National spatial development planning in South Africa 1930-2010: An introductory comparative analysis

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> The state apparatus was not developed by means of a single plan and with well-worked out relationships; this left a wide margin for conjecture about administrative methods. The central economic apparatus, the Central Planning Board, did not fulfill its task of leadership and could not do so because it lacked sufficient authority over the other bodies. It was unable to issue precise orders based on a single system and with adequate supervision, and it lacked the requisite assistance of an overall plan. In the absence of good organization, excessive centralization cured spontaneous action without replacing it in time with correct methods (Ché Guevara, 1963: 180).

Abstract

This article reviews the various attempts at national spatial development planning that have been introduced in South Africa over the past eighty years. It demonstrates that, despite the ostensible support for national planning during this period, such plans and proposals rarely had a direct impact on the conduct of government business. Using both the authors' personal experiences with the most recent such 'plan' – the National Spatial Development Perspective – they seek to explain why such planning initiatives are so difficult to introduce and implement. Key in this regard, they argue, is that while most national planning initiatives are formulated in a control paradigm common to more local planning contexts, the plans have to function within a complex and tightly interwoven national, provincial and local system that is essentially incompatible with such a paradigm. The historical overview, they argue, suggests that such a national spatial planning intervention would require a far harder-edged form of governance leaning more in the direction of intervention and control and less so in the direction of the current softer forms of dialogue, facilitation and guidance premised by the 1996 Constitution.

NASIONALE RUIMTELIKE ONTWIKKELINGSBEPLANNING IN SUID-AFRIKA 1930-2010: 'N INLEIDENDE VERGELYKENDE ANALISE

Hierdie artikel verskaf 'n oorsig van die verskillende pogings tot nasionale ruimtelike ontwikkelingsbeplaning soos voorgestel in Suid-Afrika oor die afgelope tagtig jaar. Die artikel dui aan dat sulke planne en voorstelle, ten spyte van die oënskynlike ondersteuning vir nasionale beplanning gedurende die tydperk onder bespreking, baie selde 'n invloed gehad het op die optrede van die regering van die dag. Deur gebruik te maak van beide die outeurs se persoonlike ervarings met die mees resente sodanige 'plan' – die Nasionale Ruimtelike Ontwikkelingsperspektief – poog hulle om te verduidelik waarom sulke beplanningsinisiatiewe so moeilik is om voor te stel en te implementeer. Sentraal in hierdie verband, beweer hulle, staan die feit dat die meeste nasionale beplanningsinisiatiewe in 'n beheerparadigma, wat meer algemeen in plaaslike beplanningskontekste is, geformuleer word, terwyl sodanige planne moet funksioneer in 'n komplekse en nou-inmekaarverweefde nasionale, provinsiale en plaaslike stelsel wat essensieel onversoenbaar is met so 'n paradigma. Die historiese oorsig, beweer hulle, suggereer dat sodanige nasionale ruimtelike beplanningsintervensie 'n baie harder vorm van 'regeer' vereis – een wat meer neig na intervensie en beheer, en minder na die meer 'sagte' vorme van dialoog, fasilitering en rigtinggewing, soos veronderstel in die 1996 Grondwet.

1. INTRODUCTION

In what is a rare occurrence, 'national spatial development planning' – i.e. a process whereby a national/central government seeks to consciously plan for the spatial development of the territory of a country by using the location, timing, nature and scale of infrastructure investment and development spending to stimulate, support, strengthen and encourage growth and development in specific spaces/places[1] – has made national headline news in South Africa (see *inter alia* Mofokeng, 2009; Jazhbay, 2009; SABC News, 2009; Manuel, 2009). While the reasons for it may be less about the concept or the expressions of intent in a recently published policy document entitled *Green Paper: National Strategic Planning*, and more so about the personalities involved,[2] it has revealed the existence, modalities, arguments for and implications of this level and type of planning.

Notable as it is, it is of course not the first time that this has happened in the country, as over the past sixteen years successive African National Congress (ANC) governments engaged in a series of attempts at national spatial development planning. Prior to this, the notion was actively pursued in two distinct periods: the 1930s to the early 1940s and the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Notably, in the case of the first phase, not only government, but also civil society, in the form of organised groups of architects, championed the cause.

While the near recent developments concerning national spatial planning provide an opportunity to speculate and debate as to what the outcomes of the current initiatives will be, our understanding of the recent and future attempts at national patial planning will be better informed if they are also viewed in the light of previous historical efforts to implement such planning.

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While it will be shown that many of the features of the recent and current efforts of national spatial planning are different to those of the past, there remain a remarkable number of similarities about the ideas, the discourses, the institutions, the frameworks and the actions involving national spatial planning in the three periods, even though, of course, such planning was initiated for quite different political objectives. More specifically, by adopting the above analytic approach, we seek to show both the shortcomings of these previous initiatives, as well provide pointers as to the necessary conditions and required social, economical and institutional environments for this kind of planning to realise its objectives in the future.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As far as could be established, no academic document has been produced with as its topic 'a comparative analysis of national spatial development planning in South Africa prior to and after 1994'. What exists in the literature on the phenomenon during the pre-1994 period is of two kinds. First, overviews of colonial and apartheid spatial planning, in various degrees of detail, but by and large of the broad-brush stroke variety in which some reference is made to the attempts at national spatial planning in the colonial and apartheid past (see, for instance, Mabin, 1991; Mabin, 1995; Muller, 1982; Muller, 1991; Mabin & Smit, 1992; Parnell & Mabin, 1995; Smit, 1989; Oranje, 1993; Oranje, 1994; Oranje, 1998b; Oranje, 1999). Secondly, more detailed explorations of one of the particular eras, such as for instance the work of Wilkinson (1993) on the planning initiatives of the Smuts government in the 1940s; Muller (1996) on the plans for the Foreshore in Cape Town as a distinct expression of modernist sentiments in planning thought in the 1930s and 1940s; De Beer (1979) and Jaspan (1979) on the Guide Plans of the 1970s; Fair's short book on Spatial Frameworks for Development (Fair, 1982); the overviews of Pretorius, Addleson & Tomlinson of regional development initiatives by the apartheid State (see Pretorius, Addleson & Tomlinson, 1986a; Pretorius, Addleson & Tomlinson, 1986b; Addleson & Tomlinson, 1986; Tomlinson, 1993)

and work on the (regional) industrial development policy of the previous regime (see, for instance, Bell, 1972; Bell, 1973; Bell, 1997; Bloch, 1993; Hart & Todes, 1997; Platzky, 1995). As for the post-apartheid period, there are only a handful of published documents that mention national spatial planning in this period (see Platzky, 1998a; Platzky, 1998b; Harrison, Todes & Watson, 2007; Todes, 2006; Oranje, 2007; Atkinson & Marais, 2006; Oranje & Van Huyssteen, 2007; Merrifield, Oranje & Fourie, 2008; Rogerson, 2009; Nel & Rogerson, 2009). In the majority of instances, however, these documents only cover a segment of these events, and none of them were written with the explicit aim of 'telling the story of post-apartheid national spatial development planning'. As such they referred to it, but did so 'in the process of telling another story about something else'. In all of these instances, the existing material also pre-dates the most recent set of events following the ANC's Polokwane Conference in December 2007, the ousting of President Mbeki in September 2008 and the publication of the Green Paper on National Strategic Planning in September 2009.

This absence of writing on the subject means not only that an important segment of the South African planning history is 'not' being reported on, but also that the possibility of learning from the past at a time when a new system is being developed, is not being utilised. While this article seeks to respond to this gap in the literature, it has modest ambitions. It is viewed as a useful start, as merely a brief beginning, with far more work having to be done. In addition, even though it revisits the past, it does so not for the sake of providing an account of the past, but with a view to 'a better future'.

3. NATIONAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: PRESENT AND PAST

National spatial development planning initiatives by central/national governments have undergone a strong revival over the past ten to fifteen years after falling from favour during the New Right-dominated 1980s and early 1990s.

