



SOUTH AFRICA'S ELECTORAL CONUNDRUMS - SOME FATAL MISJUDGEMENTS

South Africa's recent local government elections have resulted in the African National Congress (ANC) taking approximately 46% of the total votes cast, with the Democratic Alliance taking 21.65% and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) garnering 10.31% of the total. Only 26.1 million voters were registered within the country's population (estimated) of 60 million people. Party coalitions will be needed to govern, although most of the smaller parties except for the EFF have declared they will not sign up to any coalition agreement with the ANC. Although the EFF received 10,31% of the total votes cast, the party does not have a majority in any municipality. There are 257 municipalities and five large metros in South Africa.

After screeds of media analyses, editorials and television debates, the mainstream media appears to have ignored the elephant in the room, the question many now ask: why do some people still vote for the ANC despite the damage they have wrought on our country and on our lives? In any normal society, that party's performance (or non-performance) would have precipitated its unceremonious ejection from office at the first opportunity. The ANC's desecration of South Africa over the past 27 years is well documented. Perhaps nowhere in the world has a country descended from functionality and relative economic stability, from "developed" to "formerly developed", in such a palpable and spectacular manner. No subtlety with the ANC! Through their mismanagement, corruption and contempt for law and order, the ANC has assaulted the very soul of the country. SA's moral fibre been battered, and the confidence of a once relatively secure population lies in tatters.

How can we come to terms with this grave conundrum: if they voted for the ANC under these precarious conditions, with the country falling apart around them, then will they vote for the ANC forever? Millions supported the ANC despite that party's desecration of virtually everything they touched. These supporters don't seem to mind stepping over the sewage, walking past the festering rubbish in the streets while trying to survive with spasmodic electricity and water supplies (if at all!). There they were, putting their crosses on a voting slip to support the worst government South Africa has ever had, by any normal criteria. Weren't they worried that the country's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the so-called developed world?

When questioned by journalists as to why they backed the ANC on November 1, the answers given were illogical, emotional, and devoid of common sense. (Common sense is of course culture based: what is common sense to some makes no sense to others!). Their reasons however were authentic to them but did not resemble the grounds upon which people in democratic countries support or reject political candidates. This is of course the difference between the first and third worlds living cheek by jowl in the new South Africa. These post-1994 elections have exposed the unbridgeable gap in attitudes, norms, and values between SA's various groups. Therefore, South Africa is where it is today, with half the citizenry frustrated to near madness by the incompetence, arrogance, and dishonesty of the ruling clique while the other half don't seem to mind at all. They rant and rave and burn everything in sight and violently protest on a regular basis, but they vote for the same people against whom they are protesting! Where in the world does this happen? No wonder president Ramaphosa's pre-election campaign was one of smiles and platitudes and promises: while millions of presumed ANC supporters stayed away or voted for other parties, there were still more than 5,5 million who voted for the ANC. "We are still the most popular party in the country," boasted President Ramaphosa.

WHY THEY VOTED FOR THE ANC

Harrismith, the seat of the Maluti-a-Phofung municipality, is so dysfunctional that residents deliver their own services. (Sunday Times 7.11.21). This ANC-governed council owes Eskom R5bn. It is the electricity utility's biggest local government creditor. For the past three years this local council has failed to submit its financials to the Auditor General. Yet the ANC received 39.2% of the vote, more than any other party. For some the state of their miserable lives under the ANC "is not the fault of the ANC!" Yes, service delivery is a problem "but the ANC is not to blame". (Sunday Times 7.11.21). These residents blame "sabotage within the government" for their municipality's collapse. The ANC is dealing with corruption "from within" they believe, while the ANC "will take us forward", declared others. "I will never stop believing in the ANC", said one loyal voter. The fact is they believe anything the ANC tells them. One highly effective propaganda message that is relentlessly repeated to these uninformed hapless people is that only the ANC will pay them their social grant every month, and that any other party if elected "will bring back apartheid". This works every time. "The ANC has done the most for the people of SA", opined an old man. Where did this come from? He is too poor to buy a newspaper. He has no television. He simply believes what he is told and collects his welfare payment every month. That is his world. There are millions like him in South Africa.

From Boihutso outside Lichtenburg in Northwest province, the dairy giant Clover fled last year, taking more than 400 jobs with it. This council couldn't provide reliable water and electricity. While everything was falling apart, two rival ANC mayors were fighting it out in the council. Potholes, piles of uncollected rubbish and people collecting water in buckets is par for the course in this place. In the Ditsobotla area of the municipality, 51.8% of the people voted ANC. One lady said the party "has done a lot for us. They brought us freedom, so we can't turn our backs on them." "The ANC is not

to blame," said another lady. "The ANC is not the problem; it is the councillors!" (She doesn't connect the councillors with the ANC that deployed them there!). Another said he voted because the ANC "freed us from apartheid", and because "we don't pay school fees and our children are being fed at schools". Another voted because of the R350 relief of distress grant.

