3.1 Provincial Planning in South Africa – Together…Hand in Hand

After the political miracle of 1994, the South African political actors, policy-makers and academics had to come up with functional and well crafted government machinery. Instead of hoping for yet another miracle, the post-apartheid society had to face its fears, its challenges and its opportunities head-on. The quest for an all-inclusive, non-racial, non-sexist society resulted in the drafting and subsequent adoption of a democratic constitution. Not only did the constitution embody the political aspirations of a society long deprived of its dignity and equal rights, it also gave birth to a new administrative structure. For some though, the political negotiations of the early 1990s, resulted in a political structure that was "neither explicitly federal nor centralist" in nature (Pottie, 2000: 37). In this quasi-federalist system, there seem to be tension between the three spheres of government. Although the constitution guarantees the equality and distinctiveness of the three spheres of government, there has been a concern over the role and the purpose of the provincial sphere.

Building from the discussion made in the previous chapter, it is the purpose of this chapter to try and outline and thus stimulate debates on the role that the region should be playing especially with regard to strategic planning. As highlighted earlier on, intergovernmental planning or the structure of the planning polity is determined by the conflict and negotiations that take place between different levels of government. Without down playing the success and achievements resulting from the decentralization process in South Africa, there is concern among critics (Jozana, 2000; Kalema, 2000; Pottie, 2000; Rapoo, 1999; Khosa and Muthien, 1998) who state that provincial government is not as efficient as it should be. With the local and national government taking a centre stage in strategic planning, the provincial sphere is yet to legitimize itself as a functional point (McLeod, 2001) were strategic planning and economic governance can flourish.

This chapter seeks to analyse the role and purpose of provincial-scale planning in South Africa. Acknowledging the politics and the history behind the formulation of the current provinces in South Africa, this discussion will nonetheless be centred on new regionalist perspective. For the full engagement and participation of provinces in the cooperative governance system, is likely to result in a more integrated planning polity. As proponents of NR point out, provinces have a potential of being the drivers of economic development and political governance (McLeod, 2001; Wheeler, 2000).

In order to fully tackle the matter at hand, this chapter will be outlined as follows: *firstly*, the current South African planning system will be outlined. This will give the reader an insight on the planning system, thus being able to point out the gaps or loop-holes that exist therein. *Secondly*, a brief history of provinces in South Africa will be sketched. And *finally*, there will be a discussion on the role that provinces should be playing in promoting strategic planning in this country.

3.2 In Search of a Compromise: Cooperative Governance in South Africa

As outlined in the previous chapter, the administrative and governmental context plays a major role in shaping the planning polity or system of a country (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). In states such as the Netherlands where a hierarchical administrative structure exists, the central government has more authority to inform and guide the activities at sub-national level. In that case, the provinces still happened to enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy especially with regard to planning for their particular developmental agenda, despite the requisite limitations set by central government (Jenkins, 2005). In a quasi-federal state like South Africa, where all spheres are supposedly equal, there seem to be uncertainties particularly with regard to planning. Before moving on to the analysis of the South African planning system, it is worthwhile for one to engage with the administrative structure of this

country, paying particular attention to the powers that the provincial sphere has with regard to strategic planning.

According to the Constitution (1996) *Chapter 3, Sections 41.1 (e–h.)* the government consists of three spheres of government – the national, provincial and local, and these are "distinctive, interdependent and interrelated." Given the divided history of this nation, cooperative governance was paramount, as it was pivotal to ensuring and guaranteeing unity and harmony, both of service delivery as well as governance and social responsibility. In this regard, the three spheres while having distinct mandates entrusted to them are also components of a larger single body that is functional government machinery (DPSA, 2003; Pottie, 2000). Titus (2000: 19) explains that the use of the preference of the word *sphere* instead of *tier* "…was premised on a deliberate attempt to ensure that all levels of government were accorded equal status and treatment." With only a decade in democracy, the cooperative governance structure is yet to be clearly defined and there has been a lack of clarity as to who is responsible for what especially with regard to service delivery (Camy and Gordon, 2004).

In an endeavour to comprehend the tensions that exist between (and in some instances, within) the three spheres of government, commentators have labelled the province as a weak sphere which has to be done away with (Jozana, 2000; Pottie, 2000). The provincial sphere has been lambasted for being reluctant to play a significant role in defining and determining the its role, while service delivery and planning initiatives continue (sometimes with greater fanfare and attention) at local and national level. Although such statements are seemingly justifiable, one should try and understand the history behind the formulation of provinces in South Africa.

This discussion is premised on the belief that provinces in South Africa have the right not only to exist, but to thrive and become significant vehicles for the country's developmental agenda – in all aspects (Pottie, 2000). The revival of the PGDS as a

provincial-scale planning tool is an indication that provinces have a role and purpose in shaping the planning system of this country. The following section seeks to sketch out the debates on the government's federal structure with much attention is given to the debates that ensued during the formulation of provinces.

3.3 The Province as a Sphere for Political Influence…?

The birth of the South African province was long, complicated and agonising. Dominant political parties held different views about the future of administrative structure of South Africa (Frost, 1993, Humphries and Rapoo, 1993; Croeser, 1993). In a bid to secure their position in the new democratic society, South African political parties battled over the form that the new society was to take. As Lodge (cited in Pottie, 2000: 37) asserts:

> "The case for South African democracy's assuming of a federal form was based chiefly on the supposed political benefits of a multi-centred political dispensation in ethnically divided societies. Dividing executive authority between central and regional government would give minorities, defined in different ways, a stake in the system."

