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A South African developmental state: the significance of state capacity

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A SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTAL STATE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STATE CAPACITY.



A research report submitted to the Political Studies Department, Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (M.A) in Political Studies.

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Prepared under the supervision of

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March 2011.

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ABSTRACT

This study uses secondary literature and primary sources to explore the significance of state capacity in proposals to build a South African developmental state. Its main aim is to get a deeper understanding of state capacity as a significant ingredient in building a successful developmental state. The analysis is based on the postulation that no country can successfully build a developmental state without the necessary state capacity. The study surveys the literature on developmental states, explores the key attributes/institutional benchmarks of a developmental state and draws out findings about what accounts for a successful developmental state. One of the key conclusions drawn from the literature is that in order for a state to be a successful developmental state, it needs to be institutionally configured in such a way that it possesses the capacity to formulate and implement policies successfully. Using theoretical benchmarks propounded by scholars as a point of reference, the study establishes how we should understand state capacity and shows that such state capacity is a necessary precondition for a successful developmental state. Following from this analysis, it explores how the South African government has to come into grips with the issue of state capacity in its quest to build a South African developmental state. The failure of post-1994 macro and micro economic reform strategies to address the principal challenges of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment indicates that successful implementation of any policy is dependent on state capacity.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC- African National Congress

ASGI-SA- Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa

BEE- Black Economic Empowerment

CIU -Co-ordination and Implementation Unit

COSATU-Congress of South African Trade Unions

DTI-Department of Trade and Industry

EDD- Economic Development Department

GEAR- Growth, Employment and Redistribution

iPAP- Industrial Policy Action Plan

MITI-Ministry of Internal Trade and Industry

NGP-New Growth Path

NPC- National Planning Commission

NP-National Party

PCAS-Policy Coordination and Advisory Services

PSC- Public Service Commission

RDP- Reconstruction and Development Programme

SACP-South African Communist Party

SRI-Solidarity Research Institute

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