

# South Africa and state dysfunction: The role of civil society

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Dissertation accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Master of Arts in Political Studies* at the North-West University

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Graduation: June 2023

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Bernalee Anthony, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *South Africa and state dysfunction: the role of civil society* is my own work. I further declare that all sources used are acknowledged appropriately and that this dissertation has not been previously submitted. Sections with sources are my own ideas, arguments, and conclusions.

Bernalee Anthony

November 2022

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*I extend my thanks and gratitude to the following people for their support in this endeavour:*

Most importantly, all the praise and honour go to my Almighty God, who has granted me countless blessings, courage, strength, and guidance throughout this study.

The North-West University and the Faculty of Humanities for its financial, resource and collegial support.

Dr Pieter Heydenrych for his valuable supervisory support and guidance during my study.

Professor JD Froneman for this dissertation's proofreading and editing.

My husband, Pontus Karlsson, you are forever my inspiration, and I am grateful for your motivation, support, and involvement in ensuring I remain positive and focused.

My parents, Mario and Belinda Anthony, it is impossible to extend enough thanks to you for your continuous support. I am forever grateful for your tremendous sacrifices and encouragement from the moment I undertook this study. I also thank my grandparents for their prayers and encouragement.

And lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my esteemed colleagues (and now friends) at the SARChI Chair in Cities, Law, and Environmental Sustainability for their invaluable advice, encouragement, and unwavering support.

## **ABSTRACT**

Against the backdrop of political instability, weak institutions, and severe poverty, the persistence of state weakness in Africa has given rise to scholarly interest in the state dysfunction discourse that questions the prospects of democratic consolidation in Africa. The country of analysis, South Africa, has successfully transitioned to democracy and has since embarked on the path of consolidation. The robust civil society in South Africa has been a key driving force that exercised pressure against the apartheid regime and has since adopted a critical role in addressing the gap between the state and communities. Civil society has become the last defence against service delivery failure, widespread corruption and fostering government accountability for democratic consolidation. However, after nearly three decades of democratic rule, South Africa faces a series of challenges threatening the continuation and stability of democracy in the country. Establishing a consolidated democracy goes further than electoral processes and institutions but includes the improvement of people's lives and the degree to which the state fulfils the needs and expectations of the people.

By means of a literature review, this dissertation investigates the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa's three primary areas of consolidation identified by Linz and Stepan (1996): the political, economic, and social sectors. The theoretical conceptualisation of state dysfunction is built on the contributions of influential scholars, including Robert Rotberg (2004), William Zartman (1995), Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2013), Joel S Migdal (1998) and others. The key insight from each author is interpreted and applied to the context of South Africa. Furthermore, the Failed States Index is utilised to assist with identifying the features of dysfunction for analysis.

The results from this process indicate that South Africa has established democratic institutions which put the country on a path of consolidation. However, the existence of these institutions is insufficient to consider South Africa's democracy consolidated, as there are strong indications of democratic decay in the country's political, economic, and social sectors. These institutions need not only to be protected and strengthened but democratic norms, values and practices should be internalised into the larger society and the functioning of government. As such, civil society has a key role in strengthening democracy through their roles as watchdogs of society, key service providers, and promoters of democratic culture. Only time will tell whether civil society is sufficient to strengthen South Africa's democracy.

**KEYWORDS:** State dysfunction, democracy, civil society, state-society relations, consolidation.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

South Africa is a product of a continuous flow of history and culture, representing humanity's origins, dispersal, and restoration over many decades. The introduction of democracy in 1994 marked the birth of a new South Africa, which allowed citizens to construct a government based on the needs of its people and to de-racialise the economy and society. The African National Congress (ANC), which had received an overwhelming majority vote as the leading political party, had the prospects to determine their destiny and together realise the ideal of a democratic, non-racial, and prosperous society (Habib, 2013:5). This was further supported by adopting the 1996 Constitution, which provides a broad framework of the national aspiration for a united, democratic South Africa (ANC, 2012:5). Therefore, the first phase of transformation was to rid the country of the remainders of apartheid and construct a national democratic society. This formed the basis of the National Democratic Transformation Programme. Also, several other important economic policies were introduced over the years, with the main objective of building a democracy; pursuing economic growth, development, and redistribution; and strengthening human rights and equality. These include the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP); Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR); Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative South Africa (ASGISA); New Growth Path; and the current National Development Plan (NDP) (Habib, 2013). These policies form part of the second decade of transformation focused on eradicating poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Habib, 2013).

The state has done much over the years to improve the living conditions for most citizens (Habib, 2013:6). The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) reported in their annual *South African Survey* that the number of people with access to clean piped water increased from 7 244 023 in 1996 to 14 040 000 in 2014 (IRR, 2016:648). The survey also showed that 154 129 housing units had been completed in the same year; the employment rate increased by 15.3% between 2001 and 2015; a total of 16 780 488 citizens received some social grant in 2016 (IRR, 2016: 664;218;620). However, despite these achievements, the legacy of apartheid, segregation, and poverty remains deeply ingrained, as revealed in the colonial and super-exploitative structure of the economy, the gaps in development, the lack of political accountability, and the social, human, and infrastructure backlogs. Although the 1994 democratic transition has implemented extensive efforts to develop the status and well-being of society, the socio-economic challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequalities persist despite the ruling party's attempt at radical socio-economic transformation. These daily challenges sparked many debates around the state's legitimacy, questioning whether South Africa is heading toward a failed state scenario.

### **1.1.1 State Dysfunction**

The concept of state dysfunction has drawn significant attention as a vital concern for modern-day human security, all due to the collapse of order within a nation-state's legal boundaries for its people, its neighbours, and the larger international context (Starr, 2009:1). A major characteristic of the present-day African continent is the persistent and overwhelming presence of fragile states and structures. Since the concept of sovereign statehood was first introduced, the state has become the common measure of analysis in political science (Greffrath, 2012:3). Until the very recent second wave of democratisation, it became evident that not all countries function optimally under the Western paradigm of a sovereign state. Even though there had been an increase in sovereign states after the Second World War, many have become dysfunctional in that they may be failing or have failed in achieving their primary functions (Greffrath, 2012:4).

At the most basic level, the notion of a dysfunctional state relates to the deviation from a norm that signifies an ideal-type state. This ideal-type state is taken from Max Weber's conception of the state. Max Weber describes statehood as an "organisation composed of numerous agencies led and coordinated by the state's leadership that has the ability or authority to make and implement the binding rules for all people as well as the parameters of rulemaking for other social organisations in a given territory, using force if necessary to have its way" (Migdal, 1988:19). So then, those states that fail to deliver and perform the basic functions of the state can be considered dysfunctional (Anderson, 1989:19-22). Along the lines of the Hobbesian social contract theory, Zartman (1995) also adopts this premise and advances the idea that state failure occurs when "the basic functions of the state are no longer performed in a situation where the structure, authority, law, and political order have fallen apart". State failure can thus happen in many sectors, including security, economic development, political representation, income distribution, and several others. According to Rotberg (2002:85), nation-states fail at the first level because "they can no longer deliver positive political goods to their people". Also, Goldstone (2009:6) argued that failed states have lost effectiveness and legitimacy. While effectiveness reflects how well the state carries out state functions and public services, legitimacy reflects whether elites and citizens accept state activities as "just" regarding prevailing social norms (Goldstone, 2009:6-7). Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson explained in their book *Why nations fail* that depending on the kind of institutions states adopt, they can either succeed or fail. Their book pays attention to the historical currents and critical junctures that shape modern society and create political and economic institutions that are either or extractive (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013).

Defining state dysfunction is a daunting task, as the concept will differ because of states' different histories, interpretations, ideas, and approaches. However, this dissertation does not aim to

further conceptualise state dysfunction but rather to provide an analysis of the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa.

### **1.1.2 State, Society and Democracy**

Conservative thinking about democratic transition in the Third Wave of democratisation is caught in what is now known as the *transition paradigm*. Through this paradigm, it is believed that societies in transition from authoritarian rule to democratic consolidation cannot be sustained on empirical grounds because most of these societies in transition became trapped halfway through the process and ended up in the supposed 'grey zone' area (Kotzé & Du Toit, 2006:244). Drawing on the empirical cases from Western perspectives, an active civil society is generally considered an essential characteristic of democratic consolidation. Accordingly, the common perception embraces that democracy presupposes a civil society. It is important to consider that in consolidated democracies, civil society is built up from different historical backgrounds, determining the definition used. This can further have an impact on the role of civil society, as well as the relationship between the state and civil society.

Habib and Kotzé (2003:3) explained that civil society is "the organised expression of various interests and values operating in the triangular space between the family, state, and the market". This definition describes civil society as an entity independent of the state and the market. Cohen and Arato (1992), as cited by Habib (2005:673), explained that the market should not form part of civil society because the actors in the political and economic society regulate and manage state power and economic production, which gives these actors a different purpose and function from that of civil society. This makes it crucial for the economic entity to consist of production and distribution organisations, while civil society should be distinguished from political parties, political organisations, and parliaments. The National Development Agency (NDA) defines civil society as those organisations and groups operating in an environment between the family and state, which are independent, voluntary, and established to protect the interests and values of their members (Funding Practice Alliance, 2017:19). Victoria Graham (2013) argued in her PhD, titled *Assessing the quality of democracy in South Africa, 1999-2012*, that civil society should be considered a key actor of representation in society that serves as a means for citizens to raise their concerns to the larger public and political leaders. This way, diverse interests are represented, and access to political participation in political processes is widened. From this view, democracy is thus measured by the depth of its civil society.

State-society relations during apartheid South Africa can be understood as a civil society that existed in opposition to the state (Habib, 2013:139). A strong relationship between civil society and the state can be considered as a means for ensuring that governmental efforts and the

transformational objectives in the Constitution are achieved through shared efforts (Jagwanth, 2003:13). A vibrant civil society, therefore, becomes a precondition for a strong democracy that can act independently from the state and play a 'watchdog' role over government, particularly about the delivery of constitutional goals. The historical transition from authoritarian rule to democracy in South Africa shows that the relationship between civil society and the state has changed significantly over the years. Historically, South African civil society was largely characterised by advocacy for social and economic justice, which changed in the post-apartheid era to service delivery and development, particularly addressing the issues of poverty, inequality, and unemployment (Coalition of Civil Society Resource Mobilisation, 2012:15).

The demise of apartheid was a triumph because of global efforts and civil society pressure against the oppressive regime. Today, they find themselves still playing the role of fighting against the state's failure to effectively serve the interest of the people. Since the early 2000s, South Africa experienced a movement of protests that have been widespread, often violent, and intense. These protests are generally about poor service delivery provision, the lack of accountability, and against an uncaring, self-serving, and corrupt political elite (Breakfast, Bradshaw & Nomarwayi, 2021:111). The role of civil society in modern-day democracy is significantly important as it fights on behalf of citizens against corruption, public service delivery failure, and abuse of power (Gumede, 2018). It is argued that due to the inability of developing states to provide sufficient public goods and services to their citizens, civil society responds in the form of protests which may be violent or undertake a constructive 'do-it-yourself' personality (Greffrath & Van der Waldt, 2016:1-2). Examples of this type of self-help governance range from the rise of private healthcare services, caused by poor public healthcare, to extreme cases where non-state actors may seize public functions completely. This form of governance is not detached from government action. Governments are still involved in these initiatives of society by releasing, blocking, facilitating, or attempting to "organise" more self-organisation (van der Steen *et al.*, 2016). Nearly all self-organising actions occur within the limits of government spaces and jurisdiction and involve other stakeholders either in or outside the self-organised community (Nederhand *et al.*, 2018:37). As such, civil society can increase the capacity of the state and increase its legitimacy in the face of state dysfunction.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Democracy has long been at the forefront of analysis in order to understand the features conducive to the consolidation of democracy and the causes and consequences of the absence of democracy. Fundamentally, scholars attempt to answer the question of what makes democracy good, what makes it fail, and what are the benefits of democracy. Thus far, we have learned that

democracy is based on popular sovereignty and joint decision-making (Masipa, 2018:2). On the other hand, a good democracy is a legitimate regime that acknowledges individual freedom, equality, and human rights that hold functioning institutions and infrastructures (Morlino, 2004:4). Furthermore, sovereign states are required to perform particular functions for the safety and well-being of citizens (Silander, 2022:187). Thus, a good democracy is considered a strong democracy that not only safeguards economic growth and promotes political stability, but also satisfies the people's needs. These features create favourable conditions for a democracy to become consolidated. States that fail to meet these standards have been portrayed as 'weak', 'fragile', 'failed' or 'poorly performing'. In an attempt to determine the quality of democracies, several measuring tools and mechanisms have been developed, such as objective measures, categorical measures, perceptions of democracy surveys, ordinal, scale measurements etc. (Landman, 2007:4). However, the existence of multiple measuring tools has resulted in the vagueness and confusion of the state failure discourse. Consequently, the social science literature has started questioning why states cease to perform their core functions. This study will not contribute to the ambiguity of the weak state's discourse by arguing for a new gradient of state failure but argues that a dysfunctional state deviates from the ideal-type Weberian state. Thus, all gradients of state weakness have a degree of dysfunction.

From an extensive literature review, it is evident that there is a lack of existing literature on the state weakness discourse from an African perspective. Although there is vast availability of scholarly contributions that analyse state weakness in African countries, the analysis is primarily from a Western perspective, using Western ideas, tools, or measurements. Consequently, this study will analyse the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa by adopting an interpretative approach to existing scholarly contributions in the field. In doing so, the researcher can frame her analysis around an existing body of literature while given the freedom to analyse state dysfunction against South Africa's historical, cultural, political, and socio-economic backgrounds. The existing body of literature on state dysfunction in South Africa exhibits primarily a theoretical conceptualisation of the concept, which is more concerned with defining or redefining the concept. This study aims to supplement the interpretive deficiency in the field of study by analysing state dysfunction in South Africa alongside its political, economic, and social sectors. Politically, the country exhibits a one-party dominance characterised by weak leadership and corruption, poor service delivery, and inefficiency (Cronjé, 2014:64-65). The economic sector is overwhelmed by income inequality, unemployment, poverty, and economic stagnation (Kearsey, 2007: iii). And socially, the country demonstrates a lack of national unity, civic unrest, and great divisions along racial lines (Bently, 2005: 23-24). As such, the goal of democratic consolidation is to prevent state fragility, political instability, economic decline, uncertainty, and vulnerability (Kali, 2022:4).

Given the increase in new democracies globally and the challenges that come with it, It is no surprise that the state failure discourse received significant attention over the last three decades. For this study, a failed state deviates from the ideal-type state and demonstrates dysfunction in its political, economic, and social sectors (Iqbal & Starr, 2008:315). Now more than ever, the stability and future of democracy in South Africa have become a critical point of analysis as the country is demonstrating signs of decay in its core values and principles upon which the country was built. Scholars are striving to understand the features that caused dysfunction, predict future trends, and attempt to find solutions to the many challenges in the country. Historically, South Africa was a global symbol of democratisation, human rights, and freedom, however, in 2022, the country is faced with critical challenges that threaten the future of its democracy. Moreover, South Africa's democracy is believed to be at a crossroads, and consolidation can only occur when the needs of the people are met (Silander et al., 2022:187).

