independent Newspapers' *Reality Check* (*The Star*, 28 April 1999) found that rural African voters were especially likely to believe that access to health care improved since 1994.

equity preoccupation of the RDP's drafters. GEAR's authors forecast a 6% growth rate by 2000, to be achieved through deficit reduction, trade liberalisation, government "right-sizing", privatisation and wage restraint, with increases following rises in productivity and with the public sector setting the pace. GEAR's adoption by government (after a very secretive formulation process, in sharp contrast to the publicity surrounding the RDP's production[7]) was followed by a tougher adherence to market principles. This was evident in the harsher treatment of debtors by municipal administrations, in the "contracting out" of government business to private firms—with, in cases such as pension pay-outs, a deterioration in the quality of service—and in a shift in land reform policies so that entrepreneurial would-be farmers rather than the most impoverished rural dispossessed became the principal beneficiaries. The growing hostility from trade unions to GEAR and associated neo-liberal measures helps to explain the decline in popular confidence in the Mandela administration in 1997 and 1998, and the more accentuated decline in popular confidence in the subsequent Mbeki administration.

Coincidentally, the impetus towards more fiscally conservative policies gathered force after the departure from the GNU of the National Party (NP) in 1997. This departure was prompted by two considerations: the NP's failure to exert any profound influence over the 1995-1996 constitutional debate and the evidence accumulating from opinion polls of falling white support. Ironically, since then, more vigorous parliamentary opposition from the historically white parties, in part a consequence of the NP's defection as well as an effort by the traditionally liberal/centrist Democratic Party to attract the support of Afrikaner conservatives, may have prompted the rise in white political morale and public confidence reflected in the survey findings reported in Chapter 4.

The conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's main proceedings in October 1998 may also have contributed to subsequent improvement in white morale. Public opinion polls suggest that Whites

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[7] For the contrasting policy procedures that produced the RDP and GEAR, see Lodge (1999); for a critical analysis of the impact of GEAR on social policy, see Bond (2000).

were least predisposed to welcome the TRC's activities, notwithstanding its role in granting legal amnesty for human rights violations under apartheid. Survey evidence indicates that white citizens were least susceptible to recognising personal responsibility for contributing to national reconciliation.[8] On the other hand, the even-handedness of the TRC's final report may well have strengthened perceptions of the government's impartiality among white citizens, especially in the light of the ANC's objections to the findings and Nelson Mandela's contrasting endorsement of the report.

Changing political identity

Our data indicate that over the five years of the study people became less likely to refer to race when considering issues of personal identity. Moreover, the surveys indicate that the political party loyalties generated during decades of nationalist conflict were slowly weakening in favour of affiliations to neighbourhood, class awareness, generational consciousness (especially among younger people), religion, ethnicity (with respect to Afrikaans-speaking Whites and Africans in general) and, most significantly, individualised or personalised conceptions of identity. Some of the political and social developments that might help to explain these changes have been referred to earlier in this chapter. Growing social inequality amongst Africans and the enlargement of the black middle class might have helped to erode a sense of racially defined communality among Blacks. Very rapid social mobility for substantial numbers within this group would have contributed to the tendency towards more personalised self-definition, expressed in a particularly colourful way by the ANC chief whip, Tony Yengeni, in his justification for his acquisition of an expensive leisure vehicle: "I'm a Mercedes-Benz man. I bought a 4 by 4 not because I want to drive around in the bundus, but because it's the in thing and I'm part of the trend" (*The Star*, 27 March 2001). Political

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[8] For details of a survey undertaken among 2 000 South Africans in July 2000, see *Reparation and Memorialisation;* press insert published by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, October 2000.

party demobilisation as well as public dissatisfaction over the performance of political representatives in office (especially in local government) may help to explain why pre-1994 political identities were losing their appeal.[9] This does not mean that there are to be dramatic realignments of political party support in the near future. Turn-out statistics in 1999 and 2000 show that the most common reaction of disenchanted ANC voters is to stay at home on election day, not to support other parties. It does mean historic nationalist movements—on all sides—cannot depend upon their emotive communal appeal to remain "parties of belonging". Instead, activist politics—measured through civic-style participation—has become more parochial in orientation, with the grand narratives of national liberation being displaced by localised feelings of injustice over the harsh treatment by municipal officials and provincial bureaucrats of indigent rent defaulters, evicted shack dwellers, and elderly claimants seeking their entitlements.