Various novel national planning instruments have not only been prepared on the national level, as in the case of Ireland, Wales, Portugal, Estonia and Belarus, and newer versions of earlier examples rolled out in Denmark and the Netherlands, but there have also been calls for such frameworks to be developed for Australia and the UK (see Oranje, 2002a; European Urban Knowledge Network, 2007). At the same time supranational planning instruments, notably the European Spatial Development Perspective, and frameworks to guide long- and shorter-term investment have been prepared for the African continent (Faludi, 2002; Faludi, 2008; Faludi & Waterhout, 2002; Oranje & Van Huyssteen, 2005). Similar instruments have unofficially been proposed for the North American continent (see Faludi, 2002; Faludi, 2008).

This revival is of course not a universal phenomenon, and very different from its previous international heyday in the 1960s and 1970s. Not only is the driving force no longer a naïve modernist belief in the ability of a strong, centralist State to single-handedly, benevolently and rationally plan for 'its space', it is also no longer a case of a belief that without a national spatial development plan a country is 'not on the map of nations' (Oranje, 2002a). Far more so, the current phase of national planning is driven by a growing awareness of scarcity and the need for wise resource management, challenges of multi-level governance, and pragmatic ways of dealing with differences in and between regions. As such, this new generation of plans, perspectives, reports and notes, seeks to provide an arena for dialogue/ engagement on spatial investment and development spending between various spheres of government; a set of spatial principles to guide public infrastructure investment and development spending, and creative responses to lingering differences in economic activity and quality of life in different parts of a country (Oranje & Biermann, 2002).

In contrast to earlier times when ideologies were more clear-cut and their proponents far more vocal, visible and certain about the wisdom of their positions, the new series of plans

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1   See Oranje (2002a) for a detailed discussion of such initiatives.

2   The Minister in the Presidency responsible for the proposed new national planning function, Minister Trevor Manuel, is disliked by the left for his perceived key contribution to what are perceived to be a range of neo-liberal policies developed during the previous President Mbeki's time in the Presidency (see *inter alia* Mofokeng, 2009; Cosatu, 2009a; Cosatu, 2009b).

take freely from currents in regional planning thought that are in many cases far apart (see Ellis & Harris, 2004; Bell, 1997; Unger, 2005; Oranje, 2002a; Oranje & Biermann, 2002). In these new discourses on national spatial develop-ment planning, pragmatic, postmodern, nostalgic, pro-rural, anti-modern, anti-urban approaches are combined with deep-modernist statements on equality, spatial justice and balanced territorial development and territorial cohesion. Real-world concerns about lagging regions are often attended to with more liberal approaches of exploiting comparative and competitive advan-tages (see Hubner, 2005; Commission of the European Communities, n.d; Commission of the European Communities 2006a; Commission of the European Communities, 2006b; Brass, 2000; Taylor, 1998; Oranje, 2002b; Unger, 2005; European Commission, 2003; European Commission, 2004; European Commission, 2007; Ellis & Harris, 2004; and Ministers responsible for urban development in the Member States, 2007). Despite all their differences, the single shared characteristic is 'the urge to ensure outcomes', with the means and modalities often no longer of such concern (see Oranje, 2002b; Ellis & Harris, 2004; Government Office for the East Midlands, 2006; Sridhar, 2005; Commission of the European Communities, 2006b). At the same time, some similarities remain, such as the assumption that it is possible through State intervention in the economy, notably through infrastructure invest-ment, to change the spatial pattern of economic growth and development (see Smee, 2006; Faludi, 2002; Faludi, 2008; Oranje, 2007). Similarly, the as-sumption that the deeper and richer the knowledge base of what is available in terms of resources, and the better the advantages/potentials of places/re-gions can be described, packaged and put on offer, the better the outcomes will be (see South Africa. Department of Trade and Industry, 2007; Asheim, Cooke & Martin, 2006; Gertler & Wolfe, 2006; Nel & Rogerson, 2009). Lastly that strong institutions, supported by solid supportive policy, legal and funding frameworks, staffed by capable and dedicated actors, and tied together by mutually supportive, collaborative

relationships will ensure the realisation of the stated (national) objectives (Oranje, 2002a; Oranje, 2002b; Faludi & Waterhout, 2002; European Commission, 2003; European Commission, 2007; Sridhar, 2005; Ministers responsible for urban development in the Member States, 2007).

4.   THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE: 1930-2010

In order to provide some structure to the narrative, the events are discussed under four headings: (1) contextual conditions, i.e. the societal, economical, ecological and institutional conditions in which the events unfolded; (2) instru-ments, authors, approaches, objectives and storylines, i.e. the proposed plan-ning instrument, the stories associated with it and the actors involved; (3) institutions, i.e. the framework of govern-ment departments, agreements, rules and regulations in which the instrument is located, and (4) implementation, outcomes and impacts, i.e. whether the instrument was implemented, why this was done, or not, and if so, what was achieved and not.

4.1 The Ultra-Modernist - 1930s-early 1940s

4.1.1 Contextual conditions

As elsewhere in the world, the 1930s were austere times in South Africa; the Great (and global) Depression and persistent drought had wrought havoc in the economy and seen large movements of especially white Afrikaner farmers to towns and cities (see Davenport, 1989; Giliomee, 2003). For instance, between 1921 and 1946, the percentage of white people in urban areas increased from 52% to approximately 73%, while the black African urban population increased from 13% to 22% in this period (Statistics SA, 2009).[3] This spurred a range of novel State actions aimed at countering the pain this brought, notably public works programmes. At the same time the State was beginning to make its imprint on the national space economy and the way in which the country was de-veloped by passing the *National Roads Act* in 1935 and the first provincial Town

Planning and Settlement Establishment Ordinances in the early 1930s (Oranje, 1999). A key driver in this regard was the belief that reason, as expressed through science and practised by rational 'men', was able to provide the informa-tion/intelligence for the State to better understand the dynamics and challeng-es of the national space economy, and act upon it (Oranje, 1998b). The logic was simple – the better the intelligence, and the stronger the will, the better the plan and the surer the realisation of the desired outcomes[4].

The Depression, however, not only brought pain, but also a greater awareness of events in other parts of the world, including demonstrations of the power of the State in mobilising resources, notably the New Deal in the USA and the enormous expansion of the industrial sector in the then communist Soviet Union (Oranje, 1998b). Planners were also becoming acquainted with regional planning initiatives in Britain and the USA, especially the American Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), national planning in Russia, the research of the National Resources Board in the USA and the findings of the Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt Committees in Britain (Bryer, 1940: 433; Bryer, 1942; Hanson, 1943: 229-230; Hanson, 1946: 39; Pearse, 1942b: 362-364; Harper, 1943: 177; Anonymous, 1943a; Anonymous,1943b; Anonymous, 1944: 289). This was given further impetus in the Second World War, with the full force of the State acting in a coordinated, focused and singularly-minded way (see for instance Floyd, 1943; Hanson, 1943; Pearse, 1942b; Bryer, 1940: 427-431; Anonymous, 1943b).

4.1.2 Instruments, authors, approaches, objectives and storylines

The context as sketched provided fertile soil for those wishing to see (greater) national spatial development planning. Two groups took on the challenge: the one, led by two groups of architects, peaked in the late 1930s; the other by the Smuts government had a short run, starting in the early 1940s and coming to an end less than three years later.

In the case of the 'architects',[5] frustra-tion at the weak formal institutional

3   Urbanisation is an imperfect indicator of modernisation, but as the discussion below will show, it remained a particular concern of national spatial planning throughout the three periods examined precisely because of this link.