So, the critical question remains, what is to be done? How can democracy be strengthened to put South Africa on a path of becoming a consolidated democracy? Despite some scepticism regarding the feasibility of civil society in the African context, civil society has long been regarded as a driving engine of democratic transitioning and consolidation. Civil society creates an environment for communities, individuals, and self-organising groups to function independently from the state. In doing so, a vibrant civil society can encourage pluralism and strengthen democracy by establishing a culture of democracy in state institutions and the larger society (Katusiimeh, 2006:100). Diamond (1994) argued that a robust civil society is a precondition for democracy and can contribute to democratic consolidation in many ways. Civil society can influence decision-making by exerting an oversight role by monitoring the government's use and abuse of power, thus encouraging political accountability and transparency (Graham, 2015:174). Furthermore, civil society can encourage citizens to participate in elections and educate communities on their democratic rights and responsibilities, thus fostering unity and a culture of democracy (Katusiimeh, 2006:101). Civil society also plays a service provider function by providing socio-economic goods and services to communities when the state fails to do so (Asuelime, 2017:55). As such, the success or failure of civil society can influence the process of democratic consolidation, whether positively or negatively. Accordingly, there is a need to focus on the strengths of civil society that are likely to strengthen democracy and foster development.

Based on the above arguments, the problem this dissertation will address ***is determining the features that demonstrate dysfunction in South Africa and analysing the role of civil society in strengthening democracy.*** The successful outcome of the research problem will depend upon the achievement of several key research questions and objectives discussed below.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Given the problem statement above, the following objectives will inform the study's main goal.

- To understand the features of the ideal-type state.
- To determine the features and understand the relevant theoretical perspectives of state dysfunction.
- To understand the role of civil society in a democratic dispensation and its importance for development.
- To analyse the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa and to identify the roles of civil society in strengthening democracy.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Following the research objectives outlined above, this study will address the following research questions.

- What are the features of an ideal-type state?
- What are the features and relevant theoretical perspectives for analysing state dysfunction?
- What is the role of civil society in a democracy and its importance for development?
- What features demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa, and what is the role of civil society in strengthening democracy?

### **1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT**

There has been a growing discourse regarding the stability of the South African state and its seeming dysfunction. The existing body of literature regarding state dysfunction in South Africa is primarily theoretical and concerned with defining the concept to eliminate ambiguity. Although these are important elements to study in the body of knowledge regarding the subject matter, it has led to a critical lack of empirical indicators that describe, identify, and predict state dysfunction within the South African context. This is an important objective of the study because states do not fail in the same way under the same criteria. Therefore, dysfunction must be investigated within its given context. Rotberg (2004:1) defines state failure as when states are consumed by domestic violence and fail to deliver positive political goods to their citizens. As such, governments lose their integrity, and the state itself becomes illegitimate in its citizens' perceptions. Also, Robinson (2007:6) aimed to connect definitions by stating that a weak state is a type of failed state.

On the other hand, Anderson (1989:19-22) describes that states become dysfunctional when they fail to deliver and perform the basic functions of the state. Therefore, some conceptual confusion exists concerning the meaning and application of the failed state and its derivatives. However, it is not the goal to redefine the concept of state dysfunction but rather to clarify this confusion and argue state dysfunction from a South African context. Correspondingly, once a state is declared dysfunctional, it directly threatens its quality of democracy. Democracy is seen as a structure of rulemaking determined by people who are governed by those rules and are encouraged to follow the rules that are made (Boman, 2006:23). In the context of state dysfunction, where the state can no longer effectively fulfil its primary roles, civil society can be the driving force and a primary agent of change. As such, civil society is an important aspect of the democratisation process because it provides a dynamic connection between citizens and the state that can be used to enhance community cohesion and decision-making (Van Beek, 2006:245). Citizens better informed and represented are most likely to participate in politics and easily communicate their ideas and concerns. Added to this idea, Smith and McDonough (2001:239) argued that public participation can further benefit the government by adding new ideas and solutions where decision-making is intended to promote transparency, responsiveness, and fairness. Civil society also fulfils a watchdog role that holds governments accountable for their actions and provides citizens with basic services and goods.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research design of any scientific study must provide the reader with a clear understanding of how the research objectives identified will be achieved (Bak, 2004:25). Bak (2004:25) further explains that the purpose of the research method is to provide details on the methods and procedures to be used in the study. Research method can be defined as how the researcher collects, studies, and presents evidence during the course of the research process (Auriacombe & Mouton, 2007:447).

This dissertation adopted a qualitative research approach, focusing on the evolving nature of social reality. This means that the study will search and explain the meanings ascribed to social or human problems (Creswell, 2009:4). The qualitative approach is therefore a detailed approach that offers thorough descriptions and leaves room for subjective constructions. Researchers who use the qualitative method may differ in their approaches and make use of grounded theory, case studies, narrative research, ethnography etc. (Creswell, 2009:12-14).

Given the scope of the topic, data for this study was collected through a literature review and a collection of primary and secondary material. Secondary sources utilised include, but are not limited to, internet and electronic sources, academic articles, textbooks and political analyses and

commentaries as the main collection methods. Printed sources used include academic textbooks, books, institutional sources, dissertations, newspaper articles, and public articles. The value of a literature review is that it examines what has already been studied on the topic, which will assist the researcher in determining the current state of affairs on various aspects related to the topic (Healy & Mulholland, 2007:105). Therefore, a literature review is a significant tool through which a theoretical inquiry involves gathering knowledge about democracy, state dysfunction, and civil society theories.

Due to the subjective nature of this study to determine the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa, the research was also based on deductive reasoning with a theoretical point of departure. This means that the argument is logically developed on existing knowledge. Deductive reasoning is defined by Sternberg (2009:499) as "the process of reasoning from one or more general statements regarding what is known to reach a logically certain conclusion". This method usually involves joining statements to a conclusion. When the premises in an argument are proven to be true, and deductive reasoning is followed, then the conclusions of the study can be accepted (Holyoak & Morrison, 2005: 169). As such, theory and concepts of state dysfunction and fragility served as a starting point for the development of a framework to study state dysfunction in South Africa.

Furthermore, the research is interpretative in nature. According to Bayat and Fox (2007:10), interpretative research is the gathering and analysis of a wide-ranging collection of records related to people, actions, context, and participants' perceptions. In this manner, this dissertation renders valuable new insights into the relationship between the state and society and how civil society can come to play a democratic role in reviving a dysfunctional state. The interpretive nature of this study allows for a deeper understanding of the critical role of civil society to strengthen democracy in the face of state fragility.

Drawn from the Fragile States Index and the contributions of Robert Rotberg, William Zartman, Joel Migdal, James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu, this study presented a newly constructed framework of state dysfunction that applies to the South African context. This was achieved by employing these authors' core statements of state failure to analyse the features that demonstrate dysfunction in South Africa's political, economic, and societal sectors and present insights on the role and influence civil society can play in strengthening democracy through consolidation. The authors selected represent extensive knowledge in the focus of their subject matter, and this diverse combination provides this study with a broad theoretical foundation that includes issues in the entire discourse of state dysfunction. The theoretical background has been obtained from a literature study regarding the Weberian state. This described the attributes of 1) the ideal-type Weberian state, 2) a dysfunctional state, and eventually, 3) the reconstruction of state dysfunction

in the South African context. As argued in this study, states fail in different ways; therefore, the variables used in this study go beyond the common characteristics of state failure and include some indicators provided by the Fragile States Index.

## 1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher utilised several databases to determine the availability of relevant information for the study, including:

- Catalogue of books used: Ferdinand Postma Library, North-West University, Potchefstroom campus.
- Theses and dissertations of South African universities
- Sabinet reference
- SAePublications
- Google Scholar
- Relevant online websites

The following categories of literature were consulted in this dissertation.

**Peer-reviewed articles:** The study primarily utilised peer-reviewed articles to thoroughly analyse state dysfunction in South Africa.

**Government documents and publications:** Government and other official documents were important for this study to determine policy objectives and progress in democracy and development.

**Scholarly books:** Scholarly books provided insights into the recent developments of state dysfunction, democracy, and civil society discourse, especially regarding historical developments and in predicting future trends.

**Public speeches:** Public speeches by influential politicians and academics assisted by emphasising the importance of South Africa's goal to build an inclusive and democratic society. They showcase progress made as well as shortcomings.

**Newspapers and other online news providers:** Newspapers were consulted and supported through academic sources. The online sources provided the researcher with an accessible reference point for the country's current political and economic developments.

**Other institutional/organisational websites:** Including the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), CIVICUS, The World Bank, Economist Intelligence, The Fragile States Index, The Global State of Democracy Indices and Freedom House.

Due to the extensiveness and complexity of this study, the research materials and sources used in the study were not limited to the above literature.

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Over the last three decades, research has been made more systematic and accountable. Laws and regulations have been introduced which control the access to information as well as the behaviours of researchers. Also, codes of ethics have been formulated within institutions to ensure that research is delivered following professional and ethical standards (Sarantakos, 2013:17). Regarding professional practice, researchers are expected to uphold ethical standards that avoid the fabrication or falsification of data authority misuse, and misleading ownership ascriptions (Sarantakos, 2013:17-18).

The research methodology used in this study is focused on searching and analysing existing literature on the given topic. Thus, this dissertation does not require an ethics clearance form, as data will be collected from existing literature and not involve any contact with individuals and vulnerable groups. However, this study will not misuse authority or criticise the work of others based on controversy, personal bias, or group interest. The study will also appropriately acknowledge (in the bibliography and list of references) the work of other researchers in the conceptualisation process.

## **1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study's significance derives from the topic's relevance and the shortcomings in the existing literature on state dysfunction, particularly in South Africa. Undoubtedly, the country is in the middle of great uncertainty, which caused an increase in literature and media outputs, questioning whether South Africa is becoming a failed state. This thesis does not aim to further complicate the weak state discourse by arguing for another gradient of state failure, but it rather aims to determine the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa in its political, economic, and social sectors.

Through the use of civil society as an effective tool to revive dysfunctional states by consolidation, this study offers a valuable addition to the body of knowledge concerning, firstly, an understanding that states fail in different ways and, therefore, a single framework to explain state dysfunction is

insufficient. Secondly, this study provides an understanding of the important relationship between civil society and the state and its importance for democracy, and thirdly, an understanding of the role and extent to which civil society organisations can contribute to democratic consolidation in the context of state dysfunction in South Africa. The study thus seeks to explain that a robust civil society is of utmost importance for democratic deepening that can eventually revive dysfunctional states. As such, this study becomes part of a body of academic literature available on a particularly important matter, as civil society organisations determine much of the success and stability of the social, economic, and political reality in South Africa.

## **1.10 STUDY LIMITATIONS**

Given the qualitative nature of the study, this study used data from secondary sources and statistics that formed part of its analysis. Thus, caution had to be taken when researching to ensure the reliability and validity of the data and information used. The biggest challenge of this study was that research on the state failure course is extremely extensive and complex, which resulted in a vast availability of different categories, definitions and types of state weakness. This rather resulted in the concept's ambiguity and vagueness. There exist countless indicators, measures and theories aiming to categorise states as failed, fragile, weak, etc. Many studies have solely focused on institutional variables in analysing state failure. It is for this reason that this study does not aim to further bring confusion to the discourse by adding a new gradient of state failure, but this study aims to determine the features that demonstrate dysfunction in three primary sectors in South Africa: political, economic, and social sectors. It aims to provide a wider understanding of the discourse from an African perspective to best achieve the research objectives and questions. This dissertation embraced this wide focus and extended the scope to include social, economic and political factors. It also became evident that there is a lack of African scholarly works on state dysfunction and failed state discourse and that we primarily hear the voices from the West. Thus, the researcher had to be careful when applying Western principles to the case of South Africa.

In addition, this dissertation did not use interviews or physical data collection, which limited the resources available for analysis to secondary sources such as peer-review articles and scholarly books found in online databases and the NWU-library.

## **1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

This dissertation is organised in the following fashion:

**Chapter one** provided the background and problem this study will address. A brief background on state dysfunction and civil society is provided, followed by research objectives, study purpose, and central theoretical statements are presented as well as the research methodology of the study. Finally, the study's chapter layout was prepared and presented.

**Chapter two** provides theoretical and conceptual knowledge of the state. It includes the concepts, definitions, theories, typologies, and previous research employed in conceptualisation.

**Chapter three** discusses the different theoretical perspectives of the state failure discourse with special attention to the African context. This chapter forms the basis for the conceptualisation of a dysfunctional state.

**Chapter four** analyses civil society organisations by emphasising their role and value in strengthening democracy. This is followed by a discussion of the relationships between civil society, development, and the state.

**Chapter five** analyses the features that express state dysfunction in South Africa's political, economic, and social sectors. This chapter first highlights important historical contexts and challenges threatening South Africa's democracy. The chapter further explains how civil society organisations could strengthen democracy for consolidation in the context of state dysfunction.

**Chapter six** serves as the concluding chapter, summarising the key findings and providing further recommendations for strengthening democracy through civil society.

# **CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUALISING THE FUNCTIONAL STATE TO DETERMINE STATE DYSFUNCTION**

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter introduced the reader to the foundation of the study. A brief overview of the structure of the dissertation was provided, along with its objectives, research questions, and methods. Furthermore, the complex nature of state dysfunction was introduced, questioning whether South Africa is heading towards a dysfunctional state paradigm. The discussion concluded by explaining civil society's role and influence in promoting public participation to prevent state dysfunction.

The focus of chapter 2 is to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the state and its concepts. As argued in chapter 1, this dissertation is built upon the hypothesis that a dysfunctional state has failed to perform the essential functions of the state. Thus, the logical point of departure to understand the nature of a *dysfunctional* state is to first discuss theoretically what a *functional* state is. This will be achieved through a qualitative literature study fixated on the modern state's different definitions, developments, functions, and characteristics. The strong state's main contributions are drawn from Max Weber's works, whose state formulation remains dominant in political science. The perceptions from other authors will also be presented and applied to the primary attributes of the state. This chapter, however, does not aim to contribute to the state concept discourse but rather that it serves as a theoretical discussion that will form the basis of conceptualisation.

### **2.1 THE STATE AND ITS CONCEPTS**

For most of human history, people were organised in stateless societies defined by the absence of centralised authority in economic and political power. This social organisation was families living in group societies acting primarily as hunters and food gatherers (Fukuyama, 2012:53). These societies then changed to tribal forms of organisation. During this time, political power was determined by the accessibility of natural resources such as freshwater, productive soil, and the climate of different settings (Holslag, 2018:24-25). These resources were all crucial for the survival and development of the early organised societies. There is also an indication of endemic conflict between tribes, primarily by stealing livestock and crops, capturing women, or competition between resources and social standing (Holslag, 2018:26). Many decades after this form of communal organisation, political arrangements have expanded from the simple systems of self-governance and monarchies to the more complex democratic and totalitarian structures

known today. However, modern-day society (as we know it) is very much different from historical times. The rise of science characterised the early modern period with rapid technological developments and secularised civic politics (Bentley & Ziegler, 2008: 595). The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been defined by the growth of economic globalisation, communications, and the Internet (Midgley, 2007:31), which have initiated significant changes in politics, business, and the personal lives of citizens.

