

INTRODUCTION

To what extent has South Africa pursued social and economic development since 1994? The successive post-apartheid administrations have indeed been attempting to facilitate social and economic development, among other pressing objectives. It would seem that socio-economic development has been deteriorating, particularly since the fifth administration. The first democratic government was elected in 1994, making it the first administration. The second administration was during 1999-2004, the third one was during 2004-2009, the fourth one was during 2009-2014 and the fifth one was during 2014-2019. The deterioration in socio-economic transformation has continued during the sixth administration (2019-2024), at least the three years of the sixth administration. The coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) worsened a socio-economic situation that was already dire.

The African National Congress' (ANC) 2017 Strategy and Tactics discussion document, although it uses different nomenclature, reiterates what was articulated by its 2007 discussion document. The 2017 discussion document stated that:

The attributes of the South African state we seek to build include visionary acumen in terms of long-term orientation; ideational capacity reflected in the legitimacy to lead and mobilise society behind set objectives; organisational systems that ensure that the state is able to meet its objectives; and technical capacity residing in a bureaucracy that is professional and capacitated to translate policies into practical programmes and projects. (ANC, 2017:21)

It is in this context that the book examines the hypothesis that suggests that capacity constraints and the organisation of the government have affected social and economic development in South Africa. The focus of the book is on the institutional architecture and its influence on socio-economic outcomes. Examining the role that the state apparatus plays in inclusive development is even more necessary in South Africa on the grounds that the economy has been performing poorly for a long time (since about 2008) and socio-economic transformation has not progressed much since 1994. It is even more critical to undertake this task because the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the wellbeing of many in South Africa (as in various other parts of the world) and has brought to the fore the institutional architecture that the South African government put in place with the intention of creating a capable state, particularly since 2009. It is in this context that I felt the need to reflect comprehensively on the events following 1994 as far as the institutional architecture and development outcomes in South Africa are

concerned. Sufficient lessons abound for a thorough engagement on making inclusive development a reality in South Africa. This book takes into account the insights shared by other authors and materials on this subject as well as my earlier works.

A fundamental question that this book tackles is whether the organisation of the state and its capacity allows for robust developmental outcomes. In other words, is the manner in which government is organised and capacitated ensuring social and economic transformation? This question is not new but it has not been comprehensively addressed. There were attempts at dealing with this question during the third administration, under the leadership of former President Thabo Mbeki, which resulted to some re-organisation of the government during the fourth administration (under the leadership of former President Jacob Zuma). The question has become increasingly critical and relevant given the challenges that were made more prominent by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The book is an attempt to eschew what seem to be easy answers to South Africa's development conundrum. It has become too common to blame corruption, patronage and such as reasons as to why socio-economic transformation has not been sound in South Africa. What is also normal is attributing weak socio-economic transformation to the government's inability to build a nation when in fact the focus since 1994 has been on state building. Nation building has not even started. Sufficient material exists on the nature of the political transition, the structure of the South African economy and other issues that have limited socio-economic progress. The proper institutional architecture should have mitigated these and other challenges.

To explain further, this book deals more directly and in detail with the question of the extent to which South Africa can be viewed as achieving its developmental goals based on its institutional architecture and how the institutional set up has evolved since 1994. A critique that deals with the prospects of South Africa achieving its developmental goals and with the challenge of state-building is overdue, given what seems to be deterioration across society. Williams (2014:8) lists four factors as having precipitated a relook at the notion of state-building in South Africa: economic restructuring, democratisation, epistemic shifts and the ecological crisis. In this context, it is important to examine South Africa's progress, challenges and prospects towards achieving its developmental goals.

South Africa inaugurated a planning commission in 2010 as part of efforts to ensure that development outcomes are improved. The manner in which a planning commission is structured in any society is of great significance as it is not merely a matter of having a planning function or a planning commission. Since the mid-2000s, there have been efforts to improve long-term planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is opportune to examine whether these efforts and initiatives, including formally establishing extensive long-term planning institutional mechanisms, were carried out appropriately and whether they have contributed to socio-economic development. Put differently, after efforts were made and the attendant institutional set-up was established, why have the institutional architecture improvements failed to improve social and economic