4   Not only was this sentiment echoed in Great Britain and other European countries, but also resonated well with the views of the then Prime Minister, General Smuts, a key proponent of systems thinking and one of the originators of the concept of holism.

framework for settlement building led to growing calls for regional and national planning and for the planning of settlements and mass housing projects to be located in such higher level planning (see Hanson, 1944; Hanson, 1947: 164; Pearse, 1942b; Bryer, 1940: 427-431). This view was very similar to that of the British Town Planning Institute, who had also by the mid-1930s called for land use regulation to become an element in national socio-economic planning (Hebbert, 1983: 6). In addition to these calls emanating from the older segments of the profession, two more radical modernist groups of urban-based activists strongly influenced by the ideas of Le Corbusier and the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM) for the cause had become established (see Martienssen & Fassler, 1934; Herbert, 1974: 99-103; Le Corbusier, 1936: 383; Kendall, 1936). One of these groups was based in Cape Town, with as its 'leader' Professor Leslie Thornton-White from the Department of Architecture at the University of Cape Town (Herbert, 1974: 227; Parnell & Mabin, 1995: 54; see Thornton-White, 1938; Pinnock, 1989: 156). The other, and by far the more influential group, was 'gathered' around a young architect, Rex Martienssen, in Johannesburg (see Martienssen, 1927; Martienssen, 1929; Pearse, 1942a). This latter group, much like the Modern Architectural Research (MARS) Group in the UK,[6] that they were very aware of, even had their own name, namely the 'Transvaal Modernist Group', met regularly to discuss their ideas, and published their views in the South African Architectural Record (Herbert, 1974: 236).

For these modernist architects the irrationality of unplanned city planning and development and the utilisation of natural resources needed to be stopped and replaced with rational spatial development based on science and ingenuity (Martienssen, 1941; Muller, 1996). This process would start from the (national) centre with clear directions and control, and find expression all the way down to well-planned 'neighbourhoods, in turn,' following the international ideas around the construct at the time. Like little building blocks, the country would be designed in architectural fashion and neighbourhoods used like building bricks to realise the plan (see, in particular, Jonas, 1938: 3-4; Pearse, 1938: 9; Kantorowich, 1938: 74-76 and Hanson, 1938: 85-87 for a very strong expression of this sentiment).

In the case of 'Prime Minister Smuts' Social and Economic Planning Council', this body was set up in March 1942 with the aim of advising the Government on all matters pertaining to economic and social policy with a strong focus on promoting balanced development of the country's resources (Wilkinson, 1993: 249).[7] The Council, which was a copy of a similar body created in Great Britain at the time (see Wannop & Cherry, 1994: 29), was called upon to make plans for the development of the country in a planned way after the war, and consisted of a group of hand-picked technical experts in their respective fields (Morris, 1943: 8; Le May, 1971: 68; Mabin, 1992: 414). The Council produced a number of reports, notably *Report No 5 on Regional and Town Planning,* published in August 1944 (Union of South Africa, 1944). This report was highly critical of the weak state of existing planning legislation in the country, the concentration of the bulk of the population in a few large cities, and the lack of regional planning (Union of South Africa, 1944: 1, 4, 13, 14, 16). Driving this report was the modernist ethos of the day, with the State viewed as being called upon, and entitled to use its powers of persuasion and control to draft plans for the utilization of the national resource base and the purposeful, plan-led establishment of a pattern of economic development and land use, and pursue a range of progressive social and economic objectives such as full employment, no exploitation of one human being by another and equality of opportunity (Union of South Africa, 1944: 1). Should this be done, the report held, the result would be 'optimal' and represent a balanced use of what the country had to offer. Given the experience of aerial bombing at the time, the report also proposed a greater spread of industrial development in cities and towns throughout the country to minimise the risk of loss of strategic facilities during enemy attacks (Union of South Africa, 1944: 1).

The report furthermore argued that 'a better planned country' could be achieved by extensive surveys of regions, followed by regional plans to ensure a more balanced and economic use of the nation's resources; regional planning prior to the construction of large-scale housing and public works programmes; using the neighbourhood unit as cornerstone in the planning of new cities and in the redevelopment of existing ones; the integration of town plans with regional plans, and the planning and implementation of extensions to towns to be undertaken by local authorities instead of private developers (Union of South Africa, 1944: 5, 10,11, 23, 24).

4.1.3 Institutions

In the case of the architects, the more pragmatically minded group made calls for the institution of a national department of planning to give effect to their proposals (Pearse, 1943: 266 and see Floyd, 1943: 100). The radical modernists provided no clear indication of the way in which the State (and society) would be organized or structured to prepare the plans, ensure budgets and implement the proposals contained in the plans. In the case of Smuts' Social and Economic Planning Council, the Council proposed the establishment of a powerful national Department of Physical Planning and Regional Planning that would conduct the national and regional planning and zoning on a national level, and ensure the enforcement of a strict set of spatial planning rules and regulations (Union of South Africa, 1944).

4.1.4 Implementation, outcomes and impacts

The proposals of the radical architects came to a sad end, with the key protagonists of the cause losing their lives in the early 1940s (see Martienssen, 1942: 110-111; Herbert, 1974), and others losing their passion for Le Corbusier and what they began to see as 'Fascist tendencies' in his work (see Kantorowich, 1942b: 387; Kantorowich,1942a: 11-

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5   Architects, along with engineers and land surveyors, were key lobbyists for the institution of town planning legislation in South Africa at the time.

6   The MARS Group was established in the 1930s to provide a British forum on the model of the CIAM (Ward, 1994: 65). In contrast to the South African example, the British group lasted somewhat longer, finally disbanding in 1957 (Crook, 1989: 306, Note 102).

7   Stanley Furner, a prominent architect at the time, however, insinuated that, as a result of a visit by a deputation from the Central Council of the Institute of Architects to the Minister of Finance, 'urging' him to appoint '... a Commission to enquire into the need for National Planning', the Government decided to appoint the Social and Economic Planning Council (Furner, 1942: 96 and see also Borckenhagen, 1942: 105-106 for a similar point of view).

15). As for the Social and Economic Planning Council's Report No 5, this report, somewhat unexpectedly, given the mood of the time, received a cold, even hostile reception in both State and organised planning circles (Wilkinson, 1993: 272-279). At institutional level the negative response was attributed by Wilkinson (1993) to the Report's strong centralist tendencies. These were said to not have gone down well with some provincial administrations, especially that of Natal, where it was viewed as threatening the already limited autonomy of provinces (Brooks & Harrison, 1994: 216; Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1972: 16) and the Smuts-government's subsequent unwillingness to amend the Union's very sensitive constitutional make-up *(*Wilkinson, 1993: 273). In addition, the establishment of, in the words of Mr Waterson, the then Minister of Economic Development in the Smuts-Government, a '... super-state department with the power to dominate and control other State departments', was not considered 'practical and desirable' (our translation of Waterson in South Africa, 1947: 5433). On the side of the planners, judging from the papers read at a Symposium on the Report, organised by the Town and Country Planning Association in December 1945, which consisted mostly of architects, more than 15 months after the Report had been published, their lukewarm response to the Report was more nuanced and 'not' really the result of a dissatisfaction with the sentiments or the objectives of the Council as such. In their case their dissatisfaction stemmed from a feeling that many of the proposals were impracticable, premature, 'too anti-private enterprise', and too strongly focused on the physical aspect of development at the cost of its social and economic aspects (see especially Hanson, 1946: 41-42; Cooper, 1946: 48; Cutten, 1946: 46-47; Douglas, 1946: 50-51).