The contemporary global territorial landscape is divided into 195 states, so there probably is no other concept more significant to political discourse than that of the state. As Heywood (2002:85) explained, politics is often understood as the study of the state, and therefore, the state concept has always been a fiercely disputed or questioned idea. Consequently, modern societies have become the central locus of power and authority (Goodwin, 2007:333). The contemporary concept as we know it is primarily derived from the Latin word *status*, meaning condition or circumstance, which was used to describe people's legal and social standing during the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Europe (Boadie-Ampong, 2018:1). Also, the Greeks formally used the word *polis* to refer to the state, while the Romans used *civitas*, but they also spoke of *status rei Publica*, which held the idea of public welfare (Smith, 1875:291-293). One of the most influential Roman phrases, *Civis Romanus sum* ("I am a Roman citizen") explains the influence of citizenship of the Roman empire on the classical world. This simple sentence affirmed one's identity and assured citizens' special rights and privileges. These privileges included the right to vote, legal and lawful marriages, defending themselves during the trial, protection from aggressors, and some degree of freedom (Girdvainyte, 2014:24-26). However, being a Roman citizen was not all wonders. They were required to pay taxes to the empire and serve in the military, and they lost any sense of cultural identity or ethnicity as they were now classified as Romans (Girdvainyte, 2014:24-46).

It is significant that even though political organisations have existed since ancient times, it was only during the early 16<sup>th</sup> century that the concept was formally introduced into modern political science through the works of Niccoló Machiavelli, who was also credited with formulating the modern idea of the state. His admiration of the Roman state was reflected in his work, as he believed that the power of the state was the end of the state (Ali, 2015: 223). This means that states must aim at maximising their power — even if it means sacrificing the individual for the state's interest. Before Machiavelli, politics and the functioning of the state were strictly merged with ethics (known to be a sub-branch of ethics). However, this quickly changed as Machiavelli was the first theorist to intentionally split politics from ethics and religion and henceforth give a certain autonomy to study politics (Mathur, 1991:419). It is important to understand that Machiavelli was not against the church but against organised religion interfering with the state's authority. Since then, the concept has made its way through different forms and languages in

Europe. The question of the origin of the state has been discussed for centuries. Early philosophers have made various attempts to explain the origins of the state and its functions.

The force theory is historically significant as some of the greatest empires were formed through blood and iron. The kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are some examples of the creation of states by using force. The theory commonly suggests that the state is formed using force to claim control over a population or area. The force theory can be analysed from both a negative and a positive school of thought. The pessimistic school of thought dates to when the state was formed by conquest. In this thought, the state developed out of the forceful domination of the strong over the weak (Baradat & Phillip, 2017:55). As soon as a state had been formed, force was continuously used to maintain order and secure it from external threats. The positive school of thought was based on thinkers such as Georg Hegel and Friedrich Nietzsche. These theorists agreed that the state was formed based on force. However, their perspective of force exalted the state. Here, the state was the most powerful form of human organisation. They further explain that the state, as an institutional power, arranged matters as they should be; the weak should be ruled by the strong (Heywood, 2013:75). Moreover, history supports the force theory as the origin of the state, but it cannot be considered the only or most important factor. Force is also not the sole foundation of the state, and if force becomes the heart of the state, the state will only last if force endures.

The second theory is nearly as old as the state concept itself. The divine right theory is known as the theory of the divine right of kings and is grounded on the belief that some people are chosen by God to rule. By claiming legitimacy through divine authority, monarchs became extremely powerful in this religious era (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:57-58). This theory outlines that an ordinance of God established the state, and its rulers are divinely appointed and are thus not accountable to any other authority than God (Anifowose, 1999:95). This means that the state was not founded by men but by God alone. Thus, the king derived his authority from God. So, disobedience to the king was a violation of God's will and therefore regarded as a sin (Maduekwe *et al.*, 2019:31). Since the people had no right to rebel against a wicked king, Christian kings often used religion as a shelter to validate their dictatorships. However, due to the rapid growth of scientific enquiry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the more acceptable social contract theory, this theory came under criticism for being an inappropriate theory of state origin.

The social contract theory was developed centuries by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The theory was based on the notion of popular sovereignty, where the state's greatest source of legitimacy and authority is the people (Bird, 2006:70-71). Under this theory, it is believed that the state was created by all individuals. The hypothesis is that individuals have consented to abandon their freedom and surrender to the

ruler's authority in trade for protection of their rights (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:58). Thus, the state exists because of them. At the same time, the people are part of the state.

Central to understanding the state concept is the confounding problem that 'state' and 'government' are often used as synonymously. The concepts are often used interchangeably, but political scientists clearly distinguish between the two. The *state* can be identified as the *government* because it is a much larger entity, comprising political units and bureaucratic institutions, the judiciary, military, police, and security services (Garner *et al.*, 2012:122). The term 'government' refers to the institutional processes in that collective decisions are made and enforced. The primary functions of government are thus to make law, implement the law, and interpret the law (Habib, 2013:66). The act of government is the process through which state power is used. All standard governments hold coercive power which ensures the legitimate command to act according to the constitutional specifications that allow governments to carry out present laws, pass new laws, and judge conflicts. (Robinson, 2013:558).

In the same way, does the concept of 'governance' relate to the essence of statehood? Understandably, governance refers to how people are ruled and how state affairs are administered and regulated. According to the World Bank report (1998), governance is the exercise of political power in managing a nation's affairs or the exercise of power. Therefore, the relationship between the government and the state is based on representation and authorised agency (Crawford, 2007).

The state concept is also different from the concept of a nation, even though these concepts are frequently confused. Nations are large geographical areas comprising a mixture of cultural and political features. This is because a nation can continue to exist even though it is not confined within a state (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:47). A nation's existence is defined by a union of people based on similarities in language patterns, ethnic relationships, cultural heritage, or even geographical proximity (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:48). One's nationality is often expressed in their heritage, culture, and language rather than citizenship. The quest for identity and belonging becomes more widespread in a world becoming more intertwined. In most of the developing world, primarily in Africa, states have encountered specific issues in their fight to achieve a national identity. Statehood in these contexts was only achieved after a struggle against colonial rule through a united pursuit of national freedom. One of the more significant examples of a nation is that of the Kurds. The Kurds have approximately thirty million people, making it "the largest nation without its independent state" (Gunter, 2004:197). The Kurds are known as the largest nation without a state. Still, their struggle continues today.

The modern state was a *tool* designed to conduct war and draw out resources from society. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this tool underwent a significant transformation as it was combined with the concept of *nation*, forming a *nation-state*. The nation-state then gradually acquired broader economic and social responsibilities. The term 'nation' has no necessary political implications. The only distinguishing feature shared by the state and nation is the people (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:52). One of the outstanding values of the nation-state system is *national self-determination*, or the right of national groups to organise themselves politically (Garner *et al.*, 2012:122).

Accepting that the state is a notoriously tricky concept to define, it is not a reason enough to refuse or not attempt to define and understand it. A classical definition of the state is provided by Max Weber, who described the state as an institution claiming a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in enforcing its order within a given territorial area' (Gerth & Mills, 1946:77-78). The state is so inseparably linked with sovereignty. The state possesses legal sovereignty because it has the *right* to command compliance. At the same time, it also has political sovereignty in that it can command obedience (Garner *et al.*, 2012:7). Sovereignty is the principle of absolute and unlimited power. According to the classical definition of the state, there must be an authority with the power to enforce its decisions, with violence if needed. Therefore, complete sovereignty controls internal and external interventions (Marume *et al.*, 2016: 27). Thus, no other power can question the state's authority. However, absolute sovereignty is impossible; even the most powerful dictator cannot exercise complete control.

With the dawn of globalisation, the concept of state sovereignty has undergone significant changes to the extent that the modern state's role is politically, socially, technologically, and economically different.

- *Politically*. The state's role has changed politically with the advent of globalisation as it strengthened interstate relations and dependence. At first, states were created to be sovereign; however, because of globalisation, states often have to surrender their sovereignty to *pooling* in conventions, contracting, coercion, and imposition (Shaw, 2000:184). Thus, globalisation has caused a decline in governments' authority to control their economies and regulate their political structures. States are now forced to adjust and act upon the pressures of global market forces to compete in the international arena.
- *Socially and culturally*: The social effect caused by globalisation is somewhat problematic. In this case, the state's role has changed from being a controller to being a protector (Buchanan, 2012:1). The primary examples of globalisation's adverse effects include internationalised crimes such as terrorism, drug and human trafficking, and pandemics. In addition, no society

exists in complete isolation and is thus an active participant in the global exchange of culture (Oji, 2011:265).

- *Technologically*: Progressive technological advances broke barriers between states and changed how people and societies interact. Mass media and social networking sites are now platforms for expression, awareness, and participation. This has changed the state's role because the media and the internet now control what kind of information is being shared with citizens (Baylis & Smith, 1999: 21). A recent example of how the internet challenged state sovereignty is that of the 'Arab Spring' of 2011. Social networking sites are used to voice civic concerns and to lead protest movements by sharing a single hashtag, such as the #metoo, #feesmustfall, and #blacklivesmatter movements that created global responsiveness and encouraged policy change.
- *Economically*: Globalisation has influenced and brought severe changes in the economies and the role of the states in managing their economies to encourage growth and development. The state no longer has the power to control its currencies because of intangible assets, importations, online banking and a common currency between many states, like most of Europe (Baylis & Smith, 1999: 21). Consequently, underdeveloped countries are opening their economies to attract foreign investments to use their natural resources optimally to reach economic growth and development.

The above section demonstrated that the modern state results from contingent and continuous historical developments. In today's world, a state is more likely to succeed when it proves the indicators of statehood and sovereignty. Though some states are unable to exercise these characteristics fully, and as a result, they are regarded as dysfunctional states. Even if the state concept appears to be a concept, there is a more significant meaning behind the word. However, in terms of a state's definition, there has not been any theoretical agreement among researchers concerning the understanding of a state.

Consequently, studying the state as a concept is necessary as it contributes to understanding its functionality in the public sphere. The following section will explore a few definitions and functions of the state concept. This is a vital part of the study because a complete understanding of the primary role and functions of the state will provide a basis for analysis when conceptualising state dysfunction. This will help the researcher identify what an ideal-type functioning state is and the characteristics that come along with it.

### **2.1.1 Defining the State: 'Means' or 'Ends'**

The functions of the state almost fall on every sphere of human activity. It shapes and controls sectors ranging from education to economic activity and social welfare to external defence. And

where the state does not exercise its control, it regulates, supervises, and authorises (Heywood, 2013). State effectiveness has come to be measured regarding the state's regulatory and control systems. For this reason, the nature of state power has become a topic of political analysis.

Regarding the definition of the state, there has not been much theoretical agreement among scholars regarding the understanding and functioning of the state. As a result, there is a constant battle over the definition and study of the state that is argued under diverse ideological spectrums. The term *state* brings up different but interrelated and sometimes overlapping ideas about a specific range of political phenomena (Barrow, 1993:9-10). The many attempts to define the term can be understood as part of an ideological conflict because different definitions will lead to constructing other ideas and values of the state and its function. Thus, the many contrasting perspectives of state power have clear implications for the critical role of the state. Granted that no globally accepted definition of the state exists, any serious state analysis should define what it is and does. The different meanings of the state often seem to stress the importance of either the 'means' or the 'ends' of states (Barrow, 1993:10).

#### ***i. 'Means'-related definitions***

Means-related definitions of the state tend to lean towards defining the state in terms of its role and, even more so, its violent means. Yet, violence does not necessarily refer to state brutality or sadism, but it relates to the state's use of force for state power to achieve specific political means. However, any conversation of force must progress from understanding power and authority.

The first dimension of the state relates to its relationship with power. Power is generally understood as the ability to achieve the desired outcome. This is also often referred to as the "power to do something". In political studies, power is understood as the ability to influence the behaviour of others even if it is against their will (Heywood, 2013:5). Slightly overstated, Hay (2002:168) argued that "power is to political analysis what the economy is to economics". Power affects not only personal relationships but also shapes other dynamics, such as social groups, organisations, and governments. Also, the power of a state or government is not necessarily limited to the control of its citizens.

The second dimension to consider is authority. Where power is defined as the ability to influence the behaviour of others, authority can be understood as the 'legitimate power' to do so. Authority is thus grounded on the official duty to obey rather than coercion or manipulation (Heywood, 2013:4). It sometimes can become highly desirable to translate power into authority when authority becomes a product of manipulation. Even if it is possible to define power and authority separately, governments use both in practice, even in democracies. Is power a good thing? Some

would argue that power is good, but not too much, because “absolute power corrupts absolutely”. This means that using power to achieve certain goals is positive, yet, using power to harm others is negative. From a liberal perspective, power is always undesirable because “every exercise of power involves impressing someone’s values upon another” (Barry, 2000:99). For this reason, liberals encourage the limitations of power by the separation of powers to stop one branch of government from using too much power. However, the exercise of power cannot be eliminated, although its focus and implementation can be changed.

Now the question arises, is power the same as a force? Since power is viewed as the ability or capacity to influence the actions of others, power must be understood as potential. And if power is potential, force thus becomes a type of action that fulfils that potentiality. Force is thus a tool of coercion. It is also argued that the actual use of force means power has failed (Garner *et al.*, 2012:52). Therefore, it is evident that there is a clear conceptual difference between power and force. Power and force perform different functions; while power gives the ability to create force, force translates power into violence or threat of force. The most widely used means-related definition is from the German sociologist Max Weber who described the state as “a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Gaub, 2003:115-116). The state becomes inextricably linked with sovereignty. Weber, as quoted by Parsons, further expanded on his central conception of the state, which reads:

*...The primary formal characteristic of the modern state are as follows: It possesses an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation, to which the organised corporate activity of the administrative staff, which is also regulated by legislation, is orientated. This system of order claims binding authority, not only in membership by birth but also, to a large extent, overall action taking place in the arena of jurisdiction. It is thus a compulsory association with a territorial basis. Furthermore, today, the use of force is regarded as legitimate only so far as it is permitted by the state or prescribed by it... The claim of the modern state to monopolise the use of force is as essential to it as its character of compulsory jurisdiction (Parsons, 1947).*

It is fascinating that even before Weber’s conceptualisation, intellectuals such as Machiavelli and Hobbes perceived that states should give importance to the monopolisation of violence as this function was a primary driving force in state formation. From these two explanations by Weber, it is understandable that he conceptualised the state in terms of the means of statehood and not according to its primary functions (ends of statehood). In the same way, Machiavelli considers the existence of the military, which represents force, when he claims further, “*the best ordinances in the world will be despised and trampled underfoot when they are not supported, as they ought*

*to be, by military power ...*" (Ojo, 2015:66). Charles Tilly's contributions cannot be overlooked when thinking about state formation. Tilly's famous statement of "*war made the state and the state made war*" is frequently cited by many scholars as he also adheres to a Weberian conception of the state. Tilly argued that the primary factor that explains the development of the modern state was its ability to fight wars. He introduces the following characterisation of the state in the introductory chapter of *the formation of National States in Western Europe* (1975):

*An organisation which controls the population occupying a definite territory is a state insofar as (1) it is differentiated from other organisations operating in the same territory; (2) it is autonomous; (3) it is centralised; and (4) its divisions are formally coordinated with one another"* (Tilly, 1975:70).

Furthermore, Gianfranco Poggi adopted Tilly's conception as a fundamental interpretation of statehood. Poggi (1990:19) notes that the characteristics above include the basic and remaining features of the modern state, upon which many secondary features have emerged throughout the years. At the same time, such contextualisation of the state excludes various secondary functions that states have adopted through modernisation, such as social welfare responsibilities and economic intervention. Poggi interprets state formation primarily from three perspectives:

- The managerial perspective emphasises the top-down approach to the establishment of an influential political administration over a large territory.
- The military perspective follows Weber's idea that emphasises the state's monopoly of legitimate violence.
- And the economic perspective, which follows Marx's idea and sees the state as the result of a class struggle between producers and exploiters in the capitalist mode of production (Poggi, 2002:95).