So, for those parties whose chances of winning the 1994 elections were minimal, the province was to be an entry point to the state apparatus. To use Kihato and Rapoo's (2001: 2) words, "provinces were positioned as second-order prizes to be won by political parties which perceived no prospects of capturing power at central level." The NP for instance proposed a 'properly federal' state with powers entrenched in provinces – from their standpoint, the central government was not to be granted concurrent powers or have overriding powers over provinces (Frost, 1993).

The IFP clamoured for a confederal system, with sovereignty residing with each component state making up the federation of South Africa (Pottie, 2000; Frost, 1993). For these two parties, provincial autonomy was a way of keeping the identity of the regional scope of politics relevant and region-specific. To this day, the IFP is striving

to regain control of KwaZulu-Natal and the DA is still attempting to re-assert their dwindling power base in the Western Cape, following the amalgamation of vestiges of the NP with the former DP[10] before the previous national elections last year.

As a leftist party, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was bound to claim the right for a more centralist state, with more powers given to the central government and minimal powers to the provinces. The ANC was in favour of a "system of provincial government which would ensure effective governance at both central and local government levels" (Khosa and Muthien, 1998: 6). Realising these different view points, a political compromise was made. The 1996 Constitution therefore resulted in a system where the national and provincial government had concurrent functions, with other competencies being exclusively national and some, provincial.

Even after the political compromise, the debate on the constitutional powers of provinces still continues – "opposition parties are still pressing for greater powers at provincial level" (Pottie, 2000: 46). For some critics, the new constitution does not give provinces enough areas of exclusive legislative competence (Jozana, 2000; Pottie, 2000). Instead of being a distinctive sphere, a province becomes yet another implementation arm for the central government together with the local government. Given the history of provinces particularly with regard to monitoring local government activities and coordinating the delivery of services, one is tempted to question its legitimacy in the cooperative governance structure. Some commentators even suggest that "the provincial system is a disaster and must be scrapped" (Jozana, 2000: 12). It is one's personal opinion that such a submission is uninformed and might pose a threat to a new democracy like South Africa which is in a process of unifying and transforming its fragmented society in a fundamental way.

---

[10] Please note that as of the last national elections in 2004, the ANC now controls all nine provinces and hold an overwhelming majority in parliament. The NP, turned NNP led by Marthinus van Schalkwyk has now been dissolved and members are now with the ANC. While the IFP has since lost its majority in the KZN government, it remains a strong force in the regional socio-political arena.

Provinces are certainly faced with a number of challenges such as those detailed by Pottie (2000: 43):

- political interference in administration;
- over-centralisation of management;
- poor budget formulation and spending;
- insufficient departmental organization and;
- inappropriate human resource distribution
- and most relevant to this discussion, *weak strategic planning*.

These concerns however are not unique to the provincial sphere; they cut across all spheres of government and it would take a concerted effort from all spheres of government to resolve the abovementioned problems. Moreover, provinces themselves have a duty of legitimising their political existence, thus transforming themselves into spheres *with* influence. As will be highlighted below, the PGDS is the strategic planning tool that can not only legitimize the existence of a province as sound political entities, but can contribute to the success of the South African planning system. In order to grapple with how this could effectively be done, it is important first to have an understanding of how the planning system operates.

3.4 Intergovernmental Planning in South Africa

Owing to its apartheid legacy, the South African socio-spatial fabric was highly fragmented. For centuries, the separatist policies of the previous regime proved to be very effective in disintegrating the South African. With the enactment of the notorious Group Areas Act (1950), South African society was divided according to race, with blacks being driven away into to what were ironically referred to as 'homelands' (Davies, 1981) and the South African urban and rural population distribution and morphology changed so dramatically and fundamentally that its repercussion are still being witnessed and felt. Driven by a "crushingly exclusionist ideology" the apartheid planning system resulted in a society with dual faces: "one

healthy, functional and white; the other stressed, dysfunctional and black" (Bollens, 2005: 226).

Given such a political context, planners of the time were used to implement the segregationist policies of the nationalist government (Mabin, 1992). This disregard for human dignity and rights led the marginalisation of the majority of South Africans, tearing the very fibre of this community. For the last decade, a new cadre of planners and politicians has been working relentlessly to find new ways of integrating the society.

Within the context of cooperative governance, planning in South Africa had to be transformed from a separatist to a more people-centred and inclusive system. The RDP for instance, clearly indicated the new direction that South African planning sought to take. According to the *RDP White Paper* (1994):

> "The RDP is an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework. It seeks to mobilize all our people and our country's resources towards that final eradication of and the building of a democratic, non-sexist future."

As early as 1995, there was commitment on the part of the government to ensure that planning was integrated enough to address the social and economic disparities of the past. The RDP office's endeavour to coordinate various sectoral and provincial activities was indicative of the developmental and integrated planning trajectory that the government sought to pursue. Although the RDP office was closed in 1996, its effort to establish a system of integrated development planning cannot be overlooked. For Harrison (2003: 3) the RDP office played an important role in "conceptualizing development planning" in this country. Although the political atmosphere was altered with the ruling party adopting a "neo-liberalist turn" the spirit of integrated planning was unfettered. It is the newly restructured local government that was to play a pioneering role in fostering integrated development planning in South Africa.

