

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE



Democracy and Governance (D&G) is a Research Programme that explores contributions to and constraints upon democratisation in South Africa and throughout the African continent. Researchers evaluate the policies, institutions and impact of government, business and civil society with regard to their capacity to reduce inequality and poverty, whilst empowering communities to promote local, national and regional sustainable development. The Programme has three major thrusts, namely democratisation, local government and delivery, and public service and development.

At present, D&G has a complement of 14 full-time and 2 part-time researchers distributed among the HSRC's centres in Pretoria, Durban and Bloemfontein.

Current and recently completed projects

During the course of the 2002/03 year, D&G was involved in approximately 30 research projects: large and small, with and without external partners, some exclusive to South Africa and others Africa-centred, and funded from internal and external sources.

External funders included:

- the Nelson Mandela Foundation;
- the Department of Provincial and Local Government;
- the South African Development Education Trust;
- the Electoral Task Team;
- the National Assembly;
- the Department for International Development (DFID) in the United Kingdom; and
- the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Research partners included various individual scholars from universities, Khanya Consulting, Paradigm Consulting, the Africa Institute of South Africa and other Research Programmes from within the HSRC.

The State of the Nation: South Africa 2003/04, edited by John Daniel, Adam Habib and Roger Southall, to be published in 2003, is the first publication of an annual review of events and developments in South Africa. It is modelled on the seven editions of the *South African Review*, which appeared in the 1980s and early 1990s. The first volume sets an agenda of promoting sympathetic yet critical assessments of South African Governmental and societal performance over the ten years since 1994.





In collaboration with Professor Robert Mattes of the University of Cape Town, D&G undertook a survey for the Electoral Task Team on **popular attitudes towards the South African electoral system**. The report indicated that South African voters had welcomed the high levels of representivity, inclusiveness and fairness provided by the national list system of proportional representation, and had no wish to return to a first-past-the-post system. However, there was considerable dissatisfaction about the failure of the present system to provide adequate accountability of elected politicians to voters, or to foster the emergence of independent-minded representatives.

Together with the Africa Institute of South Africa, D&G and IRRD submitted a report to the National Assembly on the identification and analysis of **economic strategies in Africa and proposals on an appropriate strategy for the African Union**. Noting that economic integration in Africa is imperative if the continent is to achieve its potential, the report observed that the continent's present regional institutions (such as the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community and the Southern African Customs Union) were characterised by considerable overlap and required greater co-ordination. African integration was also hindered by uneven development and patrimonial sovereignties. The success of the newly launched African Union and NEPAD therefore rests upon

a significant deepening of both political and economic unity.

A report titled ***A Passion to Govern: Third-Generation Issues Facing Local Government in South Africa*** was prepared by D&G and other contributors for the Centre for Development Enterprise. It recorded how South African local government has proceeded through three stages since 1994. The first-generation issues concerned the racial amalgamation of councils; second-generation issues looked at constitutional and normative questions about "what developmental local government should do"; and third-generation issues examined questions of practical development management within the context of national policy. The report raised critical issues concerning the need for sustained and coherent policy debates about practical questions of municipal service delivery.

Mandela, South Africa and Burundi, undertaken on behalf of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, examined the role played by Mr Nelson Mandela, and subsequently by the South African Government more generally, in forging the Arusha Peace Agreement. The Peace Agreement sought to bring to an end the intermittent but brutal civil war between ethnic (minority) Tutsi and (majority) Hutu coalitions that had raged since a post-election coup in 1993. After reviewing the role played by the contingents of the South African National Defence Force, which served as bodyguards for Burundian politicians participating in continuing negotiations, it offered a guarded assessment about

the prospects for peace following the transition from a Tutsi President to a Hutu one on 1 May 2003.

A project on **civil society organisations and service delivery to farm workers** examined the challenges faced by Government Departments and municipalities in serving the needs of farm workers, who are among the most marginalised social groups in South Africa. With the drift of population to urban areas, combined with the recent amalgamation of municipalities, basic service delivery to farm workers has tended to decrease. The report, which focused on the Free State, noted how non-state bodies are increasingly taking up the responsibility of filling service delivery gaps.