According to Greffrath (2012), Patrick Dunleavy is another modern state author who cannot be overlooked when analysing the functions of the state built upon the Weberian conception. Dunleavy's concept includes both a classical institutionalist description and a functionalist characterisation which can be categorised according to the primary and secondary functions of the state. He defines the state as a multi-criteria concept which, in its preliminary categorisation, refers to:

- Organised institutions with connectedness or cohesion.
- A given spatial territory, inhabited by citizens.
- Functions to define and enforce binding decisions collectively on its people.
- Encourages a public sphere separate from decision-making (Greffrath, 2012: 77).

States should also:

- Claim sovereignty and effectively monopolise the legitimate use of force within a territory.
- Have the ability to define members of society and control its borders.
- Advance the common interests of members of the society.
- Be seen as legitimate by its population.
- Command bureaucratic sources and enforce taxation.
- Regulate societal activities utilising law and government activities using constitutions.
- Be recognised as a state by others (Greffrath, 2012: 77-78).

In this detailed description, Dunleavy is not limited to the Weberian conceptualisation of statehood but elaborates the description with several additional features. This is particularly relevant for this study since the modern state not only functions according to its essence, but because of modernisation and development, the state has taken on additional roles and functions. And therefore, this study argues that any state that lacks these attributes is considered dysfunctional. Most European and Scandinavian countries exhibit all these attributes and are consequently regarded as strong states; on the other hand, most African and Asian countries lack many of these features and might be described in terms of their dysfunction as weak, soft, or failed.

## ***ii. 'Ends'-related definitions***

Ends-related definitions instead emphasise teleological objectives and functions of the state. This means that these definitions or explanations focus more on the functions the state serves than the cause by which they develop.

The idealistic perspective of the state is most clearly reflected in the writings of Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hegel; however, Aristotle and Plato are considered to be the founders of the idealistic theory. Idealism is an understanding of politics that stresses the importance of morality and ideals (Garner *et al.*, 2012:57). This philosophical position suggests that ideas are more 'real' than the physical world. The fundamental belief of this theory is that the state is an end, and the individual is a means. In this way, Aristotle introduced the premise that man is by nature a social animal and that they naturally form a community by interacting with one another (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:57). For Aristotle, the state is not only a political and economic institution, but particularly a moral association where individuals strive for a moral life. Accordingly, the state, being an independent institution, has the crucial function of providing the highest good to the individual (Bird, 2006:29-30). At the same time, Immanuel Kant viewed the state as unfailing and supreme. He argued that the individual has no choice but to follow the will and orders of the state. It would be a sin to violate the state as it is the only means for the individual to gain liberty (Bird, 2006:48).

Moreover, from the perspective of the Hobbesian community, the human condition in the state of nature, was seen as chaotic, irresponsible, and devoid of freedom; therefore, there was a need for men to give up their natural rights for protection with the hope the state will fulfil its purpose of achieving order (Boadie-Ampong, 2018:1-2). It is essential to mention that under the Hobbesian contract, the state is absolute, and this is the ultimate form of authority under which peace is possible (Bird, 2006:75). Thus, for idealists, the state is above the individual. Therefore, the state's purpose is to create and uphold all those circumstances in which a free and moral life becomes possible for all people. However, the idealistic theory of the state cannot be entirely accepted. This is because the approach is abstract and distant from reality. Secondly, the theory displays elements of totalitarianism, which threatens democracy and liberty. But, despite these criticisms, Idealism has some optimistic views as it creates a way for the welfare state and the development of social democracy.

It is no surprise that liberalism is one of the most critical political philosophies that provides another possible teleology of the state. For classical thinkers, change has remained the primary tool of liberalism throughout history. Classical liberalism established itself in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a period where the institutions that dominated society were those of the church, monarchy and state. They believed that the government oppresses people when it has too much power. Therefore, the less government, the better (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:21). As a result, they called for a separation of executive and legislative powers. Also, private property was held in high regard. Undeniably, classical liberal thinkers believed that property was a natural right and that the individual's possessions should be protected from the state (Baradat & Phillips, 2017:21). According to John Locke, the essential goal of the state was "the preservation of property", and with 'property', Locke's work refers not only to personal possessions but also to one's life and liberty (Bird, 2006:80). Thus, the primary jurisdiction of the state is founded on its role as guarantor of personal safety, property, and individual liberty. A state that ceases to provide this function has no reason for existence.

Social liberalism, on the other hand, reached popularity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and contained a more flexible view of the state's role. Social liberalism desires to apply state power to advance societal progress on issues regarding equality and opportunity (Drougge, 2019:1). The role of the modern state is no longer fixated on protecting liberty and personal possessions, but it assumes many other roles. The state has become a provider of goods and services, social insurers, wealth distributors, entrepreneurs, bankers, and economic planners (Ratnapala, 2007: 13). The modern state is also considered the ideal-type state for which all should strive. Though, no state thoroughly enjoys complete internal and external sovereignty, absolute legitimacy, a monopoly on the use of force, and a wholly practical and functioning bureaucracy. However, some states might be closer to this ideal than others. States then use

their territory, sovereignty, legitimacy and bureaucracy to deliver what Rotberg (2004) called *political goods*.

Rotberg (2004) described the state's role in its responsibility to deliver security to its people, including upholding the rule of law and securing a functioning legal system and infrastructure (Rotberg, 2004:3). He argued that the primary function of the state is to

*...to prevent cross-border invasions and infiltrations, and any loss of territory; to eliminate domestic threats to or attacks upon the national order and social structure; to prevent crime and any related dangers to domestic human security; and to enable citizens to resolve their disputes with the state and with their fellow inhabitants without recourse to arms or other forms of physical coercion" (Rotberg, 2004:3).*

These political goods also became a measuring tool of state strength and weakness. Only the strong state can deliver these political goods, while a weak state is only capable of doing so partially. In modern societies, all elements that present state strength are somehow interconnected. If a state lacks the capacity and resources to provide sufficient infrastructure and security to its people, its legitimacy will weaken.

In the same way, corruption in institutions such as the military and police service can cause a loss of security and protection, and in turn, citizens will turn to private means to settle their needs. This will threaten the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force. The continued cycle that demonstrates lawlessness creates a public perception that the state is weak, and this pattern is difficult to break. However, answering why some states are strong while others are weak remains a long-debated question in the study of political development.

The Marxist theory paints quite a different picture of the nature of the state. Marxism has been curiously influential, seeing that many of the world's population lives under regimes inspired by Marx's ideas. Marxism regards the state's ends as the continuation of class domination in favour of the ruling class (Garner *et al.*, 2012:34). For them, the state primarily exists to protect the ruling class's interests which is mostly at the expense of the poor. Democracy in such societal order is nothing but a sham. Regardless of elections, the impact on the population is relatively minimal (Heywood, 2013:40-41). The state's laws are also the will of the dominant class in society to protect their interest against the oppressed. For Marxist thinkers, the state is, therefore, only a vehicle for the exercise of power by the dominant class and not to maintain law and order or to ensure the well-being of the masses. Although Marxist characteristics are observable in many contexts, and it is tempting to agree with its perspective, the theory is a narrow perspective of the state. The theory explains that the purpose of the state is to protect the interests of the powerful;

however, the state is a symbol of the welfare of an entire population. As a result, a more complex and subtle form of Marxism developed.

Neo-Marxism broke away from the rigid superstructure repression and rejected the classical Marxist class theory. At the same time, classical thinkers argued that political power is strictly connected to the ownership of productive wealth, which proposes a capitalist ruling class. For neo-Marxism, this is somewhat mirrored in unequal competition between those who own businesses and the labour groups (Heywood, 2013: 250). Classical Marxists claimed that the superstructure is divided into two groups; a political society made up of the state and civil society, including institutions such as the church, trade unions, mass media, and political parties. However, for neo-Marxists such as Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), the state consists of political and civil society. Gramsci described the state as “the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to maintain the active consent of those over whom it rules” (Hoffman, 1984:4). This means that hegemony is only achieved when the state has managed to maintain its power by gaining its population's approval and not through force, as presented by Weber. Gramsci thus believed that the state could only remain hegemonic if it were willing to compromise and take account of the demands of the exploited class. It is for this reason that ruling class hegemony can never be achieved.

The contrasting interpretations of state function and power present evident difficulties for the desired role and responsibilities of the state, raising questions such as: What should the state do? What are the functions of the state? What makes a state? This definitional confusion is the cause of a never-ending disagreement about the exact role the state should play. The following section of this chapter will analyse Max Weber's conceptualisation of the state as the ideal-type state and what is considered a strong state.

## **2.2 THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF STATEHOOD**

The study of the state has gradually become an important concept in political analysis, and today it has become the universal form of political organisation. Modern states are complex units with different features. While some states are powerful, others are poor and weak. For the past two centuries, the modern conceptualisation of the state represents the ideal-type state to which all states should strive. Since there are thousands of scholarly meanings of the state and what it ought to do, a good start would be to provide a definition on which this study will be based. In line with Weber's conceptualisation, the 1993 Montevideo Convention on Human Rights and Duties of States maintain that states should have specific features such as territory, population government, and sovereignty to control internal and external affairs (Boadie-Ampong, 2018:1-2).

These are the basic features it needs to be considered as a state. This study employs Max Weber's conceptualisation of the state, as he is globally recognised as one of the most prominent thinkers in developing the state concept (Käsler, 1988: ix). Weber's ideas are so comprehensive that he influenced scholars in various disciplinary, methodological, and philosophical branches of the social sciences, including political science (Kim, 2012). Consequently, it is valid that this study incorporates many concepts of the Weberian tradition.

Max Weber describes the state as "a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate force within a given territory" (Weber, 1946). Weber's definition of state might appear as a basic description; however, his conceptualisation is profound in meaning and creates an opportunity for different interpretations. For this study, we can quickly identify three main elements in Weber's definition: *monopoly*, *legitimacy*, and *force*. Also, Weber includes *territory* as a primary characteristic of the state, together with government and sovereignty, as included by the 1993 Montevideo Convention on Human Rights and Duties. Hence, an entity could be considered a state if it exhibits the following attributes of statehood:

#### **Basic features:**

- ***Territory*** - The first feature might appear so obvious that it can sometimes be overlooked. A recognised state must have a geographical territory, an area with clearly defined borders to which it lays claim. It is indeed by territory that one recognises a state on the world atlas. State formation and the degree of the territories on which they are based can be influenced by religion, common descent, economic interests, war, geographic barriers, and the accidents of history (Marume *et al.*, 2016:25). The state exercises supreme power over all its territory. However, the defined region is not simply a space for state activities. Still, it signifies a physical feature of the state's symbolic identity, which has led it to be called the 'Motherland' or 'Fatherland' (Greffrath, 2012:88).
- ***Government*** - Government refers to a large set of appointed officials whose primary role is the organisation of the state, which implements and enforces laws (Garner *et al.*, 2012:5). They are three organs that make up a government: judiciary, legislature, and executive, each carrying out its distinctive functions. Furthermore, governments can take different forms, from autocracies to dictatorships. The state exercises its sovereign power through its government.
- ***Sovereignty*** - The essence of this concept refers to the state's incontestable and absolute legal and political powers. Sovereignty can be applied to the modern state in two components. Internal sovereignty refers to the state's capacity to exercise complete power and authority within its territorial borders. In contrast, external sovereignty speaks to the state's position in the international domain and its ability to act as an autonomous and

self-governing unit (Heywood, 2013:58). It must be acknowledged that absolute power is impossible, especially in the international arena where the state's power is restricted by international and supranational organisations such as the European Union and the World Bank.

### **Primary Features:**

- **A monopoly of force** – For Weber, this is the core of the modern state. The importance of this does not refer to the continuous use of force but rather that the state is the only entity that has the legitimate right to use such force (Jachtenfuchs, 2005). This does not mean that the state is the only entity to use force but is the only legitimate entity to authorise it. In essence, the state can give other actors permission to use violence without influencing its monopoly; the military and the police are the most concrete examples of this kind of monopoly.
- **Legitimacy** – Legitimacy can be understood as the acknowledged right to govern. More specifically, it refers to the popular belief in accepting an authority's right to rule (Zartman, 1995: 110). Weber distinguished between three types of legitimate authorities: Traditional legitimacy is the right to govern based on society's long-standing practices and patterns, such as the "divine right of kings" (Desrus, 2021:33). Charismatic legitimacy is the right to rule based on personal virtue or heroism. Rational-legal legitimacy is the right to rule who is selected according to accepted laws, such as electoral processes (Desrus, 2021:33). The latter also separates the modern state from earlier systems of rule. Legitimacy further increases a state's sovereignty, as force alone cannot uphold effective internal control. If citizens abide by the rules and laws of government, then force might not be required to exercise control.

The purpose of this section was not to redefine Weber's conceptualisation of the state but to acknowledge the influence of the Weberian tradition in the social sciences and state discourse. The six features identified above are frequently employed as the ideal type of state.

### **2.2.1 The Anatomy of the Strong State**

The modern (Weberian) state is a model of the ideal-type state. However, the extent to which states can achieve this ideal is questionable. Even though some states are closer to achieving this ideal, no state enjoys complete sovereignty, full control over its territory, absolute legitimacy, an utterly compelling bureaucracy, or a monopoly on the use of force. Seeing that only the strong states are closer to this ideal-type state, we can now question what makes a state strong.

Firstly, a strong state is regarded as a pre-condition for democratic consolidation, strengthening the rule of law, and improving service delivery (Giraudy, 2012). As such, this study defines a strong state as the extent to which states can fulfil the core elements of statehood and the capacity to provide sufficient political goods to its citizens. These political goods range from security to strong institutions and legal systems to infrastructures such as health care and education (Rotberg, 2004). Additional features of strong states are that they are economically bigger than weak states and are also less corrupt, indicating stronger bureaucracies and more legitimacy (Boadie-Ampong, 2018:44). Strong states are mainly administered by institutions responsible for law and stability to resist external pressure and threats. In addition, a strong state should be able to ensure political stability, economic growth, sufficient service provision, and the possibility of social development (Giraudy, 2012:600). However, no state is perfectly strong, and each still has elements of relative weakness. Many strong states demonstrate gaps in security, institutions, economy, or social welfare. Malek (2006) also extensively analysed the characteristics that make a state strong or weak.

**TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG AND WEAK STATES**

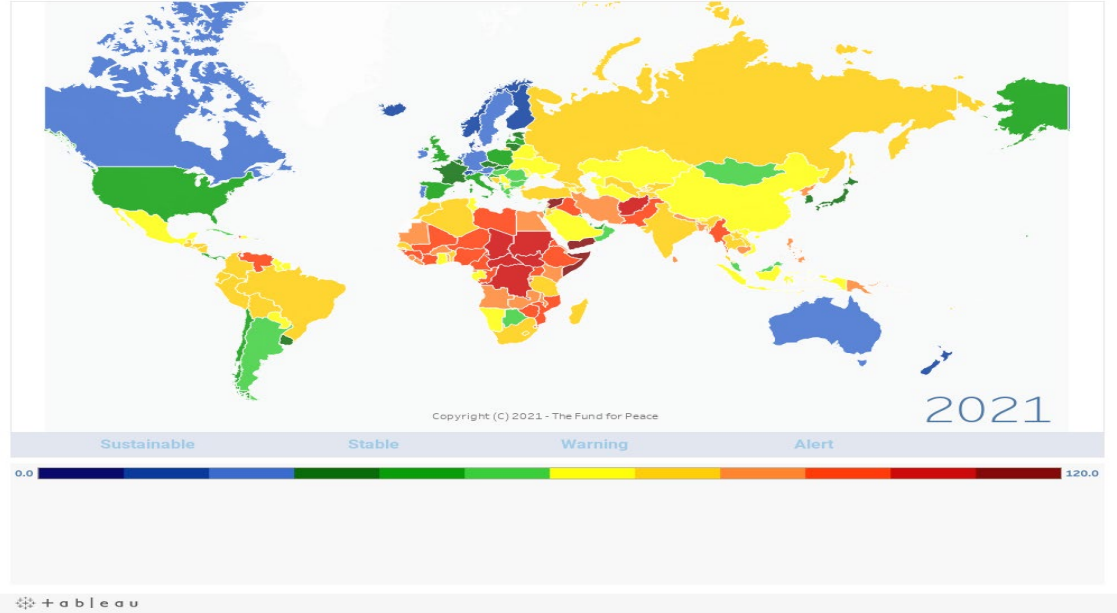
<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>STRONG STATE</b>	<b>WEAK STATE</b>
State monopoly on the use of force	Exists	More or less absent
Sovereignty	High	Low
Quality of democracy	High	Low
The legitimacy of the state and citizens' loyalty to it	High	Low
Security	High	Low
State control of territory	Exists	More or less absent
State control of borders	Exists	More or less absent
Effectiveness of institutions, infrastructure and bureaucracy	High	Low
Corruption and Crime	Low	High or out of control
Economy	Functioning	More or less in deep crisis

Demographic changes	Slight and under control	Significant and out of control, enormous streams of refugees, mass migration
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(Source: Malek, 2006).

The Fragile States Index was developed by the Fund for Peace and has since become a critical tool for measuring state strength. The FSI provides data on 178 countries along four primary categories, consisting of twelve measures of fragility. The map below presents a colour-coded map that specifies a country’s fragility or strength, ranging from dark blue (sustainable and strong), yellow (warning), to deep red (high alert). The countries marked red, yellow, and orange display critical features that make them vulnerable and at risk of failure or collapse.

**FIGURE 1: THE FRAGILE STATES INDEX – GLOBAL MAP**



(Source: Fund for Peace, 2021).

The countries listed as the most sustainable are Finland, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand, Denmark, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Sweden (Fund for Peace, 2021). According to the twelve indicators, these countries performed the best and scored the highest. On the contrary, those countries that performed the worst and reached the lowest scores are Yemen, Somalia, Syria, South Sudan, Congo (DRC), Central African Republic, Chad, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Zimbabwe (Fund for Peace, 2021). However, this does not mean that a country marked orange (warning) is at higher risk of state failure than a country marked yellow. On the contrary, the conditions in a country marked yellow may worsen much faster than in a country already

considered high risk. Thus, the pace and direction of change (positive or negative) differ. The map also shows that Africa is in danger of becoming a failed continent compared to the rest of the world. Hence, the indicators and colour-coding are only a vague guide and should be utilised accordingly. To gain a deeper understanding of the drivers of instability and fragility is a personal endeavour for each country. Therefore, the researcher should delve deeper into the sub-indicators as a guide for analysis.

As mentioned in chapter one, this study will investigate South Africa’s consolidation prospects in three primary sectors: political, economic, and social. The reader will observe that this dissertation employs a different approach to analysing the social sector in South Africa. The FSI measures fragility in the social sector through demographic pressures; however, in the South African context, racial and ethnic divisions have more serious consequences for democratic consolidation in the country. As such, the FSI’s social cohesion indicator provides a clearer understanding of the social sector in South Africa. The table below demonstrates the features that will be analysed in each sector to determine state dysfunction in South Africa.

**TABLE 2: THE FRAGILE STATES INDEX INDICATORS TO BE UTILISED**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>KEY FEATURES FOR ANALYSIS</b>	<b>FSI GUIDING QUESTIONS</b>
<b>POLITICAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legitimacy</li> <li>• Public services</li> <li>• Openness and fairness in political processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the government have the confidence of the people?</li> <li>• Have riots or uprisings occurred?</li> <li>• Is there evidence of corruption on the part of government officials?</li> <li>• Is there equal access to public services?</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic decline and poverty</li> <li>• Uneven economic development</li> <li>• Sustained human flight and brain drain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a large economic gap?</li> <li>• Are professionals leaving the country?</li> <li>• Is there a relatively high proportion of higher educated people leaving the country?</li> <li>• Is wealth concentrated in the hands of a few?</li> <li>• What is the unemployment rate?</li> <li>• How do people view the economy?</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National identity</li> <li>• Group grievance and civic unrest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a sense of national identity?</li> <li>• Are resources fairly distributed?</li> <li>• Have groups been reintegrated?</li> <li>• Are there feelings of ethnic and/or religious intolerance and/or violence?</li> </ul>

(Source: Adopted from the Fund for Peace, Fragile State Index 2021)

The extensive list of FSI indicators is an attempt to measure state strengths or weaknesses in South Africa. However, the FSI as a measuring tool may have critical concerns: Can we measure state strength? Is measuring these indicators feasible and arriving at a final score for each country? The index does not provide an explanation or definition of the phenomenon; it merely indicates and does not explain. However, even though there are many critical views regarding the use of the Fragile States Index, it should be emphasised that the index does not have the goal to 'name and shame' states. The purpose is to help states build stronger institutions and to create awareness of the consequences failed states can bring, such as poverty, crime, corruption, and human rights violations. Despite the many criticisms received, it cannot be denied that the index plays an essential role in creating awareness and visibility of state weakness.

Considering democratic development around the world, the Democracy Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) measures the state of democracies in 165 independent states along five key categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture (EIU, 2021:3). These five categories further include sixty indicators. States are classified as either full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime, or authoritarian regime. The top 5 rankings for 2021 are as follows: 1) Norway, 2) New Zealand, 3) Finland, 4) Sweden, 5) Iceland, and 6) Denmark (EIU, 2021:12). While the bottom six rankings for 2021 are 162) Syria, 163) The Central African Republic, 164) Democratic Republic of Congo, 165) North Korea, 166) Myanmar, and 167) Afghanistan (EIU, 2021:16).

It is interesting to notice that those countries listed at the bottom of the Democracy Index are also at the bottom of the Fragile States Index. The same applies to the countries at the top of both indexes. This could show a link between weak democracy and state fragility, the weaker democracy, the weaker the state's capacity. This statement is supported by Rotberg's (2004:6) argument that failed states display flawed institutions. In such a state, the only institution that functions accordingly is the executive; further, "respect for human rights and democratic processes has slipped" (Rotberg, 2003:17). In the same way, the decline in democracy could lead to failure, as "partial democracies [especially in Africa] are indeed far more vulnerable to state failure-type crises than are either full democracies or autocracies" (Goldstone, 2009:291). This primarily happens when new or flawed democracies cannot provide economic and physical security to the population. Due to its ineffectiveness, corruption becomes widespread, which further undermines the state's effectiveness and legitimacy.

Measuring the strength of states has long been regarded as an important reason to encourage the feasibility of political and economic indicators such as increasing economic growth, strengthening democracy, upholding the rule of law, and providing adequate political goods. This is important, seeing how many states have experienced severe crises over the last few years. In

some cases, the destruction of the state has proceeded to the extent of widespread political violence and civil wars. Therefore, it is not surprising that 'state failure' has become a slogan for the political and economic development of the third world. Consequently, international organisations and major powers view weak and failed states as a significant problem as they are plagued with poverty, corruption, crime, and poor service delivery. In such countries, democratic values are difficult to foster when states cannot even provide basic political goods to their citizens (Rotberg, 2004). Therefore, international organisations and institutions have taken steps to address the immediate humanitarian and security problems to rebuild states, ranging from food aid to the deployment of peacekeepers.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Chapter two's primary aim was to understand the features of the ideal-type state. Understanding the features of a functional state would assist in determining the features that demonstrate state dysfunction. This chapter introduced the reader to the state discourse, which clarified its different concepts, roles, and functions. It is evident that the modern state has undergone significant changes throughout history, which has changed its functions over time. These changes were not only institutionally but also political, economic, cultural, and technological. Before the existence of the formal state, people and communities were organised in stateless societies defined by tribal forms of organisation. Even then, there existed some form of social and political organisation. The rise of the state introduced many theoretical perspectives on the formation of the state. The force theory suggested that the state was formed due to a power struggle in which the strong overruled the weak. The divine theory argued that God chose certain people to rule. In comparison, the social contract theory believes that people create legitimate political power. Moreover, the birth of the state also introduced additional concepts that are often confused and used interchangeably. The study thus clarified the concepts of government, governance, nation, and the nation-state.

In the same way the origins of the state are debated, so are the functions and role of the state. Due to the many contrasting perspectives on the functions of the state, this study concludes that the roles of the state can be either 'means-related' or 'ends-related'. The former understands the state as the ultimate form of power by using violence and force to achieve political means. The latter understands the function of the state in teleological objectives and functions, for example, the state as the primary service provider, protector of people and land, and the promotor of freedom and human rights. This chapter studied several conceptualisations of statehood, of which Max Weber's conceptualisations seemed preeminent. He defines the state as "a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate force within a given territory". As such, this study regards Max Weber's conceptualisation of the state as the ideal-type state as

his view of the state combines both means and ends-related functions. Weber's definition of the state also informed the primary elements of statehood, monopoly use of force, territory, government, sovereignty, human community, and legitimacy. These elements are mutually enforcing, and it's unlikely that they could function without the presence of the other elements. However, the extent to which states exercise these elements of statehood is questionable. It is only the strong state that is closer to achieving this ideal. This chapter further raised an important question and analysed the features that "make states strong". Understanding the anatomy of a strong state would clarify what makes states weak and causes dysfunction.

Firstly, strong states uphold the essential elements of statehood, as defined by Max Weber. A strong state claims a legitimate monopoly of force over a populated territory. Secondly, strong states have strong institutions that uphold law, order and stability to ensure political stability and economic growth. Thirdly, strong states can deliver quality and efficient political goods and services to their people. These are critical functions of the state to ensure the continuation and legitimacy of democracy. Measuring the strength of states is important to determine their capacity to fulfil the functions of the state. States with higher capacity can ensure long-term economic growth, political stability, law and order, support development initiatives, and provide quality service provision to the people. On the contrary, states with low capacity achieve the opposite. The Fragile States Index is an important tool that measures state strength or fragility along a set of twelve primary indicators. This study will use this index to analyse the features demonstrating dysfunction in South Africa's political, economic, and social sectors.

# CHAPTER THREE: A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DYSFUNCTIONAL STATE

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the state discourse, which serves as the basis of conceptualisation for this study. Chapter two thus fulfilled an important role in this study as one first must understand the fundamentals and features of a functional state, also known as the strong state, before identifying the dysfunctional state. Several conceptualisations of statehood were discussed, of which the Weberian state is considered the ideal-type state to which all states should strive. The five Weberian- attributes identified in the previous chapter, together with the state's ability to provide political goods to its people, signify a functional state. Thus, the absence thereof demonstrates state dysfunction.

By means of a literature review, chapter three will investigate the theoretical nature of state dysfunction. This chapter will introduce the reader to the various concepts of state weakness, its features and key indicators, followed by a discussion of the problematic nature of the weak state/failed state discourse. The primary goal of this chapter is to analyse the contributions of four scholars on state weakness (also dysfunction) to understand the features that demonstrate deviations from the ideal-type state. Each scholar argues for a specific state sector where dysfunction occurs (political, economic, social). These arguments will then be merged to construct a theoretical framework which will be applied to analyse state dysfunction in South Africa (chapter 5). This chapter will employ the influential work of William Zartman, Robert Rotberg, James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu, and Joel S. Migdal. However, the study is not limited to these scholars.

## 3.2 THE WEAK STATE: CONCEPTS AND KEY FEATURES

Since the 1980s, the discussion about the state was frequently dominated by statements about the deterioration of the state. With the rise of globalisation, the once-powerful leviathan experienced a decline in state authority largely due to the emergence of the global economy, the market, non-state actors, and international organisations (Heywood, 2013:72). This view claims power has shifted towards global markets and transnational corporations. In the most extreme forms of this statement, the state is seen as 'hollowed-out', reflecting a shift from *government* to *governance* (Bevir, 2009:9). Such developments have led a rise in the market-state or the 'postmodern' state. As societies became more globalised and complex, private companies became more responsive to developing public policy and delivering public services, relying more

on networks and markets than hierarchical state institutions (Bevir, 2009:2-3). However, the argument that the state has become weaker can be somewhat misleading. For instance, even though states and markets are viewed as rival forces, markets cannot function without states establishing and implementing property rights. Furthermore, even if states have lost authority in some areas, they gained more authority in others.

The constant debate about the decline of state power and authority occasionally raises concerns about weak, failing, or collapsed states, especially in the developing world. The state failure concept dates to the early 1990s as Madeleine Albright brought the conversation to light at the United Nations (Gross, 1996). However, Robert H. Jackson was writing about a similar topic termed 'quasi-states'. Furthermore, other significant scholars in the field include Helman and Ratner's *Saving Failed States*. Also, Zartman's work *Collapsed States* is the first book dedicated completely to the state failure and collapse concept. The first few groupings of state failure were constructed by Gross (1996), who categorised state failure according to five categories: 'anarchic', 'phantom', 'anaemic', 'captured', and 'aborted'. As more scholars became interested in the topic, more gradients were added, such as 'hollow', 'soft', 'weak', 'fragile', 'failing', and 'collapsed'. Even though the academic discussions on the failed state concept only took rise in the 1990s, the concept had been present in the political economy of international relations for centuries. This is seen in the way European colonial powers often interfered in poorer states as they provided an opportunity for territorial expansion while, at the same time, potentially threatening the security and trade interests of the weaker states (Dorff, 2000).

A strong state is considered to be those that function optimally according to the Weberian ideal-type state; thus, some states may not achieve the rank of 'strong state' but instead move from 'weak' to 'failed' or, in extreme cases, 'collapsed'. Countries like Somalia, Liberia, Congo, Syria, and Afghanistan are examples of state failure and collapse. In these states, the government failed to provide for its population's well-being and protect it from internal and external threats (Carment, 2003:409). This is when states become weak when they cannot provide basic functions for their citizens. As a result of such states' inability to provide the primary political goods to their citizens, the economy weakens; education and healthcare deteriorate; physical infrastructure breakdowns occur; corruption flourishes; there is a failure to control its borders; and crime and violence escalate out of control (Rotberg, 2002). These circumstances often lead to violent uprisings that result in population changes and refugee crises, food shortages, failing economies, and the death of citizens from disease, starvation, and direct conflict (Carment, 2003:409). Weak states' poor performance cannot be blamed on external factors alone, but rather on the (poor) quality of governance itself. This means that the deterioration of the state is the consequence of poor governance (Fodor, 2009).