The commitment of political actors and planners in this new political dispensation "found expression in a range of Acts, policies strategies development planning instruments, integrated mechanisms and structures" (DPLG, 2005: 1) aimed at fostering intergovernmental planning and governance. The following section seeks to outline the nature of these planning instruments at local, national and provincial level and a more detailed discussion will be on provincial-scale planning as it forms the core of this discussion.

3.5 Planning at Local Level

The transformation of the South African local government system heralded a new and revived approach to planning in South Africa. With the emergence of global economic restructuring and emphasis on localism (Naude, 2003, Nel and Binn, 2001) the local government in South Africa was seen as an arena for promoting economic development and local democracy). As the Constitution of South Africa (1996 – Chapter 7, section 153a) stipulates:

> A municipality must structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community and to promote the social and economic development of the community.

The plethora of legislation that followed from 1996 to 2001, seek to give the local government a legislative backing. The Local Government Transition Act (1996) for instance did hint on the importance of integrated development planning. It is the *White Paper on Local Government of 1998* however, which introduced or formalized the concept of "developmental" local government. According to the White Paper, a developmental local government was expected to:

- Exercise municipal power and functions in a manner that maximizes their impact on social development and economic growth;

- Play an integrating and coordinating role to ensure alignment between public and private investment within the municipal area;
- Promote local democracy in such a way that citizens and community groups, apart from being represented by the councillors, are involved in the design and delivery of municipal programmes;
- Build social capital by providing community leadership and vision;
- Seek to empower marginalized and excluded groups within the community.

In fulfilling its mandate, the local government had to devise a strategy that was in essence a long term visionary strategy which strove to guide planning at local level. The municipalities' first attempt to adopt and let alone implement IDPs proved to be for the most part, unsuccessful. One of the reasons for this, is that during that period in the South African planning history, there was a serious deficiency in the numbers of experienced personnel at local level. Furthermore, the concept of IDP had not yet been fully conceptualized by most municipal councillors (Harrison, 2003).

With the introduction of the *Municipal Systems Act* (2000) that mandated every district and local municipality to adopt a strategic IDP, planning at local level has never been more promising. Although there has been "a mix of satisfaction and regret" (Harrison, 2003: 1) with regard to the implementation of the IDP process in South Africa, one can rightly state that for a planning system which is relatively new, the IDP process has made a significant contribution in shaping strategic thinking around planning.[11]

It is not within the scope of this paper to get into a profoundly detailed discussion and analysis of the IDP process, but what this section seeks to achieve, is to highlight the attention enjoyed by the local government with regard to strategic planning. There are quite a number of policy documents that have been released by the government, the DPLG as well as other research institutions such as the CSIR,

---

[11] For a detailed analysis on IDPs, see Harrison (2003; 2002)

that are dedicated to making planning at local level more strategic. Recently, the DPLG (2005) held a series of national workshops on the strengthening of the IDP process in South Africa. Indeed, such commitment to local planning is crucial as this sphere of government is viewed as closer to the people. When reviewed against the input made (that is in terms of personnel training, workshops and such), the progress made by municipalities in their implementation of IDP left much to be desired.

Gleaning from personal observations of the IDP hearings[12] in May 2005 one realised that both the district and local municipalities are struggling to formulate pragmatic IDPs. It obviously follows that if the IDP document is not strategically drafted, the implementation process is bound to be a challenge. Apart from municipal managers expressing their confusion over the role that district municipalities should be playing in the IDP process there is a general consensus that municipalities particularly those in categories B and C, are faced with an unfunded mandates. As Naude (2003) brings attention to the fact that, most of the weak, small and rural municipalities are in heavy debt – expecting such municipalities to implement IDP as well as other activities such as PIMMS, and LED, is almost outrageous. In essence, that both district and local municipalities need assistance from the provincial government in particular – that the province needs to move forward and take charge of strategic planning in this country.

Prior to moving on to the crux of this discussion – that is the role that provinces should be playing in planning – one needs to outline the role that the national government in the planning polity. Recently, there has been some enthusiasm within the planning fraternity over the implementation of NSDP. Such excitement is understandable especially when realising that the national government has more resources as well as influence that can be imparted positively on this country's planning system. It must be stressed however, that if there is no harmony between

---

[12] The author was a part of the resource team during at the Western Cape IDP Hearing.

and within the government machinery, planning is bound to be less strategic and disjointed.

3.6 Planning at National Level

As stipulated in the Constitution (RSA, 1996), all spheres of government are equal. In practice however, the national sphere appears to be 'more as it determines the policies of the nation (Pottie, 2000). Furthermore, both the local and provincial sphere are financially dependent on the national government. As the UK and Netherlands case study has highlighted, the central government has a major role to play in strategic planning. Not only does the central government provide national consistency in planning (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002) but it also ensures that planning goals are in line with the national goals. In South Africa where a system of cooperative and integrated governance (Harrison, 2003) is emphasised, the leadership of the national government in areas of public interest such planning is paramount.

3.6.1 The MTSF and the MTEF: Budgetary Planning Instruments

As its offering to the planning system, the national government adopted the *Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF)* which is:

> "A limited but focused set of medium-term strategic priorities that are shared by all spheres of government and inform planning, budgeting and implementation. It links policy priorities, planning and budgeting for government as a whole" (DPSA, 2003: 45).

As a budgeting tool, the *MTSF* seeks to link all departmental policies and priorities across all spheres (Harrison, 2003: 8). The *MTSF* also comprises of a sequencising exercise (DPSA, 2003) or a planning cycle that enhances strategic medium term prioritization. This planning tool is important as it ensures that planning decisions made by the cabinet are implemented nationally. The *MTSF* also informs the

preparation of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework *(MTEF).* The latter is target oriented as it details the government's three-year rolling expenditure and revenue plans for national and provincial plans (DPSA, 2003) and when properly implemented, these two planning tools can lead to a holistic planning approach.

