

Moosa, respectively considered to be Coloured and Indian, the real BEE world is overwhelmingly a black African one despite what one might expect from the higher educational qualifications and stronger business traditions amongst Coloured and especially Indian South Africans. The signs are that the private sector in South Africa, if it wishes to have a serious engagement with the state, must show a black face, ideally from top to bottom but especially at the top. This is not the case with regard to foreign capital. Foreign investment is in part being excused from BEE rules.²² The desire rather would be to bring international capital in as a distinct, autonomous partner. In this sense, Evans' notion of a changing set of alliances in response to globalisation are in large part beginning to be carried out in South Africa. However, the other factor at play is the very opposite of globalisation as it is generally understood: locally-based nationalism.

Assessing BEE requires more than detailing the clearly extensive intermeshing of a private-state based elite of common origins and common political affiliation. First of all, it remains true that actual black influence as directors and as owners of South African companies remains very modest. For instance, black "tycoons" and company directors are often dependent on large loans from the existing sources of finance which will not be repaid quickly or easily, as we have seen. Most of the black directors of listed companies are in fact non-executive. The disjuncture between public power and private weakness that so troubles the ANC and its supporters has been bridged to some extent but remains very substantial. In 2003, only 1,6% of JSE ownership was held by definably black companies according to one estimate.²³ (Hirsch, 2005; Balshaw & Goldberg, 2005) The proportion in listed firms of black executive directors was well under 10%.²⁴ (Hirsch, 2005, 230) The state has by contrast proposed a 2014 target of 25% ownership.

Second, while one can certainly find energetic and intelligent black capitalists in South Africa, and firms that are very independent of state links, the extent of corruption, the speed of class creation, makes it imperative to ask to what extent this is a class that is essentially parasitic, equivalent to what Jomo has called crony rentiers with reference to Malaysia. Taking this further, it remains much less clear that the new class of black businessmen and women have any kind of broader project relating to South African economic development. Southall has argued that they preside over firm structures dominated by managers with essentially narrow financial ambitions only, whatever their colour. (Southall, 2005, 183-84) Thus far some kind of nationalist patriotism remains more a feature of Thabo Mbeki's wish-list than any kind of reality and, according to the best-informed of writers on the subject, William Gumede, is a deep source of frustration to the president. Gumede believes that the kind of alliance Mbeki stands for is intended as well as a model for African development continent-wide; South Africa stands or falls on the premise of BEE. (Gumede, 2005, 224-25, 230) Mbeki's commitment to regulated governance and clean hands, moreover, goes directly against the strong pressure to empower and enrich black people quickly which he equally demands; the tension between these two tendencies are a regular manifestation of South African life as witnessed in the media.

²² See *Business Day*, 21 December 2005. To some extent this is also true of small companies with limited staff that can function independent of government linkages.

²³ However, this figure rises to over 15% when various types of institutional investors with predominant black clientele are added. Moreover, there are obviously many shares held by individual blacks in companies which are not predominantly owned by blacks. For a short guide to controversial figures, see Southall, 2004a, 318-19.

²⁴ By contrast the directors on state-owned enterprise boards were more than 60% black.

Coming back to the Malaysian example, it is important to recall that NEP in Malaysia was intended to bring about deep institutional and social intervention that could turn Malaysian society away from the furrows that had been ploughed in the colonial era. In South Africa, BEE largely lacks any such pretensions. However, the radical and populist roots of the liberation movement that brought the ANC to power have continually sprouted a repeated critique difficult for the government to thrust aside. Again and again, the problem with BEE is defined as its narrow base and its tendency to reward (if extremely generously) only a tiny number of select beneficiaries. As Seekings & Nattrass point out, there is no reason to think that the emergence of a small class of rich businesspeople either increases the number of small business opportunities or has any effect on unemployment. (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005, 344-45) As William Gumede frankly opines, "Very few of the new rich put their money into bricks and mortar; they much prefer to simply acquire more money".²⁵ (Gumede, 2004, 215)

This criticism has struck home and is seen to have potentially an effect on the party's core constituency. Therefore, policy has shifted officially towards the institution of what is called Broad-Based BEE. Broad-Based BEE has recently achieved official status through scorecards of indicative targets devised by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Codes of Good Practice) which are intended (with reference for instance to the issuance of tenders) to supersede simply the question of black ownership. This system was released to the public in November, 2005. Instead a whole host of categories are evaluated on scorecards: the presence of black management, skills and training, the status of companies used by the applicant company as offering services and products, benefits to micro and small enterprises and to the social wage of black employees are all worth points. (Balshaw & Goldberg, 2005) This system envisions a phalanx of independent BEE evaluators emerging to gauge the honesty of replies and certify compliance; these will grant Verification Certificates of appropriate conduct. It is certainly questionable at this stage whether the massive costs involved in such an evaluation process will be undertaken or whether this process cannot itself be corrupted. Certainly the temptation to evade the whole process by fronting, more or less legally, all black firms intended to catch business, is likely to be great. However, the pressure for compliance is also important and some argue leads to change in advance of any formal pressure. (Vuyo Jack, *Business Day*, 12 March 2006)