As a result of the enduring concern with understanding state failure, an extensive range of terminology was developed which characterises the strength or weakness of states on a continuum, ranging from 'weak', 'fragile', 'failing', 'failed' and 'collapsed' states. As a result, these different definitions are continuously challenged as they create significant confusion, as many of them are perceived to entail intrinsic contradictions. In addition, several development institutions, such as the World Bank and the Fund for Peace, use the typologies of fragility to identify the potential and appropriate approaches for developmental engagement and initiatives. Nonetheless, despite its criticisms for being too vague, these typologies can be used as a valuable tool to understand weak state features and trajectories and how these may further develop.

Regardless of the extensive availability of contributions on the topic, there is generally no agreement on the description of state failure. Scholars are endlessly motivated to understand why states fail to perform the primary Weberian functions because those states that do not meet these standards are described as weak. In the more extreme cases, they are labelled as failed or collapsed states (Torres & Anderson, 2004: 5). Replacing empires and monarchs, the modern state is more focused on answering and delivering to the public. One of the most commonly agreed-upon definitions is presented by William Zartman, who defines failure as happening when "the basic functions of the state are no longer performed" (Zartman, 1995). Zartman also argued: "Collapse means that the basic functions of the state are no longer performed, as analysed in various theories of the state ... state collapse is the breakdown of good governance, law and order" (Zartman, 1995:5-6).

In the same way, Robert Rotberg, another important scholar in the field, defined state failure as the "inability of states to provide political goods to their citizens" (Rotberg, 2004). Both Zartman and Rotberg distinguished between a selection of services — existing in a hierarchy — states provide, ranging from the provision of security to social services and infrastructure. For Rotberg (2004), state failure should be a continuum rather than an either/or, and that differentiation between states that are strong, weak, failing, failed or collapsed should occur. However, by defining statehood in terms of a service provider role, Rotberg and Zartman provide a view that leads to a *loose* definition of state failure. Their definition suggests that most states should be labelled as *failed* since states can't fulfil all the ideal functions allocated to them. Instead, Rotberg and Zartman's definition could be used as a normative ideal to describe the ideal state.

The sudden attention in the failed state discourse dates to events after the fall of the Soviet Union as the changes uncovered the weaknesses of states globally. The phenomenon was primarily used to explain several humanitarian disasters during the 1990s, e.g. in Haiti, Somalia, and Kosovo. As a response, academics became fixated on the consequences of state failure resulting from disasters such as refugee and displaced persons and human rights violations (Wesley-

Smith, 2004:2). However, this plot quickly changed on 11 September 2001, when the al-Qaeda terrorist group attacked military and financial targets in New York and Washington, D.C. The outcome of these attacks has shifted the attention of state failure shifted from domestic and regional to global threats (Helman & Ratner, 1993:3-20). Strong states are no longer threatened by fellow conquering states but more so by the failing ones. Since then, the weak/failed state concept has become concerned with the anti-terrorism agenda, which injected more urgency into understanding dysfunctional states. The fragile political environment in such a state creates an opportunity for terrorist groups to gain power over a territory. States such as Afghanistan, characterised by porous borders and a lack of central government, became 'safe havens' for terrorist organisations to conduct their activities without fear of punishment (Rice, 2003:2). For these reasons, studying dysfunctional states has become an important theme in global security.

State weakness has a strong international effect. As the world is growing more independent, the threats displayed by state failure are also on the rise. When states lose control over their territories, the outcome is *ungoverned spaces* allowing large-scale drug manufacture and trafficking, international terrorism, and other global crimes to thrive (François & Sud, 2006). Collective international action thus becomes essential to control the global risks of failed states.

Robert H. Jackson's *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (1990) principally redefined the concept of state sovereignty used in the post-colonial era. State sovereignty forms a vital part of statehood and is a necessary requirement to be part of the international society. After colonialism, all states were acknowledged as even participants in the global system. This means that all states comprise of negative or positive sovereignty. They thus are recognised other states, participate equally in international organisations, and form diplomatic relations with other states (Eriksen, 2011: 232). Yet, not all states, especially dysfunctional states, share the same measure of sovereignty. Jackson's main argument is that states in the developing world are made up of a new class of states, mostly because of colonisation, which essentially lacks the common attributes of statehood (Jackson, 1990:1). Thus, such states is not entitled to positive sovereignty, instead, a new kind of post-colonial negative sovereignty has occurred. Negative sovereignty is identified as "freedom from outside interference. it is the legal foundation upon which a society of independent and formally equal states fundamentally rests" (Jackson, 1993:27). Jackson's argument implies that states in the developing world largely depend on the international community to distribute sovereign rights that maintain 'quasi-states'. He argues that a quasi-state is a state recognised as a participant in the system of states but does not hold the empirical features of statehood (Eriksen, 2011:233).

Simultaneously, some states lack positive sovereignty because they cannot control their territory, implement policies, or foster economic growth and social development. Yet, these states endure

and persist to be acknowledged as members of the global state system. Jackson (1993:29) argued that due to this recognition, Africa's weak states continued to exist. This means that international recognition has empowered weak states to exist even if control over their region or essential elements of statehood has been limited.

In the book *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can be Done About it*, Paul Collier explains why some countries are trapped in a cycle of poverty and provide possible strategies for overcoming these challenges. For Collier, the primary problem with development is that many countries at the bottom are falling behind (Collier, 2007:3). The world's poorest countries have distinctive features in common with roughly a billion people. Whereas the rest of the world has been developing and growing wealthier, the bottom billion has been getting poorer. Countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo have a worse economic position than in 1970. These countries are caught in one or more of four traps: the conflict trap; the natural resources trap; bad governance in a small country; and landlocked by bad neighbours (Collier, 2007:5-6). However, due to the rapid pace of globalisation, it becomes more and more difficult to escape these traps. Collier provides a deliberately pessimistic view of the prospects of the bottom billion. Still, he does give some suggestions that the affected countries and the Group of Seven (G7) countries could embrace to improve the status quo. It is possible for countries at the bottom to escape these traps. However, change will come from external interventions such as international aid, military intervention, laws and charters, and trade policies (Collier, 2007:78).

*Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson (2012) provides an attempt to explain the large inequalities between nations, i.e., why some nations are poor and others are wealthy. More specific: Why did Botswana become one of the fastest-growing countries globally while other African nations, such as Zimbabwe and the Congo, are stuck in poverty and violence? The authors' most general answer lies in the kind of institutions a country adopts. The book focuses on the historical occurrences and critical junctures that form modern politics and generate political and financial institutions that can be either inclusive or extractive. A critical juncture is a major event that disrupts existing economic and political-institutional arrangements (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012:121).

Inclusive institutions focus on power-sharing, productivity, education, technological advances, and the nation's well-being, while extractive institutions shift wealth and resources from one part of society to benefit another (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012:93-96). Nations fail, they argue, "when they have extractive economic institutions, supported by extractive political institutions that impede and even block economic growth" (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012:97). Extractive institutions, therefore, do not encourage creativity, innovation, or investments, as the state will confiscate the benefits of any such initiatives.

From the discussion above, it becomes clear that weak or failed states pose severe threats locally and globally. However, the phenomenon provides a new way of thinking about development and has assisted in identifying and emphasising genuine problems that countries experience and suggested ways of overcoming them. The emphasis on the failed state thesis has also drawn due attention to the importance of state institutions and international organisations in peace-building processes, development efforts, and determining the causes of poverty and insecurity.

Yet, the failed state discourse is often criticised for being too ambiguous and misleading. The attention brought to the study of state dysfunction has presented some weaknesses, which will be discussed in the section below.

### **3.2.1 The Problematic Nature of the Failed State Concept**

The concept of failed states, that is, states incapable of providing security to their citizens, gained immediate attention in recent years. Even though the failed state concept can be utilised as a valuable tool to foresee future trends and prevent failure or state weakness. The literature on failed states presents several flaws. Doornbos (2002:797-799) argues that the definitions are blurred and cause confusion and that the supposed causes and outcomes of the concept appear to be unclear.

The first significant problem with the concept is found in its definition. Some have argued that the failed state phenomenon is not a useful tool since the idea is unclear and unfocused. This is because the concept comprises culturally specific norms about the features of a strong state (Szuhai, 2015:101). The concept and its umbrella terms, such as 'failing', 'fragile', and 'troubled' states, came to be viewed as more of a liability. This definitional confusion is also the result of an endless disagreement about the particular role the state should play. This statement stems from the wide range of characteristics used to determine state failure and poor governance, including uneven economic development, corruption, a decline in public services, and demographic pressures. This has also been criticised as a *catch-all* framework (Gourevitch, 2005:4). Understandably, countries in the developing world are new members of the international arena. Therefore, it is common that these countries are experiencing several challenges in state-building. Moreover, a strong state is also unrealistic and viewed as an ideal. This is because *strong* countries will, at some point, demonstrate features of weakness as it is practically impossible for states to fulfil all their expected roles and responsibilities.

The state failure thesis dates to the Westphalian idea of statehood, which means that the concept originated and developed in the Global North and was then applied to the Global South (Haldén, 2008). The complexities of the discourse have made it necessary to revise the concept of state

failure, especially in Africa, as it becomes clear that the idea of the state is built on (Western) expectations that are entirely different from realities in several cases in Africa. The current failed states discourse serves as an attempt by Western societies to understand the challenges that states in the South are battling. Most research indeed echoes strong Western thoughts and approaches; therefore, there is a need for stronger emphasis from the perspectives of non-Western scholars. Furthermore, it is indisputable that state weakness plagues the developing world; therefore, there is a need for a more holistic set of indicators that recognise that experiences in the 'Third World' are very different from those in Western societies. A starting point would be to consider these states' historical experiences and socio-economic backgrounds to develop more appropriate policy solutions to address state weaknesses (IPCS, 2008:4).

An additional problem with the failed state discourse is the attention on the failure of states that ignore any other external factors that might have led to their weakening. Rather, it points fingers at the state's lack of capacity to fulfil its primary functions. It overlooks all external causes and seats the responsibility of failure completely on the domestic environment (Hashi, 2015:82). Hence, the discourse believes that the state is itself responsible for failure and neglects any external factors that may have contributed to the problem. With this, some scholars of African politics have proposed that the problem of so many weak and failed states in Africa could be early signals of a new post-colonial order, where more supple and compound systems of governance will evolve and new kinds of statehood that may substitute the older colonial model (Menkhaus, 2006; Hagman & Peclard, 2007).

Understanding that the 9/11 terrorist attacks shifted the scope of state weakness from a regional to an international risk, the linkages between weak states and transnational terrorism are much more complicated than assumed. The view that weak states are described as terrorist havens has been challenged. The first reason is that not all weak or failed states are necessarily characterised by terrorism. Barely any terrorist events occurred in those countries labelled by the United Nations as least developed (Schoeman, 2008:758). Also, not all terrorist activities in weak states are described as transnational. These terrorist activities are independently organised by revolutionaries fuelled by local political discontent or national liberation struggles (Patrick, 2006:34-35). And finally, supporters of the failed states discourse are drawn to the argument that terrorists are primarily interested in failed, lawless states such as Somalia. Quite the opposite, it is argued that terrorist groups are expected to use weak or fragile but functioning states as their organisational bases, such as Pakistan or Kenya (Patrick, 2006:35).

### **3.2.2 Insufficient Reasons for Africa's Underdevelopment**

Conventionally, development has been associated with per capita growth by the World Bank and meeting the basic needs of the people. Thus, "development must be understood as a multi-dimensional process that involves major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, national institutions, rapid economic growth, and reducing inequality and eradicating poverty" (Todaro & Smith, 2003). It is safe to argue that any country that does not meet the above criteria is considered underdeveloped. However, discovering why some countries achieve optimal growth that allows them to develop further while others are in an economic trap is not easy. Africa is well known to be underdeveloped compared to Western Europe and a few other strong countries. Although, there is a general uncertainty about whether poverty and underdevelopment in Africa a result of a lack of mainly financial, human, material, or natural resources. Despite the continent's boundless natural resources, a young and large population, and various occurrences of community advancements, most of the continent remains in extreme poverty, with bad governance and corruption being almost a permanent description of the continent's condition (Asafa, 2015:76-77). So, to solve the African problem, many scholars have asked and attempted to answer the question, what is the problem?

**Colonialism:** Colonial history has been frequently echoed as one of the dark spots of Africa. Many have also blamed colonialism and external interference for underdevelopment in Africa. The arbitrage of colonisation developed when the West and Europe ploughed on African soil using religion, technology, and politics to manage and utilise their unlimited resources to further develop Europe (Dimpka, 2015:15). They promised to improve education, governance, and economic development for Africans. Still, these promises were far from being materialised. However, while understanding that colonialism indeed impacted Africa's development in terms of natural resources and reversing Africa's paths to progress, it cannot be accepted as a tangible explanation for why the continent is still plagued by poverty and poor economic growth. To add, 50 years ago, only 13 out of 54 African countries were still under colonial rule (Boddy-Evans, 2020). Different countries have experienced similar historical sufferings but have indeed managed to change their economic positions to become global success stories, such as Singapore. Singapore achieved independence in 1963, several years after Somalia and Sierra Leone. Its GDP per capita is ranked seventh globally (Statistics time, 2021), while these African countries are continuously ranked at the bottom line. In the same way, the United Arab Emirates has a GDP per capita (ranked twenty-seventh) higher than Nigeria (ranked 142nd), which holds the largest economy in Africa (Statistics time, 2021). While some might argue that Nigeria and the UAE cannot be compared, the largest part of the UAE's GDP, like Nigeria, emanates from oil and

natural gas revenues. This leads us to question whether colonialism is answerable for Africa's poor development.

**Population Growth:** Furthermore, an additional reason offered for Africa's underdevelopment is emphasised by its rapid population growth. Africa's population growth is the highest globally and is predicted to increase by 50% in the next 18 years, increasing from 1.2 billion people to 1.8 billion by 2032 (Institute of Security Studies, 2021). Also, Africa will host almost half the global population growth in the next twenty years. However, population growth is not a numerical problem but rather a problem of human well-being. Accepting the definition of development as the improvement in people's standard of living in terms of their incomes, health, education, security and general well-being, the question about population growth then changes to how development affects population growth.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the rapid population increase in Africa is a challenging problem. The effect of high life expectancy and growing dependency demand greater initiative from African governments that will address the issues of unemployment, persistent poverty, crime, and political and civil unrest. In many cases, African governments are not investing in human capital to create jobs to promote a growing workforce, whether it's a problem of resources or capacity. If this is not done soon, the African story is said to be a tale of missed opportunities (Institute of Security Studies, 2021).

**Globalisation:** A further driving force behind the North-South argument is supported by the question of whether globalisation brings about progress or decline, poverty, or wealth. Firstly, some argue that globalisation deepens poverty and inequality for structural reasons. In contrast, a liberal perspective argues that the forces of globalisation are considered the potential solution to the problem by promoting free trade and disseminating more widely the technological impacts of the information revolution (Kacowicz, 2007:578). Overall, the relations between globalisation and underdevelopment are complex and ambiguous, with negative and positive results.

**Natural Resource Trap:** The resource curse is a phenomenon that explains why countries with plenty of natural resources are experiencing poor economic growth, unstable democracy, or worsened development outcomes than countries with less resources (Collier, 2007:51). Sachs and Warner (2001) revealed that the growth of resource-poor countries was slower than resource-abundant countries. This means the resource trap is not a problem regarding the lack of infrastructure or skills to work these resources. Still, it lies within the failure of national governance to harness natural resource wealth for the well-being of its population. Many African countries were affected by the resource curse because of weak institutions, low cost of commodities and endless acts of corruption (Nwaoba, 2017:18). However, overcoming the resource curse is not

only the government's responsibility but the burden is also left for civil society and the private sector to play a role to enhance transparency, accountability, and corruption control.