The **review of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) donor co-ordination and management** addressed the pivotal role of DPLG in co-ordinating capacity-building in the local government sphere. The report noted that the DPLG's role appears to be shifting steadily from a "co-ordination organisation" (creating the framework for local government by drafting policies, legislation and regulations) to that of an "implementation organisation" (devising and implementing specific capacity-building programmes in its own right). Consequently, DPLG has become increasingly less suitable to serve as the primary co-ordinator of donor programmes, which means that an alternative body should be found to co-ordinate the activities of the numerous stakeholders in the local government arena.

Various publications on **Lesotho politics** reviewed the impact of the introduction of a mixed-member proportional electoral system for the general election of 2002, to replace the previous first-past-the-post (FPTP) system. FPTP had produced highly unbalanced outcomes in the general elections of 1993 and 1998, and had precipitated acute political instability. Analysis indicated how South Africa's military intervention into the country in 1998, although highly criticised, had provided a framework for military as well as electoral reform, providing a much sounder platform for political stability.

A **review of Schedules 4 and 5 of the Constitution**, which outlines the powers accorded to local government, argued that there is a *prima facie* case for reviewing the powers and functions of local government *vis-à-vis* the provincial and national spheres of Government. It provided a methodology for undertaking such a review of the two Schedules, which were linked to the imperatives for redistribution and development, and how this impacts on duplication and overlapping functions between the three spheres of Government. The report will be taken up by Cabinet in its deliberations around reform of the constitutional powers and functions as presently formulated in Schedules 4 and 5.

Other reports included:

- good governance surveys of Swaziland and the Eastern Cape;
- a compilation of information regarding the award of honours to Mr Nelson Mandela;

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What most voters want out of electoral system

Survey shows public sees it as fair overall, but backs multimember constituencies

Bob Mates and Roger Southall

THE Electoral Task Team chaired by Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert was established in May this year to look at possible changes to the electoral system used in the general and provincial elections in 1994 and 1999.

This system is based on proportional representation, and at national level, entails the election of 400 members of Parliament, 200 from national lists of candidates put up by the political parties, and 200 from nine regional lists (intended to provide for an element of guaranteed provincial representation).

Elections for the provinces are conducted on the basis of single

ACCOUNTABLE TO WHOM?



Majority of voters would react favourably to a shift towards a mixed electoral system

listed candidates should be chosen by party members rather than party leadership. This would seem to indicate that, overall, voters favour localised as against centralised control of the parties.

However, respondents were more ambiguous on the issue of party discipline once representatives have been elected to Parliament. Although 51% said representatives should have freedom to criticise their own parties, 44% insisted they owe their loyalty to their party.

What does this mean — especially combined with other findings which, for instance, record that South Africans attach a high significance to voting and that it is more important that the South African Parliament be representative of diversity than that it be efficient?

Our interpretation is that the survey's findings suggest that the majority of voters would react favourably to a shift towards a mixed



- a review of municipal commonage administration (and how municipalities can promote the role of emergent farmers); and
- a study of the potential for the demarcation of Ward 20 of the Manguang Municipality as an historical precinct.

A further important study was undertaken on behalf of DFID for the **Local Government Support and Learning Network**, which focused on several areas of municipal functioning, including infrastructure management, local economic development, environmental health, budgetary reform and organisational design.

In September 2001, a joint workshop of the HSRC, French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), and National Research Fund on **governance and democracy in South Africa and France** was held in Bordeaux, France. The proceedings were edited during 2002 and will be published in 2003 by HSRC on CD-Rom. In October 2002 a follow-up workshop was organised by D&G in Pretoria on public policy implementation in South Africa and France. The papers presented by scholars from the two countries are currently being edited.

Project reports were accompanied by a substantial rise in D&G's rate of academic publication. Two members of the Research Programme completed their PhDs during the year, and overall the Programme's researchers produced one authored

book, two edited books, thirteen chapters in edited books and ten articles in refereed journals, as well as a host of articles in newspapers, popular journals and websites. There are also numerous items accepted for publication that are as yet forthcoming.

Future developments

Future research includes exciting ventures on such topics as children's rights, strengthening human rights, service delivery, the political economy of South Africa and a survey of the political attitudes of members of COSATU. The writing of an historical biography of South African women will be undertaken for the Department of Arts and Culture. As part of a multi-country project a survey is to be undertaken (in collaboration with IRRD) concerning the human rights implications of South Africa's land policies.

D&G is also active in conducting workshops with users, as well as regular seminars, and also in publishing occasional papers designed to disseminate research and stimulate public debate.

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