3.6.2 The National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP)

According to Oranje (2002: 43) the NSDP "was born out of a concern that national investment and development programmes were not fully addressing the distortions of the past apartheid space economy largely as a result of uncoordinated infrastructure and investment spending in three spheres of government." The NSDP could also be South Africa's response to the rise in popularity of spatial planning approaches currently sweeping across Europe (Goldsmith, 2004). Put succinctly, spatial planning at national level as articulated in the NSDP is a way of:

● Coordinating, integrating and thinking through the spatial implications of investment in sectors, such as transport, environment, land use, [and] economics;
● Dealing with inter-regional issues that cut across local, regional and provincial boundaries and inter-sectoral issues that span sectoral boundaries and that cannot be dealt with in an adequate way by existing tools and mechanisms;
● Contending with significant infrastructure investments that radically alter the national space economy;
● Providing indicative guidance for private sector investment; and
● Using public sector investment to reduce inequalities between people residing in various localities (Oranje, 2002: 6; Harrison and Todes, 2001: 65)

In a country like South Africa where the socio-economic disparities are widening, there is a dire need for the national government to take charge and play a role in directing investment to areas of opportunity (Figure3.1). The NSDP therefore, is a perspective that informs how strategies could best be utilised for targeting development strategies and integrating the approach that would underpin

procedures for doing so. The only way the government can fully tackle poverty and economic deprivation that and other social issues that characterizes this society, is through understanding and identifying areas or "categories of development potential" (Oranje, 2002: 43). It would be futile for instance, for the government to invest its scarce resources in places that do not have the basic infrastructure. As a tool for strategic decision-making, the NSDP seeks to identify and harness areas that can lead to economic and social development.
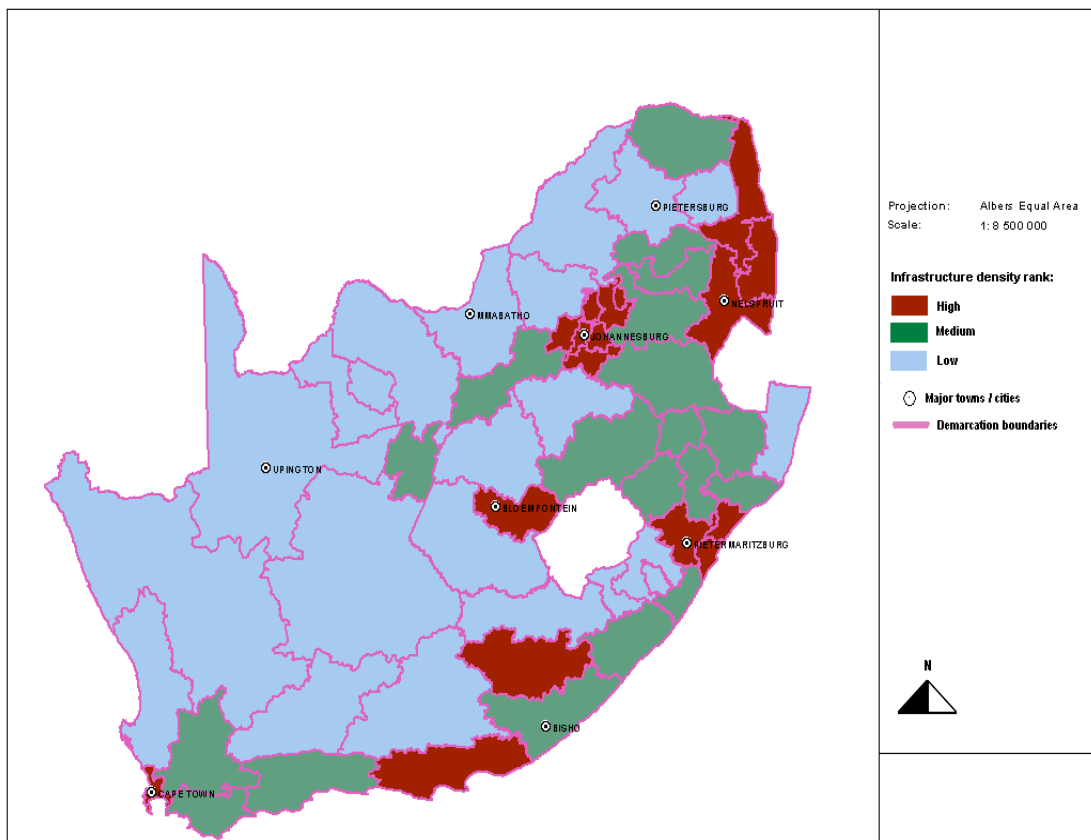

Figure3.1 Areas of Potential – From a national perspective it would appear that the areas surrounding South Africa's large cities and places of significant tourism potential are most likely to benefit from further investment. However, rural and peripheral areas continue to suffer as a result of their location, and perhaps need to think more laterally about how they could extract the most potential from those areas…A tough task indeed considering the levels of capacity that these same places also face.
Source: Presidency © 2002

Like the ESDP, the NSDP is not a binding document, and can therefore be characterised as a text that encapsulates the idea of "planning by persuasion" (Bohme, 2002: 32). For Bohme (2002) the term persuasion in this context refers to convincing. The NSDP therefore, is not the document that should be religiously followed. Provinces, municipalities and the private sector for instance would benefit from this "perspective" as it not only fosters economic governance (MacLeod, 2001) but also maps out fertile investment areas that can yield positive results.