This did, however, not mean the end of these ideas, as some of the views on the planned use of natural resources in the national interest led to the passing of the *Natural Resources Development Act*, 1947, which provided for the proclamation of 'controlled areas' – areas where the utilisation of resources and use of land had to be coordinated by the relevant Minister (see Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1946-1947: 498-520;

South Africa, 1947: 5432-5437, 3459). This Act, in turn, provided the foundation and key construct for the draconian *Physical Planning Act*, Act 88 of 1967 (see Oranje, 1998), which is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

4.2 The Grand Apartheid - late 1960s-early 1980s

4.2.1 Contextual conditions

The 1960s were boom times for the white population (see Davenport, 1989). Economic growth, fuelled by rapid industrialisation, and a high Gold price encouraged suburbanisation, along the lines of the USA and Australia (Oranje, 1998b). On a macro-scale, urbanisation of the white population entered its final phase, with the countryside increasingly becoming devoid of white people (see Oranje, 1998b). By 1970 urbanisation had incorporated 87% of the white population and only approximately 33% of the black African population (Statistics SA, 2009). Perhaps, as a result of the policies described below, the percentage of black African people in towns only increased to approximately 40% by 1985 (Statistics SA, 2009).[8] At the same time, the ideology of separate development of racial groups resulted in a deepening and increasingly painful internal strife, with political suppression, police brutality and protests against the carrying of 'pass books', separate facilities and exploitation a regular occurrence. The State's response to this was to become ever more draconian, banning political parties such as the South African Communist Party, the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, and persecuting and locking up political activists. Overseas, dissatisfaction with the inhumane system was growing and pressure mounting on the State to extend voting rights to all South Africans. It was not only the immediate questions of the system that were seriously confronting the apartheid State, but also those of the future, and how to deal with the fact that black South Africans far outnumbered whites, and were not content with staying in 'reserves' and on tribal lands.

In the domain of national spatial and economic planning, this resulted in numerous strategies and 'plans'. A key development in this regard was the so-called grand scale apartheid project thought up in the late 1960s of creating

independent states – Bantustans – based on ethnic grounds. This was given legal status by the passing of the *Bantu Homelands Constitution Act*, 1971, which provided for the establishment of legislative assemblies and executive councils in 'Bantu' areas and the so-called 'self-governing' territories. As only 13% of the national territory of South Africa was set aside for these territories, while more than 70% of the population was Black, and these territories were not chosen for their economic development potential, this arrangement was never put to popular vote.

4.2.2 Instruments, authors, approaches, objectives and storylines

The instruments deployed by the State came in a variety of forms, with as a key driver in all of these, to bring some or other form of economic rationale to the ideology of apartheid. The first set entailed the development of 'border industries' in rural towns bordering areas set aside for black occupation. This meant that the tax income would (still) come to South Africa, and that Africans could work close to 'their territories' and not migrate to what were perceived to be 'the creation of the white population' – the cities and towns in South Africa. When this failed to deliver the desired results on scale, this was followed by the development of 'homeland towns' with heavily subsidised, incentivised industrial estates. In order to increase its control of these towns, government passed Regulations in terms of the 1927 *Native/Black Administration Act*[9] – R293/1962 and R188/1969 (Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1923). These provided for the national control of land uses in African areas. In order to strengthen the measure, the 1967 *Physical Planning Act* was passed, which provided for national State control over African urbanisation by placing limitations on the extent of new industrial land that could be proclaimed in major urban areas, and the number of Africans that could be employed in such urban areas. Permits were also required to undertake economic activities in 'proclaimed' urban areas with the aim of limiting activities that were 'large employers of African labour' in cities. A key driver behind this measure was the increasingly cosmopolitan nature of big cities, which was becoming a growing

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8   The increase in whites was insignificant, from 87% in 1970 to just under 90% in 1985 (Statistics SA, 2009).

headache for the apartheid government with its sights set on maintaining minority rule through ethnic separation (Oranje, 1998). This marked a radical new path for the State, for in doing so 'it was not just pursuing its racist policies, but also sacrificing the economic heartlands for its ideological ideals'. This was followed in the mid-1970s with a decentralisation policy in terms of which growth points in 'white South Africa' would be developed to prevent rural depopulation by whites and to limit African urbanisation (see Pretorius *et al.*, 1986a; Pretorius *et al.*, 1986b). When this policy did not have the results as desired by the State, with the African population around major urban areas continuing to grow, the State engaged on a policy of 'deconcentration', whereby industrial development was incentivised in clearly demarcated industrial estates/complexes around major urban areas.

While all these measures were planned and implemented by the national government, they were what can be termed 'focused *ad hoc* measures' and not the outcome of an intensive planning process resulting in the preparation of a national plan or strategy, as was the norm in many developed and developing post-colonial countries at the time (i.e. the 1960s and 1970s) (see Oranje, 2007). Such a plan would, however, be prepared in the mid-1970s (1975) by the Department of Physical Planning, in the form of the National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) (South Africa. Department of Planning and the Environment, 1975). This plan was the outcome of the report prepared by a Committee of the Prime Minister's Planning Advisory Council with the task of investigating, reporting on and making recommendations to the Minister of Planning on the relationships between the various levels of government in terms of physical planning (Suid-Afrika, 1970).

In terms of the NPDP, published in 1975, the country was to be divided into 38 'Planning Regions' in addition to 'the four metropolitan areas' (South Africa. Department of Planning and the Environment, 1975: 9).[10] The 'Bantu

homelands' were excluded from the Plan as the apartheid government considered them 'independent states in the making over which South Africa had no jurisdiction' (South Africa. Department of Planning and the Environment, 1975: 7-9; Viljoen, 1999: personal communication). The plan also included six 'Development Axes' running between the metropolitan and proposed metropolitan areas with existing and proposed harbours and/or major centres of mining and/or industrial activities or just 'the interior' (South Africa. Department of Planning and the Environment, 1975: 17). In an interview with the town planner responsible for the plan, it was indicated that these axes were not part of the concept at the outset (Viljoen, 1999: personal communication). According to him, they were added later on, purely as an afterthought, with no studies having been done at that time, or without the use of any theoretical base or precedent as basis (Viljoen, 1999: personal communication).

In order to further strengthen the focus of government action in the country, the national government devised the concept of 'Guide Plans', which sought to ensure central government control in local planning. The setting up of the first Guide Plan Committee in 1971 for the fast-growing mining and industrial Witbank-Middelburg Area, indicated areas for occupation by different racial groups, something that was not done in subsequent plans. This was not in any way a positive sign of a change of heart, but rather a realisation on the part of the planners in this section that they did not need to indicate racial zones – the *Group Areas Act* would deal with this (Oranje, 1998). At the same time Guide Plans were also being prepared for other parts of the country. This was problematic, for once such a plan was prepared the area became subject to national control. Any proposed land development that was not in line with the plan had to be taken up in Pretoria (the capital).

The final chapter in this period was written in the late 1970s-early 1980s when the then Prime Minister, Minister P W

Botha, after two conferences attended by approximately 350 businessmen and women in Johannesburg and approximately 600 in Cape Town to promote his ideas of a regional Constellation or Confederation of Southern African States (Davenport, 1989: 444; South Africa, 1981; Viljoen, 1980b; Du Plessis, 1981). This proposal not only contained Botha's vision of a 'single economy', but also included the setting up of a Development Bank and a set of 'Planning Axes of Development' whereby the new Constellation of States would be connected (Davenport, 1989: 444; Goosen, 1980). A crucial component of the plan was the role to be played by the private sector in its implementation (see Davenport, 1989: 444; Goosen, 1980). In doing so, it would appear that the Botha government was trying to lever the private sector into making Grand Apartheid an economic reality (see Du Plessis, 1981).[11] In the later plan, 'The Good Hope Plan of 1982', termed a 'Regional Development Strategy for Southern Africa', there were eight new development regions, down from the erstwhile '38 regions plus the four metropolitan areas', including the various homelands, and no indication of the 'Development Axes' (South Africa, 1981: 70-71). Instead, a set of 8 deconcentration points in metropolitan areas and 20 decentralised industrial development points were identified (South Africa, 1981: 11). The Southern African Constellation of States had also, in the light of a very mild, even hostile reception to it from South Africa's neighbours, given way to a scaled down version, including only South Africa, the then South West Africa and the independent homelands (South Africa, 1981: 20-21).[12] Future dealings with the previously foreseen partners, such as Mozambique and Angola, would also be far less friendly, with the apartheid government moving into the realm of regional destabilisation through the support of rebel movements in these countries (Davenport, 1989: 444-5, 500-5).