While there is no agreement on an appropriate definition of state fragility, the notion may appear in different forms. It can include some economic, political, and social deficiencies and sometimes be associated with conflict. Regardless of the form of fragility, it is generally connected with underdevelopment. Although the concept of fragile, weak, and failed states is a relatively new phenomenon, its problem is not, which explains why the discourse generated such extensive academic contributions. Fragile states are generally described as unable of providing basic security, maintaining the rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2013:8). Correspondingly, countries that cannot implement and secure these basic needs are considered underdeveloped. These states are also experienced continuing violence, a history of conflict, poor leadership and governance, and the lack of capacity and resources to deliver efficient public goods to the people (Global Monitoring Report, 2007). It is also known that state fragility or weakness mostly affects the poorest and the most vulnerable people, such as women and children. They are more likely to experience the negative impacts of violence and abuse, exploitation, loss of livelihood, poverty, and malnutrition. Thus, the primary problem lies not only in the labelling of states as such but more so in the extent to which fragility impacts economic development and, in the same way, how economic growth impacts fragility. Underdevelopment consequently causes fragility, while state fragility hinders development. And therefore, internal ethnic conflict, extreme poverty and hunger, inequality, unemployment, and other threats to the African continent cannot be overcome except if such countries can escape from this destructive cycle.

Can we think fragile states will develop socially, politically, and economically and eventually follow in the paths of the now-developed world? Although some countries, such as Botswana and Costa Rica, have managed to cope with state fragility by forming stable political and economic development measures, these countries are the exception and not the rule. Many fragile African states are rather seen as a situation of *blocked development*. Block development does not mean a country is in a complete stagnation situation but rather a case of "one step forward, two steps back", or the more optimistic "two steps forward, one step back" scenarios (Brock *et al.*, 2012:43). In that event, several reasons are provided for Africa's slow development, ranging from poor infrastructure, a lack of government capacity, the effects of foreign aid, colonial legacies, low productivity, the Cold War, climate change, and geography. In contrast, African leaders tend to shift the blame to the rest of the world for African poverty, suggesting that the answers to underdevelopment are out of their hands.

### 3.3 A DIFFERENT KIND OF STATE?

Even though the failed states debate only gained momentum after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, African states were found to experience state failure or fragile statehood since the early 1990s, which generally speaks to the inability of states to fulfil their essential functions. Consequently, an extensive body of scholarly contributions has tried to shed light on the features of fragile statehood and how governments and the international community should react to it. Thus, strengthening the capacity of the African continent to provide public goods to citizens was important not only for Africa but also for Western security interests (Egmont Institute, 2009:65). Until now, the fragile/weak/failed state concept is continuously being revised and takes up many different indicators and forms, causing further ambiguity. The definitions provided remain vague and broad as it remains extremely difficult to identify the criteria of fragility.

However, all definitions of state failure have interlinked economic, social, security, and political dimensions. It is also clear that states are labelled as 'fragile' for different reasons: some are in a post-conflict situation while others are in deep political, social, and economic crises (Egmont Institute, 2009:66). For this reason, it appears reasonable to mention that there is not one distinctive fragile state, which makes the classification even more complex and relevant to study. Considered a deviation from the ideal-type state, fragile states are characterised by serious government, economy, and nationhood deficiencies. According to Brock *et al.* (2012:159), the following elements in the state become weak because of self-seeking elites combined with a history of external domination.

- i. **Government:** In fragile states, the institutional and administrative structures are corrupt and insufficient. There are also no effective mechanisms that hold leaders accountable to their people and actions. The state cannot plan and perform state-defined policies and lacks legitimacy in being lawful and just (Brock *et al.*, 2012:16). Self-seeking elites have *captured* the state to their benefit and are less concerned with state-building.
- ii. **Economy:** Fragile states lack tangible national economies that can sustain a basic level of welfare for the population. The economy in such states is also vastly heterogeneous. Many of its population is outside the formal economic sector, living in informal settlements with very low living standards (Brock *et al.*, 2012:16-17).
- iii. **Nationhood:** Two core facets make up a nation, namely citizenship and sentiment. Citizenship refers to the relationship between the state and its citizens. In a well-functioning society, citizens pay taxes (and fulfil other obligations). In return, the state provides citizens with political, legal, and socio-economic rights (Brock *et al.*, 2012:17). The second feature concerns how citizens consider themselves part of a community, a sense of belonging,

characterised by a common language, religion or culture, or historical identities. However, fragile states are defined by conditions where neither citizenship nor sentiment has developed (Brock *et al.*, 2012:18).

This section aimed to describe and better understand state fragility in Africa. Most fragile states exist today because colonialism was no longer accepted, and these states survived primarily because the international sphere was willing to accept their sovereignty claims. External relations and colonialism have indeed heightened the situation of African states, but they are not the main causes of their poor development. Fragile states are not on the path toward the Weberian model of statehood, so the question arises, "What is to be done?" Despite the power of the debate on the causes and solutions to Africa's poverty problem, there is no universal set of solutions proposed. The reason being is that different features cause poverty in other countries. There is a lot to be said about holding African leaders accountable, promoting good governance, and tackling corruption, but rather, little emphasis is placed on citizen and civil society accountability. Citizen engagement is important in building a society based on values that improve and encourage growth and development. When this level of cooperation is achieved nationally, the African narrative of underdevelopment can be changed into a narrative of potential for global influence. It is not the purpose of this study to propose a solution to the problems that plague the continent; this study aims to go beyond the issue of colonialism and the solutions of corruption and analyse what role civil society can play to encourage development and strengthen democracy. This will be further discussed in chapter five. To conclude, even though fragile states, which represent a form of dysfunction, share common deficiencies and features of fragility, the causes must be investigated individually.

The following section will provide a theoretical foundation that will serve as a tool for analysing state dysfunction in South Africa.

### **3.4 STATE DYSFUNCTION IN THEORY**

Before discussing the various contributions of state dysfunction, it is pertinent to explain the basic assumptions of this study. Firstly, as proposed in chapter one, a dysfunctional state is based on the conception of deviation from the ideal-type Weberian state. Any form of state failure is thus a state that has failed to function according to its accepted norms, it is a state that cannot achieve its goals or is unable to deliver political goods to its citizens. Secondly, the term *dysfunction* is not a new gradient of state failure but rather that there is a degree of dysfunction in all gradients of state failure. Although most scholars agree with these statements, the nature and measurements of this dysfunction are largely debated. The reason for this approach is that due to the curiosity

and relevancy of the topic, which caused research to be conducted in a rushed fashion, scholars have not yet successfully contributed to the discourse due to the multiple and different applications of the state failure concept. Thus, instead of contributing to the failed state debate, they have contributed to the complication of a relevant issue.

This study was inspired by the works of William Zartman (1995), Robert Rotberg (2004), Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, and Joel Migdal to determine the features demonstrating state dysfunction in South Africa. Having provided an extensive discussion on state weakness and the ideal-type state, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to conceptualising state dysfunction. The table below will demonstrate the fashion of debate and analysis.

**TABLE 3: THE THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR ANALYSING STATE DYSFUNCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

CONTRIBUTIONS	William Zartman	Robert Rotberg	Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson	Joel S. Migdal
<b>The core statement of state dysfunction</b>	The basic functions of the state are not performed	Failure to provide political goods to citizens	Demonstrate extractive institutions	Demonstrate fragmented social control

(Source: Own construct)

**3.4.1 The Contribution of William Zartman**

The first main academic contribution to the idea of state failure emerged in 1995 when William Zartman assembled a collection of literature entitled *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. Zartman's contribution provides a useful point of departure for understanding state dysfunction.

William Zartman developed his theory along with the Hobbesian social contract theory. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, he argued that state failure occurs when the basic functions of the state are not performed. More specifically, state failure refers to a condition where the structure, authority, law, and political order have fallen apart (Zartman, 1995:1). However, this does not mean anarchy. When this happens, political order and power fall to local groups or are

"up for grabs". Thus, state collapse is a political cause and effect with significant social and economic consequences. Therefore, it seems that state 'collapse' as a label is connected with a position of terminal dysfunction. According to the Weberian tradition, a state is an authoritative political institution sovereign over its territory (Weber, 1946). The reader can therefore notice that these features are intertwined and mutually enforced. It is not likely for one attribute to exist without the presence of the others (Greffrath, 2012:90). Therefore, when one feature weakens, it negatively affects the other functions.

As cited in Zartman (1995:8), Yoffee and Cowgill (1988) defined state collapse as the extreme case of governance problems or severe burdens on governing capacity. In more detail, this explains that a government, after being in power for many years, will eventually lose its capability to meet the demands of the people. Zartman identified the following features to be central to state collapse:

- *Territory* — The state can no longer protect its borders and land; violence increases.
- *Government* — The state is inoperative and stagnant; order is not maintained, increased corruption.
- *Human community* — Societal cohesion deteriorates; loss of national identity; the state is incapable of providing citizens with basic political goods.
- *Sovereignty* — Loss of state power and control over its land people; the land is "up for grabs".
- *Legitimacy* — The state does not function according to its traditional, charismatic, or institutional legitimacy; it has lost its right and power to rule.
- *A monopoly of force* — Loss of power to command and conduct public affairs; force can no longer be commanded to uphold order (Zartman. 1995:5-6).

Even though Zartman's conceptualisation qualifies to be a good starting point for understanding state dysfunction, he does not effectively explain the causes of state failure. Perhaps, this was his intention to leave the task to the authors of the different chapters, allowing each author to argue for the causes and indicators of the concept. Zartman states, "State collapse is a deeper phenomenon than mere rebellion, coup, or riot. It refers to a situation where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart and must be reconstituted in some form, old or new. For a period, the state, as a legitimate, functioning order, is gone" (Zartman, 1995:1). His contribution is so valuable that other authors extensively adopted and modified his state collapse definition. One such author is Robert Rotberg, whose arguments will be discussed below.

### **3.4.2 The contribution of Robert Rotberg**

Earlier in this chapter, a discussion of some of Rotberg's core arguments regarding state failure was presented. Thus, this section summarises his central thoughts, followed by a more detailed discussion of what Rotberg refers to as *political goods* in his well-known argument that states fail when they fail to deliver basic political goods to their citizens (Rotberg, 2004:1). Rotberg's argument is important for this study as it presents modern causes of state collapse and failure. He goes beyond external causes of state failure and rather focuses on internal causes arguing that "nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy, and the very nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes illegitimate in the eyes and the hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens" (Rotberg, 2004:1-2). Rotberg mentions that state failure is artificial and does not happen accidentally. The institutional instabilities and structural defects may indeed contribute to failure. However, it must be remembered that those deficiencies fall back on the decisions or actions made by man (Rotberg, 2004:22). Rotberg essentially views the state as a service provider more than a protector and distinguishes between various services, referred to as political goods, that states should provide.

#### **i) Understanding Political Goods**

Nation-states have the primary function of providing a decentralised approach to delivering political goods to their citizens. States can be distinguished from strong to weak depending on their effectiveness in providing these political goods. Rotberg (2004) identified these political goods as security, institutions, participation, and service delivery.

The security dimension is the first and most important form of political goods. Traditionally, the security dimension has been understood in the form of security against foreign attacks. This was certainly the state's main function; to avert cross-border invasions and any loss of territory, reduce domestic threats and avoid crime and dangers that could affect domestic human security (Rotberg, 2002:4). This approach recognises states as the only entity that can foster security and discards other approaches. However, this school of thought has been condemned by many based on the realistic view of security and that it no longer fits into modern transitions and challenges. As a result, the human security approach emerged as a challenge to the state-centric attitude, shifting the focus from states to people (Kerr, 2010:124). Thus, human security symbolises protection from disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, overpopulation, migration, and environmental hazards. (UNDP, 1994:22). This new security plan demonstrates a shift from disputes between states to conflicts within states. It is argued that achieving the other tasks of state-building and development would be impossible without security,

especially human security (Call, 2008:14). The delivery of political goods becomes possible only when the state has provided its citizens with a realistic degree of security. This study will employ both the state security and human security approach for its analysis.

The second political good includes institutions responsible for upholding the rule of law, security of property and inviolable contracts, a judicial system, and values that legitimise fairness and equality (Rotberg, 2004:3). Accountability, transparency, and integrity are critical features of democratic institutions and processes (Rondinelli & Shabbir Cheeman, 2003:9). These principles, among others, speak to the notion of good governance, a prerequisite for a well-functioning democracy. Good governance is understood as the ability of the state to effectively deliver positive results for communities (Buthelezi, 2009). Thus, it can be argued that ineffective government results from poor governance. Strong and stable institutions are the most effective way to minimise the abuse of power and public office (Prinsloo, 2013). However, it must be emphasised that institutions alone do not provide complete assurance for good governance. People can still abuse power and misuse the public's trust, regardless of whether institutions function soundly.

The third political good includes the right of citizens to participate freely in social and political processes. These political goods cover the crucial human freedoms: the right to stand for office, and the right to vote; respect and support for national and regional political institutions; tolerance of dissent and difference; and fundamental civil and human rights (Rotberg, 2004:3). Furthermore, public participation is a critical aspect of democracy and important to strengthening democracies (Scott, 2009). Public participation creates a direct communication channel between elected officials and citizens in a bureaucracy (Creighton, 2005:17). It is important to mention that public participation involves more than following procedures. Still, it is expected that government authorities openly listen to citizens' input and be willing to the possibility of being influenced by their contributions. The primary principles to ensure effective and legitimate participation include proactivity, inclusiveness, shared responsibility, openness, transparency, and respect for public input (Scott, 2009:35). Public participation in political processes can encourage good governance and strengthen democracy as it could serve as a control mechanism to limit the abuse of power; lead to better policy outcomes; enhances legitimacy and transparency; promotes democratic stability; and, most importantly, empower communities by engaging with the government on issues that affect their lives (De Villiers, 2001; Clapper, 1996:76; Masango, 2002:59).

The fourth political good contains a comprehensive list of services the state should supply its people. These include health care services; schools and universities/colleges, distribution of basic resources such as water, electricity, sanitation infrastructure, and housing; sufficient and safe infrastructure such as roads, railways, communication infrastructures; and the promotion of civil society (Rotberg, 2004:3-4). Globally, local government is regarded as the sphere of government

accountable for service delivery. However, it is also known that several persisting service delivery challenges and backlogs exist in developing states. For example, service delivery in South Africa is known to be defined by financial misdeeds, corruption, and misadministration (Koma & Modumo, 2016). Forceful and violent service delivery protests are triggered by the high levels of wastefulness and incompetency of local government (Kroukamp & Cloete, 2018). As such, high levels of corruption in South Africa have been described as frequent in all three spheres of government. Even though there have been remarkable improvements in some areas, corruption remains constant obstacle to development and thus demand more effort to improve the quality of people's lives.