The NSDP, like most planning perspectives, has not been without its critics. The perspective has been lambasted for being pro-rich and insensitive to the needs of the poor people. This rather uninformed opinion on the NSDP stems from the document's emphasis on the promotion of areas of potential – which for some, refers to societies that are already privileged (Patel interview, 2005; Mohamed interview 2004). For Yusuf Patel[13] the NSDP "is the most pro-poor piece of work" as it maximizes government intervention in economic development and investment. Thus the government becomes the advocate for the poor when investment decisions are made (Presidency, 2004). The channelling of investment in areas of need and potential is one way of reducing poverty and unemployment in this country. As Mabogunje (cited in Presidency, 2004: 5) clearly outlined:

> "The spatial reorganization of a country can induce the release of tremendous physical and mental energies whose practical outcome is certain to give rise to socio-economic transformation necessary to launch a country on a path to self-centred, self-reliant and self-sustaining development."

When reviewed in isolation, national and local planning instruments are well-crafted and have a potential of transforming the South African landscape, leading to a better future for all. It is unfortunate however, that the alignment of these planning instrument and ideas has not yet been fully realised. As it is, national sector departments have not yet, or are still struggling to incorporate the NSDP

---

[13] Patel is the Executive Manager: Development Planning at DPLG.

principles in their planning agenda (Meiklejohn, 2005). For some detractors, if provinces and municipalities do not see the NSDP principles being applied and framing the parameters within which infrastructure investment and development are to be planned, then it is unlikely that they are going to take the NSDP seriously align their planning to it (Meiklejohn, 2005).

The alignment of planning instruments has proved to be a challenge in South Africa. What is probably needed is a more pro-active provincial sphere which can act as a coordinator of planning policies, directing planning activities at local level and ensuring that they are in the line with the national objectives. As the Netherlands experience has shown, the provincial sphere need not be a mere monitor of planning at local level. Instead the province should be developmental, creative and forthright in its approach to strategic planning (Hague and Jenkins, 2005; Needham, 2002). The histories and contexts shaping provinces in the North and South African ones might differ, however the latter can certainly learn from the former's experiences.

The PGDS in South Africa has a potential of transforming its provinces into progressive spheres that can contribute the nation's developmental agenda (McLeod, 2001). As will be outlined in the following section, the PGDS can be the link that when properly implemented, can enhance the intergovernmental planning process in this country. The harmonisation of different planning instruments (and perspectives) can only be a success if all three sphere of government are completely involved in the process.

3.7 Provincial-Scale Planning

Provinces in South Africa are a product of the statute – as the sixth chapter of the Constitution (RSA, 1996) clearly spells out; the nine provinces have their own legislative and executive authority. According to Schedule Four and Five of the Constitution, provinces have exclusive areas where they can exercise their authority, and planning is just one of the activities that provinces are mandated to undertake. Although some provinces like KZN and the Western Cape have utilized their constitutional authority by passing planning legislations, most provinces are either reluctant or lack the resources to do so (Pottie, 2000).

According to Pottie (2000: 42) the "slow flow" of legislations emanating from the provincial sphere is a result of the restricted areas of exclusive legislative competence that this sphere has, and that "…most of the laws passed by provinces have been technical in nature, designed to bring various provincial practices in line with national legislation." Without discrediting Pottie's (2000) observation, it should be pointed out that the weakness or inability of provinces to deliver cannot be blamed solely on the constitutional authority that they possess. In any case, the South African provinces have enough autonomy to make their own decisions. Unlike Spain, Italy and France (Titus, 2000) provinces here are distinct from local government functions in terms of the autonomy envisaged for them and the operational independence they enjoy. By being distinct and autonomous spheres, South African provinces can be said to be enjoying more autonomy than those in, say, France where a hierarchical government structure exists.

Therefore in this chapter, it is argued that the province's failure to perform as expected in areas of service delivery and planning is primarily due to lack of determination and political will on the part of those who are bestowed with authority. As Vigar *et al*. (2000) purport, a piece of planning legislation for instance, is not an end in itself, instead it is designed to guide human action. Moreover, ways of thinking and acting tend to determine the way planning is approached.

3.7.1 The Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS)

Taking cognisance of this, the provinces' approach to strategic planning determines the outcome of the planning process. Borne out of the Growth and Development Summit in 1994, the PGDS is a non-binding strategic tool that seeks to direct planning at provincial level. Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) was developed as a result of national government directive for provinces to produce their own province-specific strategies in line with national macro socio-economic policies. According to the DPLG (2005b; 7), the PGDS should:

- Provide strategic direction and scope for provincial-wide development programmes and projects, within a long term perspective; taking into consideration the resources, economic, political, social and natural constraints and opportunities;

- They should act as vehicles for addressing the legacies of the apartheid space economy, promote sustainable development and ensure poverty and employment creation;

- Be frameworks for public and private sector investment, indicating areas of opportunities and development priorities;

- Focus on addressing key implementation blockages and issues whilst providing strategic direction;

- Enable intergovernmental alignment and guide various role players and agencies [including provincial sector departments, parastatals, district and metropolitan municipalities] by linking to and deepening the application of NSDP and MTSF.