But how come the millions of other South Africans of all races who are sensible, who know what to look for in a politician, and who are reasonably well informed allowed themselves to be hoodwinked into thinking that the ANC would be an acceptable future government when all the lessons of Africa told another story? Serious miscalculations were made by, particularly, whites who set the stage for an eventual ANC hegemony in 1992.

MISJUDGEMENT NUMBER ONE – It will be different here!

Many said it would be different here! What happened with black governments in Africa would not be the fate of South Africa under the ANC. Not at all! Those who warned otherwise were dismissed as negative doomsayers. A South African government under the ANC would be different from those that had shrugged off colonialism in the rest of Africa. Power sharing was the name of the game in South Africa. Minority rights were to be enshrined in the constitution, including language, education, and property rights.

Unfortunately, the ANC's modus operandi has turned out to be no different from the post-colonial shambles up north. In his book *Fighting for the Dream*, author R.W. Johnson outlines in Chapter six "Why did SA copy Africa's mistakes?" how the ANC stuck to the African script to a tee. He describes this as follows: "It is precisely because South Africa is more developed, so its bureaucratic elite has had opportunities that its peers in the rest of Africa could only dream of. There are simply much richer pickings to be had in South Africa. So, this new class – which everywhere acts like a swarm of locusts, devouring whatever it can – has had richer looting opportunities than anywhere else in Africa."

He continues: "Not only has there been more extensive looting in SA – but the looting class is correspondingly bigger, and the structural corruption penetrates deeper. Corruption has become endemic all the way down the system: municipal politicians and managers get corrupt through corrupt tenders, policemen take bribes and collude with gang bosses, hospital staff sell off drugs, blankets and other materials, and so on". He goes on to further describe other desecrations and says that "what is happening in South Africa is essentially a repetition of what happened a generation and more ago in the rest of Africa. The difference is one of scale. South Africa has become a real looters paradise".

MISJUDGEMENT NUMBER TWO – The ANC will need white skills

Many declared that the new ANC government would need white and other groups' skills to accomplish what they had promised their voters during the 1994 pre-election

campaign. This placated many whites who were nervous about what would happen to their jobs and businesses under the new regime. "They are going to need us!" they said. "Who will keep the country running?"

Many of these people were overjoyed at the promise of a new dispensation under the ANC and were relieved that finally the democracy the world had sought and pressured them to accept was now playing out in real time. Many felt elated to be embraced within this new experiment, suffused with the expectation that they would become part and parcel of a new inclusive government, that their skills would be needed and valued to ensure that South Africa would be an example to the world of equality of opportunity and prosperity. Competent people regardless of race would play their part in a new civil service based on merit. After a resounding 1992 referendum "yes" to negotiations with the ANC, the election of 1994 set the tone to move forward to a South Africa that would flourish without the impediments of the apartheid albatross. Progressive whites waited expectantly to be asked to join the new team to advance the country's economy and to assist with the betterment of the poor, while businessmen eyed the chance of making good profits building the houses, hospitals, schools, and new government buildings promised by the ANC.

This scenario didn't materialise. Although white and other skills were needed, the ANC didn't want them. Cadre deployment became official ANC policy. Whether qualified or not, loyalists were deployed to shore up patronage support for the ruling party. This was a tragic decision that affected the trajectory of South Africa's economy and infrastructure towards today's desecration and collapse. Of the 257 municipalities in South Africa, only a few are functioning today. Instead of maintaining what was handed to them on a plate in 1994, the ANC refused to utilise the valuable skills already in place and ready to assist, instead choosing political ideology over pragmatism. This led to the near ruination of what was a functioning country.

Why was South Africa surprised at this cadre deployment policy? In the rest of Africa whites were given short shrift. In Zimbabwe white farmers and others were attacked, beaten, and killed and their farms and properties destroyed. In Uganda Idi Amin threw out both whites and Indians, many of whom had been born in that country. The Indians particularly evoked the ire of Amin because these people were successful. But they were "bleeding" the country, declared Amin. The Indians were skilled, industrious, and clever. They created businesses, schools and housing, at the same time employing thousands of local people. (See <https://gga.org/rejection-of-the-bayindi-2/>) By their superior efforts they showed up Amin and his ilk for the useless parasites they were – uncaring for their own people, greedy, corrupt and lazy. Whatever else people believed of the ANC; they never thought this revolutionary party would be so obtuse as to destroy the first world country they had inherited. But they are on their way to doing this.

Many years ago, an American missionary visited Umtata, capital of the former Transkei. At that time, it was a beautiful town surrounded by neat suburbs, while the countryside was dotted with farms and light industry. A Transkei government PR

gentleman hosted the visitor who remarked that Transkeians must be happy to have had so much help with development from the SA government. The answer to this remark was surprising. "We don't care if the roads turn to dust as long as we get rid of the whites", he told the American. The roads of course did turn to dust, and the new Transkei, or what is left of it, is witness to that. What many South Africans don't understand is that millions really don't care if the roads are just dust, or if the sewage runs down the street and the garbage piles up. If they did care, they would fix the problem themselves instead of waiting for someone else to fix it. This has been a strange phenomenon in Africa. Anything is acceptable if it is devoid of white paternalism. The recent SA election results speak for themselves. Millions will stay away from the polls, but they will not vote for what they call a "white" party. While there are many who do care, they appear to be in the minority.