At present, the spectacular benefits accruing to a few hundred black families at the top largely linked to the ruling party but unconnected to the broader issues of equality and opportunity in South African society leave BEE as a policy with limited enthusiasm from the bulk of the ANC's supporters. 'Features of deals announced this week include a growing list of government officials who are major beneficiaries, continuing generous share allocations to members of the African National Congress's national executive committee and highly unequal allocations between leading and ordinary members of BEE consortia'. (Kevin Davie in *Weekly Mail & Guardian*, 11-17 November 2005) The moral element here frequently tends to be quite dominant in the available literature. (Hirsch, 2005; Southall, 2004)

This essay tries rather to pose not whether the ANC is hanging on to its ideals but whether South Africa can re-invent itself as a genuine developmental state, which might make such an evolution worth the growth of inequality within the black

²⁵ In an interview taken from research on the local scene in Durban, a prominent independent black businessman who exhibited a real interest in 'bricks and mortar', expressed disappointment that it was so difficult to make money from manufacturing compared to financial speculation. Of course, it can be argued that this is the situation prevailing in the business world internationally today.

population.²⁶ Here one has to raise the question of the relationships of the new black empowered to the established business elites even as they unbundle the oligopolies of the past and restructure their interests. Is this potentially a stable or effective set of partners? How will the growing impact of foreign investors impinge? At a journalistic level for instance, a short report included the view of the executive director of the Japanese External Trade Organisation in South Africa that BEE codes are an 'African cost', a 'hurdle' which is part of what is involved in doing business in South Africa; the implications of these terms are not exactly positive. However, the article suggests that opinion amongst foreign investors on this varies considerably. (*Weekly Mail & Guardian*, 20-26 January 2006) And what about white corporate and managerial representation? There is a lack of clear positive signals as to where its place is in Mbeki's real vision and the message is often one of grudging exploitation of superior skills and resources filled with resentment about the past rather than a genuine partnership. Whites speaking frankly generally have a pessimistic outlook (Interview, Jeffery McCarthy) However, at the same time, BEE is a cornerstone and to some extent a token for the rapid emergence of a new power elite whose position in society may be very firmly lodged and who are very closely linked to the new political order. Behind this sits a very much larger class of beneficiaries; at the same time, transformation of the life chances of the majority has so far not effectively been tied to the BEE project at all.

Much current development literature places great emphasis on the declining capacity of the national state and national planning in the context of globalisation. In a sense this represents a more conservative version of the historically very well-developed pessimism within Marxist and dependency theory writers about the potential for national development along any kind of capitalist path. However, it has also been accompanied by renewed and more optimistic research into the potential for growth on locally-based focal areas, whether provincial, regional or urban. This research project originally intended to place more emphasis on this dimension in consequence, using the large port city of Durban as a model. Unfortunately the local elections of 2006 created an environment that made new research difficult. Some relevant information was acquired in interviews, however, and what follows builds from slightly earlier research which specifically queried whether it was possible to see growth coalitions functioning as elite alliances to reconstitute economic growth in Durban.²⁷ (Moffett & Freund, 2004)

There are a number of distinct aspects of Durban that make it interesting in this regard. It is a city with a substantial African majority, like Johannesburg. However, in Durban the large majority of Africans speak one home language, isiZulu, and have their roots within the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In the province, the African vote, uniquely in the country, has been divided between two parties, the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party. The IFP, long weak in the city, has tended gradually to loosen its grip in most rural areas as well in recent years. There is a large Indian minority constituting more than 20% of the city population; this is the one component of the non-white population of South Africa which has historically always included an entrepreneurial class. Consisting of traders primarily, it branched into industry after 1960 particularly with state encouragement while large numbers of young Indians acquired professional educations. Durban has a distinctive white middle class,

²⁶ Not enough attention is paid to the rapid emergence of a black employed petty bourgeoisie, but see Crankshaw and Seekings & Natrass. For a very interesting but different take on South Africa as a developmental state, see Southall, 2005b.