4.2.3 Institutions

The creation of the border industries and associated attempts at decentralisation were instituted by a national

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9   This Act had the 'better control and management of Black Affairs' in mind.

10 Rhetoric would have it that the demarcation was done very scientifically (South Africa. Department of Planning and the Environment, 1975). According to a personal interview with an official in the department at the time, junior planners with pens and drafting tables were often the actual desk-top architects (Van der Westhuizen, 1993: personal communication).

11 The threat of communism, on the one hand, and the promise of political reform, on the other, were used to lure the business people in (see South Africa, 1981).

department created in 1964, called the National Department of Planning, that underwent numerous name changes, and whose title contained words such as 'Planning', 'Development' and 'The Environment'. Given the totalitarian nature of the apartheid State, other than tasking a specific directorate with a specific function or task, no other specific institutions were required. In the case of the NPDP, no specific indications were provided as to the required institutional regime, other than that it would be dealt with by the then National Department of Planning and the Environment. In the case of P W Botha's early-1980s plans, the Development Bank of South Africa was created to promote the development of the Bantustans.

4.2.4 Implementation, outcomes and impacts

The various decentralisation measures were implemented and seven non-statutory and eighteen statutory Guide Plans were prepared between 1973 and 1994 (see Steyn, 1994: 8). As for the National Physical Development Plan, the frame with its swaths of 'Development Axes' became well known among planning students and practitioners alike, arguably more so for its corridors than for its regional propos-als that did not really make much of a visual statement. As for the plan itself, it was incidentally never taken to Cabinet for approval. The primary reason for this was the fear of a negative response from voters located in areas which were not to be boosted/favoured (Viljoen, 1999: personal communication). In addition to this, the then Minister of the Department 'was a political lightweight' who first did not have the clout to see the plan through Parliament and, secondly, held a tightly contested seat, which could easily be lost were he to make a 'wrong move' (Viljoen, 1999: personal communication). This meant that the NPDP existed on paper, but was not pursued in the form of infrastructure investment and spending along the lines it proposed. The proposals for regional development were, however, developed further in proposals for regional development in the 1980s. The regions carved out in these exercises are incidentally not that different from the district municipalities demarcated

in the late 1990s by the Municipal Demarcation Board in post-apartheid South Africa. The provinces are also not that different from the larger regions, as proposed in work done by the Development Bank of Southern Africa in the 1980s.

4.3 The Post-Apartheid – 1990s-2010s

4.3.1 Contextual conditions

When the ANC emerged as the victor in the first democratic elections in April 1994, it inherited a country with glar-ing differences in quality of life, large variations in economic activities in different parts of the country, consider-able differences in access to a decent quality of life and a huge public debt. In both its 1992 policy document entitled *Ready to Govern* and its 1993/1994 *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RDP) it clearly expressed its wish to rapidly address these differences (see ANC, 1992; ANC, 1994). This saw the creation of the RDP Office shortly after the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in May 1994, and, given the ANC's links to the former East Bloc, its alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and its social democratic and socialist leanings, it was expected that the State would introduce massive, centrally control-led State plans and interventions in the economy. This was, however, not to be (see Platzky, 1998a; Platzky, 1998b). While the need was for mas-sive intervention and change, limited funds, fear of investor flight and lack of massive investments from abroad worked against this. As Platzky (1998a: 4) remarks, "Big reconstruction and development without growth was not possible." This ideal was given a further blow when the RDP Office was abruptly closed down in April 1996, and those working in it 'redeployed' in national and provincial departments to continue the developmental work the Office had begun.

While the political arena was undergo-ing radical transformation during this time, the challenges of deep-seated poverty, inequality and lack of access to opportunities showed little change. While the economy gradually entered a growth phase, with growth hovering

around the 3% mark, and a black middle class started making its ap-pearance, the large-scale ownership of wealth essentially remained in the hands of a white minority. At the same time, lack of opportunities in rural areas, coupled with the allure of economic opportunities in towns and cities, a delayed response to the ending of influx control in 1986 and a collapse of the paternalistic Bantustan system resulted in large-scale migration of millions of black South Africans from the former Bantustan and hapless rural areas to primarily the Gauteng and the Western Cape Provinces (South Africa. The Presidency, 2003; South Africa. The Presidency, 2006). Urbanisation of the black African population rose to approximately 43% in 1996 (Statistics SA, 2009).[13] This not only resulted in growing demands in urban areas for municipal services and housing, but also saw the large-scale migration of poverty from the countryside to town. And while the State was to some extent able to provide services and housing to millions of previously disadvantaged black South Africans in towns and cities, eco-nomic trajectories proved far harder to change (South Africa. The Presidency, 2003). The resulting deepening of urban poverty did, however, not change the popular view in Government that 'pov-erty was essentially a rural phenomenon and that urban areas were generally coping well'.

Making matters worse, continued invest-ment in and around the places apart-heid made resulted in the entrenching, and even the deepening, of the apartheid space economy, both on a micro and a macro level (South Africa. Department of Transport, 1998; South Africa. The Presidency, 2003; South Africa. The Presidency, 2006). It was, in particular, the lack of progress in ad-dressing the apartheid space economy that, in the second half of the 1990s, saw several departments including Constitutional Development, Housing, and Transport raise the alarm. In strongly worded concerns expressed to the Deputy President's Office, they argued that there was a lack of coordination in State expenditure and investment in the different sectors and spheres of govern-ment, which was not ameliorating the spatial diseconomies, but in some cases exacerbating them.

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12 Dealings with these 'states' were conducted through the various 'Departments of Foreign Affairs' (*sic*) (South Africa, 1981: 20)

13 Urbanisation statistics are not officially published after 1996.

The Office of then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki took a decision to respond to these calls and at the same time embark on a drive to address a general lack of coordination and poor performance in Government through a number of initiatives. These included the Presidential Review Commission on the Transformation of the Public Sector (PRC, 1998) and the establishment of the Co-ordination and Implementation Unit (CIU) in the Deputy President's Office, which had as one of its first priorities developing a means of coordinating government infrastructure investment (Merrifield, 1999).[14] Notwithstanding the initiatives (some described below[15]) by the Deputy President and later the President's Office, the lack of progress in meeting the targets of reducing inequality and ensuring shared inclusive and sustainable growth became increasingly urgent over the next decade. Politically this found expression in growing dissent at the Mbeki government, also from within the ANC alliance,[16] culminating in the former President's humiliation at the ANC's 52nd National Conference in Polokwane in December 2007; the adoption of resolutions that suggested a far more interventionist, developmental state, and the President's recall from office in September 2008. Six months later, in April 2009, President Zuma was elected as new President with a clear commitment to the development of lagging rural regions and strong statements from leaders in the Party and the tripartite alliance that a more socialist order was in the offing.

4.3.2 Instruments, authors, approaches, objectives and storylines

The first two attempts at national spatial development planning were initiated at approximately the same time, i.e. middle to late 1995-early 1996 (Oranje, 1998a). One of these, the so-called National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF), was commissioned by the RDP Office after being proposed in August 1995 (see Naidoo, 1996). This framework was an outcome of concerns about uncoordinated expenditure and a lack of shared standards in infrastructure investment, amidst a realisation that the State did not nearly have sufficient funds to achieve its goals, even if it were to spend in a highly planned manner. It was envisaged that the framework would start with the mapping of all State investment by making use of a GIS. This would be followed by a meeting of the various key role players involved in the expenditure so mapped, and, through dialogue and persuasion, change and tweak proposals for future investment and align these in accordance with an agreed future trajectory. In practice the exercise did not move beyond the initial phase of mapping, with very few stakeholders expressing any appetite for a situation in which they were to be 'dictated to' as to where (their) future investment should go.