In turn, the PGDS strives to bring the principles of NSDP into reality. So, not only does it take cognisance of the spatial dimension of planning but it spells out the role of the province in the intergovernmental planning system. In a context where the local government is faced with unfunded mandates and consequent failure to implement IDPs, the PGDS promises to involve provinces more into the local planning affairs. Like the NSDP that informs it, the PGDS strives to be a visionary

and pragmatic tool that takes into consideration the resources within the province thus being able to promote them.

As highlighted in the diagram below (Figure3.2), the PDGS acts as a coordinating tool interpreting national policies and priorities as embodied in the NSDP (DPLG, 2005). Instead of playing a mere monitoring role, the province becomes a participant in local planning activities. As is the case in Netherlands, provinces in South Africa are compelled by the PGDS to be developmental. Part of being developmental includes being able to control the investment trends in the province and at local level. By being able to dictate where the private sector can invests the province gains more legitimacy thus being able to intervene on behalf of the community as a whole.
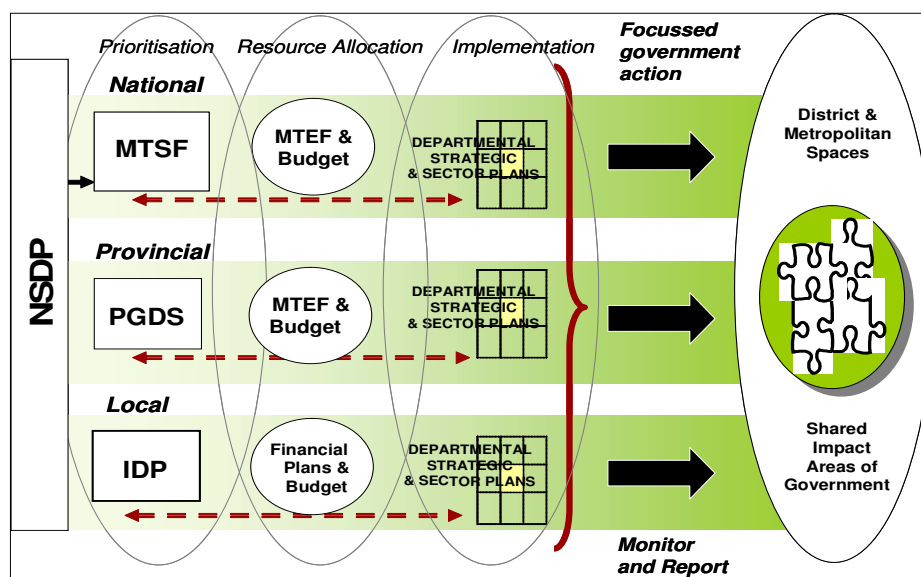

Figure3.2 Inter-governmental Planning – The diagram illustrates the importance of vertical and horizontal linkages in strategic planning thinking and implementation.
Source: Mpumalanga Integrated Spatial Framework © 2005

In an endeavour to synchronise planning strategies and simultaneously promoting governance at all levels (Camay and Gordon, 2004; Deas and Ward, 2002; Tewdwr-Jones, 2002) policy makers emphasise the involvement of as many stakeholders in the planning process. As one of the prerequisites in the PGDS formulation, the province must involve the district and local municipalities as well as the private sector in the process (DPLG, 2005). Such broad-based participation is indicative of

the government's effort to move away from the *ad hoc*, disjointed planning that characterises much of the South African planning system (DPLG, 2005a; Layman, 2003). The PGDS therefore incorporates IDP issues and is informed by the NSDP principles.

From a new regionalist perspective, the PGDS gives the province an edge in informing strategic planning decisions, consequently becoming an arena where spatial, economic and political governance is determined (Harrison, 2005; MacLeod, 2001). As illustrated in the diagram (Figure3.2), all planning instruments and perspectives are to be informed by a budgetary tool, the MTEF. Furthermore, effort is being made to ensure that all national and provincial sectors' planning decisions are informed by the PGDS and NSDP. The IDP becomes the supreme planning tool, as it would be a result of consultation from all spheres of government.

Although the process, content and structure of a PGDS will be discussed in greater depth as part of the following chapter, one should consider that the PGDS is a strategic and pragmatic tool that maps out the problems, challenges and priority needs of the province (DPLG, 2005b). Referring back to the characteristics of a strategic plan as outlined by the TCPA (2003)[14] the PGDS's strategic nature is established. For example, the PGDS is required to have a vision, take into account the resources of the province, be a product of broad public participation and must be endorsed by the provincial or national political elite – all these characteristics that are listed in the TCPA (2003) document and they are applicable in this case.

With regard to political buy-in, most if not all PGDSs are formulated in the Premiers' offices (Meiklejohn, 2005). The premier who is the political head of a province plays a role in ensuring that the PGDS is adopted and considered in the provincial planning process. The concept of a PGDS is undoubtedly developmental and is likely to have a positive impact on the planning system of this country. It

---

[14] See Chapter two of this report.

should be noted however that most provinces lack the capacity and resources to implement strategic planning. As Patel (Interview, 2005) described, over fifty percent of the provinces' revenue is spent on four areas: education, health, housing and social grants. Strategic planning therefore ceases to become the provinces' priority. Before spelling out the possible role that provinces could play in fostering strategic planning, it is noteworthy to understand the current position of provinces with regard to the implementation of the PGDS.