²⁷ Much of the material below is cited and explored more fully in Moffett and Freund, 2004.

overwhelmingly English speaking although of more diverse origins, some of it with business links either into provincial agriculture or into servicing the port and the trades dependent on it. Given this mix, it is only in 2006 that the ANC has acquired an absolute majority of seats in the Metro council. Going against this, however, is the extent to which Durban over the past thirty to forty years has become a branch plant economy. Most of its leading managers today are essentially representatives of national business. In particular, there are very limited distinctive sources of finance which can be seen as Durban-centric. (Padayachee, 2002) However, Durban has from the past a long history of close alliance between city bureaucrats, businessmen and politicians.

During the difficult political transition years (1990-94), impromptu coalitions between local councils, capital and the ANC were established in the leading cities of South Africa. In Durban, Operation Jumpstart was particularly successful in establishing an understanding between parties. One early fruit of this was the corporate success in getting city money to back the International Conference Centre which became the biggest and most important venue of its kind in the country. In 1996, belated local elections were held on the basis of a provisional voting system that fell short of one person, one vote in terms of previous so-called sunset clause agreements. This system contained a two-tier form of local government with quite powerful sub-metropolitan governments. One of these which served northern Durban was very amenable to the interests of Tongaat-Hulett, the arm of Anglo-American that owned massive property in sugar that it was beginning to convert into suburban estates through the device of Moreland Estates. In general, the picture after 1996 was of a business-friendly city government presided over by Obed Mlaba, a member of an old black elite family prominent in one corner of the metropole and still mayor today²⁸, in which Tongaat-Hulett and established white capital, now beginning to hire and promote some black executives, were quite successful in establishing the foundation of an elite coalition.

An interesting feature was the diversity of the new players. Some were white. Blacks included pioneer entrepreneurs from the pre-1990 era, ANC supporters and IFP supporters with uncertain relationships to one another. We were interested to learn that the pioneers who had made it without obvious political connections were much admired by others, white and black. (Moffett & Freund, 2004) It was surprising to see the relatively limited success of Indian entrepreneurs, especially in forms of accumulation that relied on state links; indeed some well-known Indian businessmen were clearly in eclipse. An exception was Vivian Reddy, who had successfully made the transition from links to the old regime to the new one with important connections in both IFP and ANC as well as with foreign interests but this kind of straddling was not easy. (Moffett & Freund, 2004, 144, 147) This contrasted with the rising tide of skilled, successful and sometimes very affluent Indian professional men and women qualified in law, accountancy, engineering and medicine, owning medium sized industrial firms or speculating in real estate. Some local BEE entrepreneurs benefited hugely from the establishment of the two licensed gambling casinos in the Durban municipality and elsewhere but this was an exceptionally lucrative new opportunity created by state licensing and tendering structures. In our research, we found that tendering was not generally successful in leading to substantial accumulation by black-owned firms. Instead we found evidence of fronting and incompetence and the major part of tenders continued to be awarded to established firms. (Moffett & Freund, 2004) In this context the 'old' elite was in a strong position and the relative weakness of the ANC in Durban meant that new elements did not congeal as at the national level. Little informal socialising took place across racial lines. It was concluded that 'there was no cohesive

²⁸ Mlaba and his deputy, Logie Naidoo, could be described as businessmen.

elite grouping in the city' (Moffett & Freund, 2004, 147). As one interviewee pointed out, while there were alliances of some significance built around particular projects, there was no solidly formed growth coalition in place. In particular, there was no embedded regime of the type that Stone has so memorably captured for the American city of Atlanta. (Stone, 1989; Moffett, 2005) Nonetheless it seemed possible to envision the makings of a growth coalition leading to such a regime.

These original post-apartheid local government trends worked fairly successfully in Durban in a period of generally slow growth. The city continued to be in a very strong financial position based on previous management policies while 'delivering' new housing and other services, particularly to established townships relatively efficiently. Simultaneously equivalent two-tier systems in other large cities, notably Johannesburg and Cape Town, plunged into financial crisis while adjusting poorly to the demands of an inclusive non-racial population. As a result, a new local government dispensation for the nation was created which went into effect in 2001. This dispensation has eliminated the sub-councils and contains a strong central authority in a CEO. The first CEO, a veteran ANC member Michael Sutcliffe, had been the chairman of the Boundaries Commission which delimited the much larger municipalities. Ethekwini, which included Durban, embraced rural areas and chiefly jurisdictions. Sutcliffe presided over reorganisation and considerable affirmative action initiatives that have affected the city bureaucracy which has not yet acquired the coherent vision it has held at periods in the past, notably when its top figures meshed closely with the managerial elite of the city in terms of educational background, leisure activities, etc.