The second initiative, the Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) was developed based on lessons learnt on regional development in the European Community and bearing in mind the harsh realities of the global economy (Platzky, 1998b: 9). This instrument entailed that attention and expenditure on social and economic infrastructure would first be focused in areas with potential for economic growth, and very aptly went by the name of Spatial Development Initiatives (Platzky, 1998a: 6; Oranje, 1998a). Once the SDI endeavours had proven to have been successful, there was to be a shift of attention to more marginal areas (Platzky, 1998a: 6). While all of the SDIs did not have a linear corridor format, the most successful initiative, the Maputo-Pretoria-Gaborone-Walvis Bay Corridor, which stretches from the east to the west of the African continent, has. This assisted in establishing the 'development corridor idea' as a key component of national government policy.

The third instrument with its origins located in the late 1990s is the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP) (see South Africa. The Presidency, 2003; South Africa. The Presidency, 2006). The NSDP arose from the failure with other initiatives by Government to coordinate infrastructure investment and development spending, notably the NSDF (discussed earlier) and a number of *ad hoc* intergovernmental coordinating bodies set up between 1996 and 1998 (Merrifield, 1999). Work began on the Perspective back in July 1998 in the Coordination and Implementation Unit (CIU) of the Office of the then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki. Initially the idea was to prepare a set of 'Spatial Guidelines for directing public Infrastructure Investment and Development Spending' (SGIID). Guiding the various planning actions and the various steps in the mechanism was a set of six indicative principles. Key to these principles was the introduction of the concepts of 'need/poverty' and 'development potential' in terms of which the national space economy would be described. The cornerstone of these principles was that fixed investment beyond the minimum basic level of services as guaranteed in the Constitution should be limited to places with development potential and that social development spending should be targeted in places with high poverty/need. This novelty of the approach of 'people not places', and the break with the conventional wisdom of the 'watering-can approach',[17] meant that the NSDP had a difficult journey to official recognition, with the first draft presented to Cabinet early in 2000 and it being withdrawn from further discussion after that presentation.[18]

Initial resistance to the NSDP arose because it challenged the basic assumption of the ANC and Government at the time that poverty alleviation

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14   As convener of the PRC Strategic Team and subsequently project manager to develop spatial guidelines for infrastructure investment, Merrifield was privy to many formal and informal discussions with senior politicians and civil servants arising from the Deputy President's concerns about the initial lack of co-ordination in the post-1994 Government.

15   Other critical initiatives (not discussed in this article) to improve coordination in Government included the re-organisation of the Cabinet Office, the institution of Cabinet Clusters, the establishment of the Forum of South African Directors General (FOSAD) and the conversion and upgrading of the CIU into the Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services Unit with a higher profile and significantly greater resources.

16   This Alliance consists of the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

17   This refers to an approach adopted (and coined) post-1989 in the former East Germany in terms of which infrastructure investment and development spending is spread in an unfocused way over an area (see The Presidency, 2006).

should be focused mainly in rural areas where it was believed that the 'poorest of the poor' resided, while economic growth would be supported mainly in urban areas. Despite efforts to prove that the greatest extent of poverty and economic potential co-existed primarily in urban localities, the NSDP was negatively perceived by officials and political principals in government.[19] After having been dusted off in 2002, the NSDP was revised and updated and then taken to Cabinet again early in 2003, where it was finally approved. In the process of updating the NSDP (mainly to improve empirical findings), it was decided to place less emphasis on rigid enforcement and greater emphasis on the ability of the NSDP to inform and create a learning dynamic around spatial priorities.[20] The NSDP was not only meant to be used as indicative tool for guiding expenditure decisions by all three spheres of government, but all government actors were instructed to interrogate the document, comment on it, and evaluate their programmes and projects in terms of its logic. Government actors were also asked to assist in the refinement of the data in the NSDP. Key to the success of the NSDP, it was believed, was for it to be used to facilitate and structure a debate on State expenditure in and between spheres in all planning exercises.

The NSDP was again updated in 2005/6 and a revised version published in May 2007. In contrast to the 2003 NSDP, the revised NSDP, riding on the wave of optimism in the country at the time, and the hundreds of billions of Rands available for infrastructure investment,

took a far more positive, assertive approach to State investment in the economy. Key to such investment would be more robust economic analyses, 'proper' spatial development planning and improved monitoring and review; high-level agreement on the spatial prevalence of development potential and need, and enabling and supportive actions to be undertaken by each of the spheres of government to enable exploitation of the potentials and addressing of the needs.

Despite the 2006 NSDP including a more toned down set of indicative principles on investment and spending than the 2003 NSDP, the unease created by the document, and what was perceived to be support for a top-down, forced national spatial development profile, did not go away. This resulted in the fourth initiative, a series of initiatives from around 2004 onwards by the national Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to put in place a regional development programme or strategy. The first attempt at this was aptly called 'Geospread', and was in essence little more than a GIS exercise aimed at identifying places with economic potential outside the metros. This was followed by the preparation of the Regional Industrial Development Strategy (RIDS) (see South Africa. Department of Trade and Industry, 2007). The RIDS regarded the lack of economic growth in areas outside the three major urban/metro-politan areas as 'regional inequality' that was largely attributed to apartheid (South Africa. Department of Trade and Industry, 2007). This situation was to be rectified through the pursuit of 'balanced development', which would

entail State support for economic de-velopment in non-metropolitan regions and small towns with limited asset bases (*Business Day* Reporter, 2006). This was viewed as an approach that could be adopted throughout the country, with no suggestion made that the develop-ment of all regions into viable and sustainable economic spaces would be very hard to achieve.

The fifth and latest initiative is still in embryonic phase and is set to emerge from what is currently a *Green Paper on National Strategic Planning* published for discussion purposes and a *Discussion Paper on Performance Monitoring and Evaluation*[21] (see South Africa. The Presidency, 2009a; South Africa. The Presidency, 2009b; South Africa. The Presidency, 2009c)[22]. The Green Paper sets out how government will, in col-laboration with other role players in the State and civil society, improve long-term strategic planning for the country as a whole.[23] The Paper acknowledges that South Africa has had difficulty meeting its developmental objectives. In order to address this, the Paper proposes a long-term plan for the na-tion as a whole with key milestones and targets, located within a developmen-tal state with the necessary technical, managerial and political capacities to act on the challenges. It also recognises that lack of coordination in the efforts of the various spheres and sectors of government has frustrated the pursuit of government's developmental objec-tives and that a single government term of office is too short to address/realise strategic objectives and outcomes. The development of a capable, effective and efficient developmental state, it

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18 The initial presentation for the NSDP was not planned, but occurred as a result of discussions over the lack of coordination of government spending during the January Cabinet *lekgotla* in 2000. Merrifield, as project manager, was summoned urgently overnight to make a presentation that was immediately followed by one by the Minister of Land Affairs on a new rural development strategy. The juxtaposition of the two views of development was so stark that the NSDP was withdrawn from further consideration at that particular juncture.

19 In order to technically resolve the issue of 'the location of the poor', Merrifield was asked to present the conclusions of the NSDP to the senior management of Statistics SA in late 1999. Despite the NSDP interpretation of the location of poverty being endorsed by the then Statistician-General (who subsequently became HSRC President), both Statistics SA and the HSRC subsequently published reports endorsing the ruling party perspective. These 'official' publications trumped any further efforts to resolve these differences empirically.

20 As project manager, Merrifield had many meetings in 1999 and again in 2002 with senior officials (mainly Directors-General) in the affected departments where the logic and role of the NSDP was supported. While most would have preferred a rigid guideline or map to determine government's spending priorities, it was acknowledged that such a guideline may be constitutionally problematic and therefore the idea of having an indicative guideline evolved.

21 This document proposes the identification of 25 to 30 outcomes and ten priorities by the national Cabinet (South Africa. The Presidency, 2009c). These will then be used to commit national sector departments and/or group of departments to delivery agreements that will specify roles and responsibilities against timelines and budgets. Progress on meeting these agreements will be monitored in meetings to be held on a six-monthly base.