3.7.2 Current Status of the PGDS Implementation

Drawing from the research made by the CSIR (Meiklejohn, 2005) on the status of the NSDP, PGDS and IDP alignment it can be concluded that all nine provinces have some form of growth and development strategy in place. Realising the disparities between provinces (that is in terms of institutional capacity, political will and determination) some have managed to come up with more pragmatic PGDSs than others. With the guidance and support from the Premier's Office, provinces like KZN for instance have managed to formulate promising PGDSs. Furthermore, the Limpopo PGDS is said to be informed by the NSDP principles which can not be said for Gauteng whose Growth and Development Strategy is not driven by the Premier's Office and is little informed by the IDPs of the municipalities and metropoles which make up the province (Meiklejohn, 2005).

It is clear then that the PGDS concept has not yet gained root in the South African planning system. Most provincial sector departments are still not considering the PDGS as a strategic planning tool. As previously outlined in the Netherlands case study, for a provincial plan to be a success, there must be political buy-in as well as the involvement of all relevant stakeholders (Needham, 1997). For less capacitated provinces like the Free State and the Northern Cape for instance, strategic planning can only be made possible if more stakeholders are involved in the planning process.

While most provinces still struggle with the concept of strategic planning, the alignment of the PDGS with other planning instruments and perspectives remains a challenge. Apart from lack of capacity at provincial level, those who are responsible for formulating the PDGS have little or no experience in strategic planning. As December Mahlangu (Interview, 2005) related, the PDGS is a fairly novel concept for most government officials and it would take time for most to grapple with it. In an attempt to promote strategic planning at provincial level, the DPLG formulated strategy guidelines outlining the objectives as well as goals of PGDS (DPLG, 2005b). The guidelines play a major role in informing not only those involved in the planning process, but also the public about strategic planning.

Within the PDGS guidelines document the monitoring role of the provinces with regard to local level planning is emphasised (DPLG, 2005: 4). Section 155 (6) (a) and (b) of the constitution states that provinces must promote the development of local government capacity thus enabling municipalities to perform their functions and manage their affairs. With most municipalities struggling to implement their IDPs and delivering services to the communities, the monitoring role of provinces is crucial. It goes without saying however, that if provinces themselves are not well-versed with strategic planning processes then it would be difficult for them to offer any useful advice to the local authorities. For provinces to be more efficient in their monitoring role, more capacity building is needed at this level.

Instead of playing a 'big brother' role (that is merely monitoring the local government from the sidelines) provinces in South Africa need to be more involved in the planning process considering the unfunded mandates that most municipalities are faced with (Harrison, 20003; Naude, 2003). As the Netherlands (Hague and Jenkins, 2005; Needham, 1997) case study highlighted provincial strategic plans to be *developmental*, thus being able to foster *coordination* and *integration* of planning. The PGDS together with Provincial Spatial Development

Framework (PSDF) represent strategic tools that can make planning more pragmatic and target-oriented.

3.7.3 Roles and Functions of a Developmental Provincial Sphere

Writing on the resurgence of NR and its impact on provincial-scale planning, Oranje (2002) outlined the importance of provinces (particularly South African ones) to have planning legislation because at provincial level it will not only embody or express the provinces' specific developmental goals, but they would also enable provinces to reinforce their territorial identity. Indeed, planning legislation is essential as it guides officials' behaviour, leading to predictability and supposed efficiency in planning. Nonetheless, planning legislation alone cannot lead to strategic planning. As Vigar *et al*. (2000: 5) emphasise, strategic planning is a product of governance. In other words, interaction between the public, private and civil society is imperative as it determines the fate of planning. For planning policies to work, there must be interaction between different role players in the community. It is these new players who come up with new ideas that can be transformed to strategies (Vigar *et al*. 2000).

Provincial-scale planning in South Africa therefore, is not solely determined by the amount of policy that provinces formulate (Patel interview, 2005) but what is important is the determination of government officials in fostering planning in that particular sphere. As Healey *et al*. (1997) note, strategic plan-making and implementation depend on human agency. Policies, just like plans, are formulated by people and in being agents of change, those people have the capacity and zeal to implement plans. Given their current constitutional powers, provinces in South Africa should strive to promote the following roles:

- A *developmental role* would include closely supervising municipal planning and budgetary processes thus giving priority to the basic needs of the

community. A developmental role would also include promoting social equity and economic governance (Keats, 1998, McLeod, 2001) through strategic planning.

- As the DPLG (2005b) rightly state, provinces should strive to be strategic in their approach to planning. The *strategic role* involves developing visionary PGDSs that act as a framework for integrated economic, social and community development.

- As *functional areas* (McLeod, 2001) provinces should there is a link between provincial plans and strategic plans from the local and national level. *Intergovernmental role* also involves including the local government and traditional leaders in the decision-making process.

- As section 155(7) of the constitution stipulates, provincial and national government should play *a regulatory role.* This means that they should exercise their legislative and executive authority to ensure the effective performance of municipalities. Thus, the IDP process must be informed by the PGDS and NSDP.

- Provinces also have an *institutional development and capacity building role*. Since provinces have the powers to establish municipalities as stipulated in section 155(6) of the constitution, they have a duty to develop the local government capacity; this role is linked to

- *The fiscal role*, which involves the provinces' duty to monitor the financial status of municipalities through provincial task teams implementing project viability (Titus, 2000). Provinces also have;

- An *intervention role* to play, this means intervening on behalf of local government. Such a role would ensure that the local government delivers services as stipulated in the constitution (Titus, 2000: 19).