As the position of the ANC improved (an absolute majority in the 2006 Council), it downplayed or closed down the agencies that represented the initial growth coalition scene but where the power of the old white businesses tended to be fairly manifest. Thus the Durban Investment Promotion Agency has been dissolved; it was considered to have lacked sufficient 'legitimacy'. (Moffett, 2005) According to an influential actor, 'the Durban growth coalition essentially got tired and the initiative has in a sense been taken over completely by the municipal manager and his team. The private sector is not driving it anymore. The scales have completely tipped.' (Interview, Neels Brink)

Improvements and extensions to the ICC and work connected with the gentrification and reconstruction of the old Durban Point harbour neighbourhood is probably the key source of new city-powered wealth in Durban. It is interesting that Neels Brink, author of the last quote and previously one of the principal figures in Tongaat-Hulett, now works for Metallon, a corporation where the dominant figure is Mzi Khumalo, one of the big national players in early black empowerment and now the chair of the Durban Point Development Corporation. Metallon will likely benefit hugely from the sale of real estate here.²⁹ There has been a weakening in the position of the established companies, certainly as initiators of projects, and a fragmentation in the elite formation process. However, generally for participation in serious deals, local players look to Pretoria and Johannesburg for support and knowledge. 'Johannesburg has the real entrepreneurs if you are looking at the BEE categories.'³⁰ (Interview with Neels Brink)

²⁹ However, "BEE's potential loopholes were highlighted this week by the revelation that Mzi Khumalo's Metallon Ventures scored a whopping R70m in an eight month deal in contravention of the share lock-in agreement with construction company Basil Read" Christelle Terreblanche in *The Sunday Independent*, 21 May 2006. Thus Metallon made a lot of money but the transformation of the real-economy firm Basil Read into an 'empowerment company' proved to be an eight month wonder.

³⁰ Brink specifically made the point that there was no equivalent in the country to Tokyo Sexwale in Johannesburg in the field of property which would be Brink's specialty.

In another sense too, the centralised power of the ANC has become more potent. Mike Sutcliffe has considerable sway in defining and determining the tender process in Durban. (Interviews with Glen Robbins, Mike Sutcliffe) This process is much harder for the public to access than previously. It is probably widening the possibilities for black business more than before, however; it is equally true that there increasingly are BEE firms who get the tenders but then outsource to white owned firms that continue to possess the necessary skills to carry out particular jobs. (Interview with Neels Brink) The ANC favours black accumulation but clearly is opposed to city councillors having too much autonomy in the process; national legislation has now tightened the forms through which municipal finance can be regulated. On the one hand, cohesive elite construction is now far less manifest than in the heyday of white rule (say from the 1950s to 1970s). On the other, South Africa largely defies the literature on globalisation that focuses on the decline of the national state; to the extent that there is elite formation in Durban too, it reflects the will, follows the patterns and operates within the penumbra of what the ANC does nationally.

At this point we are ready to come to some overall tentative conclusions. There is no question that a tightly-knit elite of black businessmen, ex-politicians and public servants, bureaucrats and ANC leaders has formed over the past decade. However, it remains fragile and very dependent on the ANC remaining in power. A split in the ruling party, for instance, might have quite serious consequences. The Mbeki project may come unstuck; the business elite are not easily accepted or liked in the ANC more generally. At the moment, the ANC generally is increasingly paralysed by the emergence of a succession question on the horizon (2008) and strong populist elements manifest themselves so these questions are increasingly salient.

In order to accumulate, the businessmen need as well to establish key links to the old white business elite, English and Afrikaner, and to foreign interests prepared to invest in South Africa. These links are still too superficial and distanced to be considered as embedded in the sense intended by Peter Evans. White capital remains in large measure the horse that bears the BEE riders and it is at the moment more a burden for them to be endured than a wholehearted and internalised alliance.

The ANC aspires to rule a developmental state with the capacity to pull much of Africa forwards. This however requires understanding 'transformation' as something other a cover word for removing whites and replacing them with blacks. In reality, thus far the dominant political forces do not have a developmental project that conceives of transformation beyond the question of racial identity by contrast to the effective developmental states of Asia. In this sense cronyism is so far still the dominant theme. The black bourgeoisie's hold on the economy is very fragile and dependent on an ANC government. It does not have a visible project beyond enriching itself. Moreover, broader social transformation changing the conditions of life of the poor majority is yet to happen; at best, one can point to a black petty bourgeoisie and class of skilled and clerical workers including lower rungs of management, quite numerous, who have virtually been created by the new political order.

A turn to the local scene using the example of Durban shows that while the ANC successfully reins in any locally based effort at autonomous development that might create independent political bases or offer alternatives, it is well able to maintain a centralised authority that sucks the life out of the local state. Growth coalitions which might threaten its hegemony are effectively broken up. The developmental state cannot be found effectively at the provincial or local levels despite apparently

significant levels of wealth and formal autonomy. The nation-state remains the key stage on which the drama is being played out.

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