22 Cabinet approved the release of the Draft Green Paper on the 12th of August 2009. The document was subsequently launched at a Press briefing on the 4th of September 2009 and officially tabled in Parliament on the 8th of September 2009. A revised Green Paper was approved by Cabinet in December 2009 and launched at a Press briefing on the 15th of January 2010.

23 While the Green Paper sought to emphasise the need for long-term planning, it was not the first to introduce this approach. Merrifield, as project manager of the Ten Year Review and Scenario Planning project in 2002 and 2003, had helped pioneer both the development of a political stocktaking (Ten Year Review) as well as the development of longer term scenarios for the guidance of Government (Memories of the Future).

argues, will be a multi-term process, the broad parameters and key components of which are set out in the Paper.

As for the long-term plan and its relation to other forms of planning, the Paper suggests that the plan with as its horizon the year 2025, will serve as a guide to medium- and short-term plans. As such, its outputs will consist of "a long-term vision, a five-year strategic framework, an Annual Programme of Action, spatial perspectives and occasional research" (South Africa. Presidency, 2009a: 10). In addition to this, this plan, it is argued, will provide answers to the basic questions people ask, such as "in which sectors we will be working, what will have happened to poverty, what the rate of urbanization will be, what we will eat, what the productivity levels of rural areas will be, how we will move about, what crime will be like, *etc*" (South Africa. The Presidency, 2009a: 10).

The Paper and the press statement that accompanied the launch went to some lengths to allay fears that it was not centralising planning in the Presidency, and that all other planning processes as provided for in the Constitution and legislation would continue, but within 'clear national guidelines and frameworks' (South Africa. The Presidency, 2009b). These frameworks, the Paper notes, will include guidelines that will spell out government's spatial priorities.

4.3.3 Institutions

The NSDF would in all likelihood have required some or other form of national coordination and alignment, and an entity with the authority to forge synergy and drive implementation. While it never came to this due to its short-lived existence, the South African Presidency would in all likelihood have been the most suitable home for it. The SDIs were driven by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and managed by teams for each SDI that reported to the Department (Oranje, 1998a). The RIDS did not include proposals for the creation of new institutions. The NSDP went through a variety of phases, also with regards to institutions. In its early phases (1999-2001), it was proposed that a Cabinet Committee comment and advise municipalities on their professed need and development potential. In its later versions, notably

the 2003 and 2006 versions, reference was made to an intergovernmental body that would monitor the investment decisions of State actors. Throughout all these phases, however, the responsibility of the NSDP was located in the South African Presidency.

In terms of the proposals in the recently published *Green Paper* and the *Discussion Document on Performance Monitoring and Evaluation*, four new institutions will be created, i.e. a National Planning Commission; a Ministerial Committee on Planning; a National Planning Secretariat, and a Delivery Unit. In addition, the Paper suggests that the National Planning Commission, consisting of independent experts and strategic thinkers, will lead the preparation of a long-term vision; be required to challenge government on its plans and seek answers; base its understanding and decisions based on dialogue amongst social partners, insights and research from a variety of sources and commissioned own research, and indicate how the various partners will contribute to the realisation of the plan. The Ministerial Committee on Planning, will provide political guidance to the planning process; support the planning ministry in planning, and ensure and pursue planning and budgeting that is in adherence to and supportive of the long-term plan. These two institutions will be supported by the envisaged National Planning Secretariat. This body will not only provide technical and administrative support to the Commission, but also ensure that the national plan is fed into the planning and budgeting processes of other spheres and sectors of government. The proposed Delivery Unit will consist of a team of experienced officials who can unblock failures in delivery based on lessons learnt and by facilitating change in a participatory and collaborative fashion.

4.3.4 Implementation, outcomes and impacts

Implementation of post-apartheid national spatial development planning instruments has been mixed. With the closure of the RDP Office in April 1996, the work on the first NSDF came to an abrupt end with really only a folder of GIS maps of State investment to show. The SDIs have been a mixed bag, with only two of the eleven – i.e.

the Maputo Development Corridor and the Lebombo Corridor – showing promise. Of late, corridors based on the SDIs for the regional Southern African Development Community have caught the attention of investors and politicians, due to a large extent to the renewed focus on the exploitation of mineral riches in countries to the north of South Africa. In addition to this, the national corridors have spawned a series of provincial and local corridors, with their presence often being felt stronger on paper than in practice. Lack of funding, technical competence and realism and political considerations, have often been the reasons for this. The NSDP has met a similar fate, with awareness of it being high, especially as a 'note of observance' in the section of local and provincial plans and policies where 'homage is paid to the legal and policy framework in which the plan is located'. Generally, in provinces and municipalities that ranked high in terms of developmental potential and need, the reference to the NSDP tends to be higher than in places with low economic growth levels and development potential. In discussions about development, it would often be suggested that the NSDP was anti-rural, that it 'sought to favour those that already have' and was part of the neo-liberal '1996 class project'.[24] Given its perceived association with the Mbeki administration, it will in all likelihood be replaced by something else, or watered down to such an extent that it will no longer be recognisable in terms of what the 2003 NSDP set out to do. The RIDS was never launched as a strategy, and is in hibernation, due to a large extent to a lack of management support for it and vacancies in the Unit dealing with it. Whether it will be resuscitated is an open question.

In the case of the most recent *Green paper and discussion document*, its publication has not gone down well (see Winkler, 2009; SAPA, 2009a; SAPA, 2009b; Cosatu, 2009b). While some have argued that this hostile reception was more about a lack of engagement by The South African Presidency with the alliance partners prior to the release of the document and personalities, with its political head Minister Trevor Manuel being associated with the Mbeki administration, than content, it would seem that there may be more

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24   This is a reference used by 'the Left' to label a small group of Ministers in the Cabinet of former President Mbeki, whom they argue were responsible for the unilateral adoption of what is perceived by the Left to be a neo-liberal policy document – GEAR: The Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (see Musgrave, 2009).

to it. Concerns have been expressed about the creation of a super Minister, with powers that surpass even those of the President, and that the Presidency would seek to micro-manage other spheres and sectors and deny them their right to prepare plans and budgets in accordance with their mandates (see Cosatu, 2009b; Manuel unveils green, 2009). However, as noted by Mr Joel Netshitenzhe, who recently quit his position as head of the Policy Unit in The South African Presidency, the document does not suggest this at all (Netshitenzhe, 2009). Rather, he argues, it makes numerous provisions for dialogue and political oversight of the actions of the Commission and the Unit in the South African Presidency by the Cabinet (Netshitenzhe, 2009; Mohammed, 2009). Furthermore, according to Mr Manuel, the document was prepared in accordance with a resolution taken at the ANC's 2007 Polokane Conference, which called for the setting up of such a commission (see SABC News, 2009; Marrian & Serino, 2009).

Government clearly took the concerns and critiques to heart, as in a recent revised version (January 2010) of the Green Paper the focus of the document was shifted primarily to the National Planning Commission (South Africa. The Presidency, 2010). In the document the powers of the Commission were cut back[25] and its powers and functions *vis-à-vis* those of Cabinet and Parliament much more clearly defined (see South Africa. The Presidency, 2010). In a conciliatory move, COSATU, following on from a call for the nomination of persons to serve on the 20-member Commission by the 10th of February 2010, nominated its (twelve) candidates, suggesting some level of buy-in into the process (see *Business Day* Reporter, 2010; COSATU, 2010). While the mood has surely improved, the underlying debate on agency, structure and power in this arena is perhaps dormant for now, but in all likelihood not over.

5. REJOINDER: DISCUSSION

The following section provides a brief rejoinder of the three periods in accordance with the same categories used in the discussion of each.