Most provinces strive to fulfil the abovementioned roles (Nel, 2000; Jozana, 2000). The constitution does give provinces enough powers to be developmental. It would

take commitment from government officials and other role players to ensure that provinces become viable, functional entities. As Titus, (2000: 19) observes:

> "South Africa, like all other developing countries, is faced with a number of challenges. In some instances, when searching for solutions, we tend to focus on our constitutional structure. Sometimes we forget that the primary challenge is to capacitate those who are in government and promote accountability."

For provinces to function optimally, be it in strategic planning or service delivery, there must be commitment and good leadership from the Premiers themselves. As Yusuf Patel (Interview, 2005) rightly states, "strategic plans are an expression of leadership" – good leadership is likely to lead to sound decision-making. The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) as the second house of parliament must promote the interests of provinces (Camay and Gordon, 2004). One of the duties of the NCOP represent provinces in the national legislative processes, at the same time providing "a significant voice for the provinces with regard to proposed legislations" (Camay and Gordon, 2004: 338). As a significant intergovernmental legislative institution in the country, the NCOP has a potential of ensuring that the interest of provinces such as strategic planning are prioritised.

3.8 Political Legitimacy through Strategic Planning

This chapter sought to table the debates on the legitimacy of a province in South Africa. While some critics (Jozana, 2000; Nel, 2000) questioned the existence and viability of the province in the administrative structure, others (Oranje, 2002; Pottie, 2000; Titus, 2000) stressed the importance of provinces in this era of new regionalism, pointing out its importance in defining regional agendas at the same time fostering territorial identity. The failure of the province to deliver services as expected has been blamed on its limited constitutional standing particularly in relation to the national level. Given the history behind its formulation, the

legitimacy of the province will be a bone of contention for years to come (Pottie, 2000; Nel, 2000; Khosa and Muthien, 1998).

Although the above issues are important, the basis of this chapter was to try and outline the role of a province especially in the field of planning. As political entities within a cooperative structure, provinces have a role and function to play in promoting strategic planning. The revival of the PGDS as a strategic planning tool, has given the provinces a chance to take a centre-stage in the planning arena. As the Groningen (Hague and Jenkins, 2005) case study highlighted, a good strategic plan has a potential of legitimizing the province as a political and economic actor. When informed by an instrument with a spatial dimension such as the NSDP, the PGDS can enhance the provinces' economic and social activities. Furthermore, a well-structured PDGS is likely to inform planning at local level, resulting in the formulation of pragmatic IDPs.

The relationship that exists between the different government spheres, determines the structure and the approach to planning. As a result, for PGDS to be a success, it must be in line with other planning strategies namely the NSDP at national and IDP at local level. All these abovementioned planning instruments must align with the budgeting tools such as the MTEF (DPSA, 2003; Layman, 2003).

Intergovernmental planning, desirable as it might be, has proven to be a challenge for South Africa. For the DPLG (2005b: 1) despite the policies and planning strategies formulated by the government over the last six years or so, "intergovernmental integration and coordination has remained a distant ideal". This has led to the continuation of inequalities, inefficiencies and wastage of the apartheid space economy (Ibid). Some of the factors hampering an integrated approach to planning include lack of institutional preparedness in all three spheres of government, capacity constraints as well as lack of understanding of the current development planning instruments (CSIR, 2005; DPLG, 2005b). Tackling these

challenges will take more commitment from the public and private sector as well as the civil society.

When analysing the South African planning system, it should be borne in mind that the intergovernmental planning structure is still in its experimental phases. It will take more than a decade for this country to reverse centuries of spatial fragmentation and socio-economic disparities. As Friedman (1998 cited in Camay and Gordon, 2004: 314) comments, transitional governments like South Africa need to be patient and pragmatic when formulating policies:

> [Policies and plans] seek 'transformation, - a radical break with the past. They are ambitious: they aim to accomplish a wide range of goal and they stress that success relies on 'holistic', 'coordinated' and 'comprehensive' approaches…but the 'reach' of government in society – its ability to translate intention into reality – is often low … While this may have much to do with lack of managerial capacity, a policy which asks its implementers to do the impossible may prevent them from tackling the possible.

Put in other words, government policies and strategies must be as pragmatic as possible. Policies that foster integration are desirable, however it takes time for the government to fully grasp and implement such policies. The adoption and subsequent implementation of the PGDS at provincial level for instance, will happen, but it will take creative political leaders as well as determination from the implementers of the provincial strategy.

3.9 A Deciding Moment for South African Provinces?

The success of the South African planning system depends on the cooperation of all three government spheres. With the local government struggling to meet its developmental mandates, the importance of provincial-scale planning becomes a necessity (Oranje, 2002). Notwithstanding the politics that marked the formulation of provinces in this country, this sphere of government has a duty to take charge and be more assertive in its approach to strategic planning. The PGDS as well as the provincial spatial planning instruments, render this sphere a chance to redefine and legitimise itself as a functional political entity that can transform the social and economic fabric of this country for the better. The role of provinces therefore should go beyond the monitoring of local level planning, but it must also be radical and strategic enough to transform provinces into functional and developmental political entities (Meiklejohn, 2005).

Notwithstanding the challenges that include lack of capacity, and resources at provincial level, there is a need for those entrusted with planning and governance in South African to change their attitude towards provinces and their role in promoting economic, political and spatial governance (Harrison, 2003). As Vigar et al. (2000) asserted, for strategic planning to take root at provincial level, policy-makers and planners need to change the way they think and the way they perceive provincial-scale planning. It would also take commitment from political actors and other role players to make planning at provincial level more strategic.