MISJUDGEMENT NUMBER THREE – Democracy will thrive in the new South Africa.

Democracy was on everyone's lips. It was a promise that meant different things to different people. To millions of poor South Africans, democracy meant not only freedom, but free goodies such as water, electricity, housing, schools, and medical care. They expected "service delivery" without paying for it. Billions are now owed to the fiscus for these services, but these large amounts of money will seemingly remain on the debit side of the country's balance sheet for some time yet. The party of promises, the ANC, is now reaping the violent reaction to the unfulfilled promises within the democracy they sold on their election trails. The ANC's version of democracy is not quite the scenario progressive whites and others imagined but the history of democracy in Africa should have given them some idea of what was on the cards for this country.

Says R.W. Johnson in his book *Fighting for the Dream*: "Most African nationalist movements were led by small, educated elites – mainly civil servants, schoolteachers and a few lawyers and ministers of religion. These elites used a populist nationalism to mobilise the masses against the ruling colonialist regimes. They raged against these white occupiers whom they wished to displace, using the language of democracy and human rights to denounce them, thus exciting the dissatisfied masses to action, and gaining international sympathy. In fact, their key aim was to replace their colonial masters by becoming masters themselves and then rewarding themselves with the privileges and more that the colonialists had enjoyed."

"An Houphouët-Boigny or a Mobutu accumulated many times what any of the colonial governors had owned or earned. Once this elite took power it immediately lost interest in democracy and human rights. Typically, it set up one party regimes. This new elite spent an astonishing proportion of the national budget on the salaries of the civil service which was generally corrupt and non-productive, but which included many of their brothers and cousins. Many of this political elite became extremely rich. Mobutu Sese Seko of the Congo (Zaire) became one of the world's richest men. These elites had large ambitions. They wanted to skim off whatever they could by acting as gatekeepers to the development process. They often wanted to take decisions that

defied economic rationality. They created SOE's whose management they could handpick, often placing their family members or loyal cadres of the ruling party at the top. Almost invariably, these SOE's ran at a loss. They were incompetently managed – their managers had not been chosen for their competence – and corruption was endemic."

Johnson then gives numerous examples of this process throughout Africa. He declares that "it is almost misleading to give examples, so normal was this practice of self-enrichment".

GIVE US ANOTHER CHANCE

We find ourselves in an ANC-created quicksand. We were assured it would be different here, that democracy would work. People would be hired on merit. What we experience around us can hardly encourage us to give the ANC another chance. But ANC President Ramaphosa's role in the destruction of South Africa is real and provable. The core problem has always been cadre deployment. Giving evidence before the Zondo Commission last year, minister of mineral and energy affairs Gwede Mantashe said the ANC created its cadre deployment policy "to make sure the civil service would not harbour rebels against the ruling party". Former president Thabo Mbeki also defended the policy, saying if whites were left within the civil service "they might sabotage us". (Look who is sabotaging whom in South Africa today!)

None other than the SA president himself oversaw the ANC's deployment committee from 2012 to 2017. It was his job to approve of everyone who joined the civil service whether they were competent or not. The result of this policy is clear for all to see! Incompetence thy name is ANC! The official opposition asserts that Ramaphosa's cadre deployment policy paved the way for the Gupta brothers and their families to plunder South Africa's state coffers of billions of Rands. This capture would not have been possible had it not been for the corrupt and pliable ANC loyalists in important jobs, placed there by the deployment committee chaired by none other than the country's president!

President Ramaphosa ducked and dived before Judge Zondo when questioned about his role and was reluctant to take responsibility for cadre deployment. He openly asked Judge Zondo not to pass judgement on this practice! Sunday Times columnist Peter Bruce who until recently was a vocal fan of the president declared that "Zondo Commission evidence leader Paul Pretorius had extracted from Ramaphosa an admission that the ANC's deployment committee had even discussed who should be appointed as judges in our courts!" It may happen that the final Zondo report may find that cadre deployment has been in breach of the country's constitution!

Even today government jobs are advertised bearing the caveat "we are an equal opportunity affirmative action employer". Cadre deployment has not stopped, despite the president's numerous public statements that the policy must be changed or that qualified people should be appointed to these important jobs. As far back as

2018 he was making these statements, and our files are full of his continued repetition of this false promise. He's still saying it. "Give us another chance and we will 'renew' the party and make sure that qualified people will be employed", he declares. This is nonsense. He will not dare fire those state or municipal employees enjoying his patronage. When informed voters of all races see that service delivery will improve if capable people are employed at local councils, there is no reason why voters will not support the party effecting change. The ANC will hopefully disappear under these circumstances.