5.1 Contextual conditions

Even though the three periods stretched over a timeframe of approximately eighty years, they were twenty to thirty years apart and were located in very different sets of social, economic, ideological and political systems, the space economy conditions they responded to were very similar, i.e. the concentrated nature of economic activity in a small number of major urban areas in the country *vis-à-vis* the relatively low levels of activity in the remainder of the country. By the 2000s the concentration had just become much stronger and more established as a key defining feature of the South African space economy. It is perhaps notable that the three periods corresponded to three periods whereby the South African economy and society were undergoing significant changes. The 1930-1940s saw the growth of an urbanised economy and workforce, the 1960-1980s saw experimentation with apartheid spatial logics at both miro and macro-regional scales, followed by attempts at dealing with the failure and consequences of these policies, and the 1990-2000s was when a new democracy was being established.

5.2 Instruments, authors, approaches, objectives and storylines

While the space economy remained by and large the same during the three periods, the reading of it varied significantly. So, for instance, the concentration of economic activity was at different intervals considered a security risk, an ecological nightmare in the making, a sign of disorder and the absence of reason, a threat for vested power relationships (both in the city and the countryside), the result of exploitation and colonialism, the outcome of differences in development potential (based on both naturally endowed and man-made attributes), and particular economic growth paths about which little can be done. These responses have, with the exception of the proposals of the architects in the 1930s and the post-apartheid NSDP, by and large (1) been anti-urban, with a distinct preference for developing the rural, 'for giving the countryside a chance', and for protecting what is considerd an 'idyllic pristine condition'; (2) been focused on achieving 'balanced development', as if such a state ever existed and as if it were an uncontestable public good to be aspired to and achieved and sustained; (3) been of a 'closed-country-system-zero-sum game nature', i.e. that investment and economic growth in one part of the country can only come about at a cost for another part of the country, as if the global nature of economic relations, especially in the case of cities, was simply a mirage, and (4) been based on the dual assumption that the space economy and the drivers that underlie and shape it, are highly malleable and that the State has the power to direct, guide and plan economic activity across the national territory in terms of nature, scale and location. Only the post-apartheid NSDP took a far more reserved, modest view of the power of the State, in general, and the ability of the national government to understand and plan for local economies, in particular. While the powers of such a strong State in the re-engineering of the national space economy are discussed and even yearned for, as in the recent Green Paper, and its potential for making economic good are lauded, the damage it can potentially do, both in terms of economic development and poverty alleviation and other areas of life, such as individual liberties, are not.

As for the authors of these approaches, with the exception of the architects in the 1930s, the key initiator, author and driver in all three these periods has been the State. Irrespective though of whom the authors were, they have tended to be small groups of technical persons working closely together, and who have then had to sell their ideas to a broader group of politicians and the public. This means that these proposals have veered in the direction of elitism and been prone to clique formation with their own language, understandings and histories, and associated difficulties insofar as securing broader acceptance is concerned.

With regards to the format of the documents in which the instruments were deliberated and set out, the earlier examples were far stronger on statement of intent and action. As the availability of data and mapping capacities improved, and especially with the popularisation of GIS in the 1990s, the proposals became increasingly

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25 The major change revolves around the preparation of the Medium Term Strategic Framework, which was initially to be something that the Commission would be involved with, but which is now solely a function of The Presidency and the Cabinet only (see South Africa. The Presidency, 2010; Manuel, 2010).

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map-based. The NSDP initially resisted the modern tendency towards planning with brightly coloured maps and sought to rely primarily on its developmental principles, but later incorporated maps at the request of Cabinet.

5.3 Institutions

This has proven to be one of the more controversial, and consistently so, components of the proposals in all three periods. Irrespective of who was in government, the suggestion that one 'super-department' would have the power to 'dictate' to others what, where and how it would conduct its business, has raised the ire of observers and those who would be affected by it. As for the proposed institutions themselves, they in most cases included at least some or other form of central body on which technical persons would serve, and which would advise a political superior, coordinating body that would consist of politicians. Over time these institutions have become more numerous and their internal dealings more intricate. As for process, the more recent proposals are far stronger on the ways in which such planning would be undertaken and how different stakeholders would be involved.

The institutional home of such initiatives has tended to be the highest office in the government – the Prime Minister or President. This close proximity to power has not necessarily meant that the proposals have received a favourable reception or that they have been implemented.[26] In cases where the President or the particular Minister responsible for the initiative has been disliked, be it on personal, ideological or policy-direction grounds, the initiative has suffered from 'dismissal by association'.

5.4 Implementation, outcomes and impacts

National spatial development planning initiatives tend to have far more of a life on paper than in practice. This is despite the fact that the proposals espoused in such documents may be in line with the views of the governing party. The reason for the general lack of implementation and the lacklustre

response these initiatives have been getting revolves around five aspects: fears of micro-management by an all-powerful super-ministry and a loss of independence and planning, budgeting and implementation capacities; concerns about the political fall-out of the implementation of the proposals; inability and/or fear to deal with the vast sums of funds that may be involved; a lack of understanding of the proposals and an inability to see the need for them, and a short-term focus on immediate issues. While the endeavours in the 1930s/1940s and the more recent post-apartheid attempts have thus far not come to much, the 1960s/1970s saw the apartheid State achieve significant institutional success with its national spatial engineering initiatives in support of its ideological aims.[27] While the police power of the apartheid State is sure to have played a role in this, the buy-in by a white electorate and officialdom into the long-term goals of the State and hence the initiatives in support of these, is sure to have done likewise. This was in all likelihood also supported by a generally favourable perception of the State at the time, long before the advent of the postmodern epoch and its endemic suspicion of the State and all its apparatuses.

Whilst not dismissing the role of maps and other forms of intelligence, a clear intent, commitment, a wish to succeed, a strong politician in the governing party and a figurehead with support of a broad group of stakeholders, broad-based buy-in, legal backing, such as in the form of the very powerful *Physical Planning Act*, 1967, a supportive funding regime, an effective State, and the mobilisation of all the required resources available to the State, have been stronger drivers of success.

6. CONCLUSION

This article explored the learning possibilities offered by three distinct experiments with national spatial development planning in South Africa over the past eighty years. To this end, this article explored the different readings of national space economies, the different approaches to national

spatial development planning and the different actors involved in, and the existing and proposed institutions in support of such plans. From this analysis, the similarities and differences of the various planning efforts from the different epochs were put forward. In general, and despite in some cases ostensible support for national planning, the review indicated that such national plans have had a limited impact on the content and conduct of government business. By and large they have proven difficult to introduce. Largely responsible for this has been a national, provincial and local legal and policy context that is incompatible with the kind of control that such national plans would require. Where they were more successfully implemented, the following conditions were in place or applied:

- A well-developed planning idea/concept that had strong support, both in and outside of government;

- A legal and policy framework granting the central State the power through control to implement the idea, and

- A State strong enough, both in terms of support from the electorate and in terms of technical capacity and institutional linkages between planning, budgeting and implementation, to see the proposal through.

In addition to the above, the article also suggested that such forms of planning require government systems that are located more in the harder edged realms of intervention and control, and less so in the softer spheres of dialogue, facilitation and guidance. Whether such harder edged planning instruments are compatible with the post-1994 democracy and its largely dialogical form of governance is still to be determined. As such, the article provides a range of ideas for further exploration and opens the door for comparative research on these initiatives both in South Africa and in other countries.

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26 Part of this inability to use the Office could be derived from the reluctance of officials to be seen as having the power to over-ride other national departments, provinces and local authorities. Notwithstanding the Mbeki Presidency's popular reputation for centralising power, in most instances it was often overly deferential to the views of these other institutions and the persons leading them. The majority of the consultative mechanisms inside and outside government were developed under the guidance of Thabo Mbeki, both when he was Deputy President and subsequently President.

27 It would be useful to explore the institutional structures and systems, dense rural settlements and rural industrialisation schemes that were established under apartheid with the outcomes of earlier, as well as later rural planning initiatives. This, however, warrants another study.

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