The installation, in 1994, of nine provincial governments has made its own impact upon popular political identity. The formal authority of these administrations is circumscribed by a constitution that allows the provinces very little autonomy. However, the nine provincial dispensations spend more than two-thirds of the national budget and employ most of the country's civil servants; as centres of patronage and resource allocation they have become very powerful indeed. Since 1994, the geographical distribution of protest action of one kind or another has broadened, becoming less concentrated around the major metropolitan centres and increasingly directed at office holders in the provincial capitals in implicit acknowledgement of the rearrangement of power and resources. Provincial politics has also introduced new sources of political division. Civil servants in Umtata in the Transkei resent the loss of their city's capital status and the new privileges conferred on the historically rival administration in Bisho; their disaffection helps to explain the success of

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[9] This is widely attested to in opinion polls. See, for example, the decline in identification with the ANC from 58% to 35% in IDASA polls conducted between 1994 and 1998 (Lodge, 1999).

the United Democratic Movement in building a support base in what in 1994 looked like impregnable ANC territory. The loss of authority, status or livelihood by certain old homeland elites as well as new patterns of political preferment have sometimes re-invigorated old homeland groupings such as Lucas Mangope's United Christian Democratic Movement. Within Gazankulu's old capital, Giyane, the Ximoko Party managed to treble their 1994 vote tally in the 1999 election (though this gain only represented a modest 7% of the local vote tally). Ethnic Shangaan resentment in the Malamulele area at being incorporated into the old Venda capital, Thohoyandou, resulted in an almost total abstention from the 2000 local elections in 50 stations. Meanwhile, Ngoako Ramatlhodi's Northern Province administration in Pietersburg has attracted charges of ethnic favouritism, as a consequence of Ramatlhodi's first cabinet selections being so heavily weighted in favour of Northern Sotho politicians recruited from Ramatholdi's own *alma mater*, the University of the North. The ANC's own belief that its rural support base is most effectively defended by incorporating into its leadership old homeland politicians (increasingly conspicuous in Mpumalanga, for example) and aristocratic notables (such as Stella Sigcau) reflects a recognition of the continuing salience of patrimonial kinds of political authority, which draw upon sub-national communal loyalties.

Ethnic sentiment does not always translate into irredentist politics, though. Afrikaners may feel more intensely their cultural identity—expressed, for example, in the rising circulation of Afrikaans newspapers and an impressive literary renaissance. However, Afrikaner nationalism has rapidly dwindled since 1994. Significantly, both the Freedom Front and the Conservative Party declined to contest the 2000 local government elections, opting instead to lend organisational support and encouragement to candidates in white suburban residents' associations. And though coloured and Indian politicians in the New National Party and the Democratic Party may play on communal anxieties prompted by African social mobility, only occasionally do they attempt to positively affirm a separate sense of cultural affiliation among coloured or Indian voters. All the evidence suggests that material preoccupations rather than racial or

cultural affinity supply the most important motives in party choice in working-class neighbourhoods among the racial minorities (Habib & Naidu, 1999: 189-199). Among middle-class Coloureds and Whites, the anxieties aroused by political and social reform since 1994 have helped to fuel the rise of conservative religious parties, both Christian and Islamic, drawing support for the advocacy of minimalist government, "family values", patriarchy and social discipline.

Conclusion

Since 1994, widening social inequality, the consequence of accelerating social mobility among black South Africans as well as increasing rates of school-leaver unemployment, has disrupted the patterns of political mobilisation that evolved in the previous 20 years around the liberation struggle and shaped the strategic orientation of social movements. After the 1994 founding election, the political routines of procedural democracy have represented an important shift in the political opportunity structure. The opening up of new points of access to policy making and public resources has reduced the incentives for nationally based political parties to mobilise their followers in protest action. Paradoxically, though, more popularly accountable state institutions have helped to increase public expectations that grievances can be redressed through protest. Meanwhile the shortcomings of public officials and elected representatives (especially in local government) have ensured that grievances remain widespread. "Bringing government closer to the people", the declared intention of local government reform and the practical effect of making regional administrations the main centres of resource allocation, has provided a new cognitive system influencing collective action, a new "framing process", to cite a currently influential term in social movement theory. The mobilising structures through which activist politics are expressed continue to be located in localised associational life—the civic movements and women's groups—which in the 1980s supplied the organisational underpinning of nationalist assertion. Today, though, the political identities, which help to prompt collective mobilisation and determine its activist repertoires, have changed to become increasingly sub-national in

orientation, with new notions of citizenship shaped by a multiplicity of senses of belonging or of feelings about community.[10]

[10] The theoretical terminology and conceptual cues that are explic itly cited in this conclusion and have been generally important in influencing the writing of this introductory chapter can be explored in McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1996).