This hierarchy of political goods creates measurements to which modern states may be assessed as strong or dysfunctional. It is thus a practical starting point for identifying state dysfunction. Strong states perform exceptionally well in providing these political goods to their people. In contrast, weak states tend to show mixed results, achieving expectations in some parts and performing poorly in other categories. As soon as the weak begin to function poorly, those states become weaker, and eventually, the more that weakness will edge towards failure (Rotberg, 2004:4). The level of state strength has been regarded as an important feature to safeguard democratic consolidation, adequate provision of political goods, and economic growth. Strong states offer high levels of security; political freedom and civil liberties; create environments conducive to development and growth; the rule of law conquers; infrastructures are well maintained; Hospitals and clinics serve patients effectively; and schools and universities flourish (Rotberg, 2004:4). However, the hierarchy does not determine the exact tipping points where state weakness will either result in failure or collapse or whether there is hope for a recovery and consolidation. Poor government performance in one area does not imply that the state is heading for failure, nor does it mean a state is strong because it can protect its borders. As such, this again proves that there can be no single indicator that a state is becoming weak or failed. Rather, it is essential to create clear identifiable features that differentiate strong states from weak states, as it will lead to an understanding of why states slide towards failure, and at the same time guide policymakers to design policies that will prevent failure.

### **3.4.3 The Contribution of D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson**

James A. Robinson and Daron Acemoglu's *Why nations fail* is a comprehensive book discussing the large gap in incomes and the standard of living of those people who live in wealthy and developing countries. They explain that those living in rich/wealthy/developed countries share characteristics of an educated population, healthy citizens, high life expectancy, quality government services and infrastructure, and effective and legitimate law and order. At the same

time, those living in poor/developing/underdeveloped countries share characteristics of low levels of life expectancy, a larger uneducated population, limited access to public services, poor health conditions, high levels of crime and corruption, inadequate infrastructure and an ineffective law and order system (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2013:7-8). The book aims to understand the causes of the significant inequalities and differences between countries. Robinson and Acemoglu (2013:42-43) argue that this inequality exists due to the very different institutions countries adopt because institutions shape the behaviour and incentives of businesses, governments, and individuals that can determine the success or failure of nations. The distinction between wealthy and developing countries can be understood in extractive and inclusive institutions.

**Inclusive institutions:** Inclusive economic institutions are built upon foundations arranged by inclusive political institutions to encourage participation, property rights, unbiased law systems, infrastructure, and effective services delivery aimed at improving the lives of citizens (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2013:73). In such societies, the political sphere makes it difficult for other actors or organisations to gain power that will threaten the foundations of inclusive institutions. As a result, inclusive economic institutions generate a fair distribution of wealth and resources that facilitates the continuity of inclusive institutions.

**Extractive institutions:** In extractive economic institutions, the state is used to extract wealth from one subset of the population (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2013:74). Such states also have a special relationship between economic and political institutions. In extractive institutions, power is generally focused to serve a small elite which causes financial institutions to be organised to extract resources from their society. Thus, extractive political institutions combine with extractive economic institutions (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2013:76). The political sphere thus relies on the extractive economic institutions to ensure their survival. Therefore, extractive economic institutions enrich elites and assist in strengthening their political dominance.

Robinson and Acemoglu (2013:16) argued that without a centralised state to provide order and enforce laws, inclusive institutions could not emerge. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Max Weber defined the state by identifying it with the use of a monopoly of legitimate violence. Thus, without such state centralisation the state cannot act as a provider and an enforcer of law and order, provide public services, and encourage and regulate economic activity (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2013:76). When the state fails to achieve this centralisation, society will fall into chaos. Thus, for a country to develop effectively, it needs to have inclusive economic institutions to inspire sustained and inclusive economic growth. However, they also emphasised that change could occur under the circumstances of extractive institutions, which are unlikely to be maintained (Robinson & Acemoglu, 2013:83). This is because inclusive institutions will not support nor be supported by extractive institutions.

### **3.4.4 The Contribution of Joel S. Migdal**

Joel S Migdal's *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (1988) is a significant early contribution to the failed state discourse. Migdal's contribution is praised for its theoretical depth in explaining the context of weak states in the third world concerning social dynamics. He examines the factors that have prevented developing states from growing to become the first world's leading, strong, and functional institutions. Migdal's work emphasises the nature of state-society relations and how this relationship impact their ability to achieve their goals (Greffrath, 2012:107). Migdal performs this by analysing the internal social arrangements in societies.

Migdal defines the state the same way the Weberian tradition does: an institution enforcing regulations through a monopoly of violence (Migdal, 1988: xii). However, he also acknowledges that states differ in approaching the ideal type. For this reason, to understand the dynamics of state dysfunction, Migdal warns not to use the Weberian tradition in isolation but rather to integrate the concept of society and the state in which it functions. He does not view society as a monolithic entity, but as "a mélange of social organisations" (Migdal, 1988:14), made up of groups, families, states, companies, or clans. Therefore, the state is only one organisation among this group of communities. To this end, Migdal introduced his state-in-society approach to provide a new understanding of politics in a weak state scenario. The fundamental arguments of Migdal's book are that i) the state cannot be isolated from societies, and ii) a state can only become strong where there is a great concentration of social control. Social control depends on regulating resources and services, and it also entails effectively using symbols to give meaning to social relationships (Migdal, 1988:80).

The relationship between state and society should not be defined by domination, meaning one is not more important than the other. Although this might be the case in totalitarian regimes, both entities influence each other, even in the context of state weakness (Lambach, 2004:6). However, the state's struggle for ultimate social control is often characterised by conflict between the state leaders and other social organisations. This power struggle and how social control is exercised is a primary determining factor of whether states would become strong or weak (Lambach, 2004:5). As Migdal (1988:22-23) put it: social control is power or, more precisely, infrastructural power that can improve the state's capacities and dominance. Strong states have high levels of capabilities to complete and deliver its functions, while weak states show low capabilities and struggle to perform its basic functions (Migdal, 1988:40-45).

Migdal describes developing states as complex and fragmented whereby several social and political actors compete for dominance and loyalty. There are primarily two reasons for the

fragmentation of social control. Firstly, groups exercising social control in society may be heterogeneous in their internal arrangements and in the rules they maintain. Secondly, the distribution of social control distribution is spread among several independent groups rather than concentrated in the hands of the state (Migdal, 1988:28). This scenario presents challenges as the state is thought to be the ultimate wielder of social control. Now, the state must share this critical function with other groups and actors in society. Where social control is fragmented, we can see the influence of society on the state. Thus, recognising the aspects that contributed to a fragmented social order in society will provide new comprehension into the nature of a dysfunctional state. For Migdal (1988), there are three important indicators that reflect levels of social control:

**Compliance:** At the most basic level, state strength rests on gaining conformance to its demands by the population. Compliance can be achieved and preserved through force. Migdal mentions that state control over the military or police in weak states relates directly to compliance. In addition, the state's ability to control the distribution of basic services and resources also affects the degree to which the state can demand compliance from society (Migdal, 1988:32).

**Participation:** State leaders seek compliance from citizens and thus gain power by organising citizens to engage in specific tasks following the conditions dictated by the administration of government. For example, citizens must pay taxes, vote in elections, and people must be recruited to protect borders. (Migdal, 1988:32).

**Legitimation:** The most persuasive aspect responsible for social control is the acceptance and endorsement of the state's "*rules of the game*". Therefore, citizens' compliance and participation should happen voluntarily as a result of each individual's belief that it is the right thing to do. Legitimacy is thus the voluntary acceptance of survival strategies presented by the state (Migdal, 1988:32-33).

The ability (or inability) of states to achieve predominance in society is a central cause of dysfunction. Migdal argues that the absence of state capacity is a consequence of how society is structured (Migdal, 1988:33). Most developing societies are known to have decentralised groups of social units without a central structure of symbols or values. These are "web-like societies" states that host a *mélange* of autonomous social organisations (Migdal, 1988:37), consisting of local organisations with local constituencies which are headed by "strongmen", a holder of the local authority such as "chiefs, landlords, bosses, rich peasants, clan leaders, effendis, aghas, caciques, kulaks" (Migdal, 1988:33). The high level of group diversity in web-like societies makes it hard for leaders to specify their roles and establish social control and dominance.

Societies with a high fragmentation of social control among various social organisations have triggered what Migdal calls "the politics of survival". This refers to a state leader who attempts to prevent possible outward forces, using tactics such as making non-merit appointments and the frequent reshuffling of political officials, as well as other "dirty tricks" (Migdal, 1988:214-226). This is a strategy to stop the formation of other separate powers within the state by working towards a weakening of the state's institutions.

Joel S. Migdal's arguments are an important reminder that the state is nothing more than a political organisation. It also speaks to the often-overlooked thought that the state is part of society does not function outside or above society, but that these institutions exist in a mutually reinforcing relationship (Lambach, 2004:13). When analysing the possible reasons for state dysfunction, one should not limit their view by studying the state in isolation but consider society's many organisations because all states have been shaped through their collaboration with local organisations and groups.

The discussion above shows that the state dysfunction discourse is a rather complicated phenomenon and should be analysed individually. Further, no universal definition or set of characteristics can be used to analyse state dysfunction. States do not fail in the same way; therefore, the literature needs to be consulted and applied to each case. Chapter five will utilise the above literature to analyse the features demonstrating dysfunction in South Africa.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The conceptualisation voiced above represents the fulfilment of a primary research purpose of this study, namely, to reach an understanding of the features that demonstrate state dysfunction. This study commenced with a brief historical development of the state weakness discourse followed by an in-depth discussion of the problematic nature of the discourse. After analysing the features of the ideal-type, "strong state" in chapter two, chapter three provided a foundation upon which state weakness was analysed. By understanding the features that make states strong, we can also understand the elements that make states weak. We have learned that a strong state functions optimally according to the features of the Weberian state, while a weak state finds it challenging to live up to this ideal. Furthermore, the failed states discourse mainly served as an approach to promote peace and encourage development. It has also assisted in identifying and emphasising the real problems of the developing world.

Yet, the failed states discourse is often described to be flawed. Firstly, the concept is loosely defined, which has resulted in an overload of attempts to measure state weakness. The existence of several categories of state fragility suggests that the failed states discourse is not yet fully

understood, resulting in the vagueness and unreliability of the concept. Furthermore, the failed states discourse takes root from the Western perspective, which questions its feasibility for the African context. This means that the sustainability or fragility of African states is being measured according to Western prescriptions. In addition, the key problem with the interpretations from scholars is that they fail to accept that the functions and the state have changed dramatically in the context of globalisation, the international economy, and security. As such, the ideal-type Weberian state is questioned against these changes.

Research has shown that Africa remains characterised by having the largest portion of fragile states, arguably making it a fragile continent. State weakness in Africa is thus understood as a cause and symptom of underdevelopment. Countless reasons have been provided to explain the continent's poor development, ranging from poor infrastructure to low productivity. Yet, despite Africa's weakness, the continent has not been denied participation in the global arena. The explanations mentioned fail to explain underdevelopment in Africa. Colonialism or population growth is not a valid explanation for diverting public assets into private pockets for personal gain. It is also not a reason enough for the violence against women and children. The preferred reasons for Africa's underdevelopment do not explain the violent internal conflicts because of religious or cultural differences, and they surely cannot be blamed for poor service delivery. As such, state weakness in Africa should be studied and understood against the backdrop of its history, culture, and socio-economic landscapes.

As such, this dissertation employed three significant contributions in the field to study state dysfunction in South Africa. Firstly, William Zartman argues that states become dysfunctional when the basic functions are no longer performed. According to the Weberian conceptualisation of the state, the basic functions are to protect its territory, ensure a stable and functioning government, remain legitimate, efficiently provide citizens with political goods, and exercise force when needed. Closely related to Zartman's argument, Robert Rotberg focuses on the state's role as a basic service provider and argued that states become dysfunctional when they can no longer deliver political goods to their people. These political goods are placed in a hierarchy according to importance, ranging from human security, institutions, participation, and service delivery. Secondly, Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson argue in their book *Why Nations Fail* that states become dysfunctional when they inhibit extractive economic institutions. They believe that poor countries remain poor because political elites have made their subjects destitute in service of enriching themselves. This creates no incentive to innovate and invest because the state will confiscate the benefits of any such initiative. As such, citizens lose motivation to participate in different innovative means that could encourage development. In order to establish inclusive institutions that foster development, inclusion and stability, the conditions must be created for a

centralised government, encourage public participation in politics and economics, and ensure an independent and free media. Thirdly, Joel Migdal argues that states become dysfunctional due to fragmented social control. He believes that in countries that demonstrate conflicting rural and urban politics, the government often compete for legitimacy with entrenched social arrangements. As such, the state is the only actor aiming to exercise control over society. When influence and power are dispersed among several actors, this results in fragmentation that causes the state to lose its legitimacy. Therefore, the state should exercise social control through compliance, participation, and legitimation.

These theoretical foundations will be utilised in chapter five to analyse the features that demonstrate dysfunction in South Africa.

# CHAPTER FOUR: THE NATURE AND ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN A DEMOCRATIC DISPENSATION

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a theoretical understanding of civil society's nature and role in a democratic dispensation. To fully understand the concept and functioning of a democracy, a theoretical explanation will assist in discussing the critical elements related to the idea. In doing so, the point of departure of chapter four is to provide definitions and central arguments for democracy and the process of democratisation. This chapter is therefore made up of a discussion on the elements of a democratic state, the types of democracies that exist, measuring the quality of democracy, and the role and influence of international organisations on democratic promotion. The second part of this chapter will discuss the role of civil society and its importance in promoting democratic values and principles for democratic consolidation. This chapter serves as the theoretical foundation for the analysis of civil society's role to strengthen democracy in the context of state dysfunction (chapter 5).

## 4.2 DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRATISATION AND CONSOLIDATION

### *j) Democracy*

Democracy is considered a significant achievement of modern times and has become the primary objective for nations. Today, most people live in a democratic form of government. Even though the concept is generally known to most people, it is also a concept that is misunderstood and often misused. While it is generally accepted that the democratic concept existed as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, scholars remain fascinated by its development, functioning, and consequences.

The concept of democracy derives from the Greek word '*demos*', meaning the people, and '*kratos*', meaning power (Bekker, 1996:12). Directly translated, the term democracy means "the rule of the people" or "the will of the people," even though the Greeks formally used it to refer to the poor or the masses (Bekker, 1996:13). The political system formed by the Athenians was organised so that democratic rights were only awarded to men and the elites in society. Enslaved people were excluded from exercising political rights or participation (Nwogu, 2015: 131). However, over time this form of government developed to such an extent that it now encourages the inclusion of all people and ensures the protection of human rights and individual freedom, including the right to vote, freedom of political association and participation, and freedom of

expression (Maseng, 2010:11). In essence, we can understand the primary role of a democracy is to serve the people's interests regardless of their race, culture, or social position.

Firstly, it is essential to mention Robert Dahl's perception of democracy since he is at the forefront of the discourse. His work covers most of the vital features of a democratic system. For Dahl (2000), democratic rule is the most desirable form of government. It provides significant opportunities for citizen participation and free and fair elections, which cannot be found in non-democratic forms of rule. Thus, democracy functions as a guarantee for citizens to access human rights. It helps to protect their rights and personal interests, moral autonomy, human development, and freedom of political association (Dahl, 2000:44-48). Furthermore, Samuel Huntington's perception of democracy is based on the same grounds as Robert Dahl's classic definition that emphasises the notions of contestation and participation.

According to Boman (2006:23), democracy is a system of law-making decided by the people governed by those laws. It is a process where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in government decision-making (Cloete, 1993:4). A democratic state involves much more than a government and a system of institutions. According to Bratton *et al.* (1997:337), a democracy can only function well and better respond to the interests of its citizens when all persons can freely participate in government-related processes. This driving force encourages positive change for a more democratic and just world. Democracies have several elements by which they can be distinguished from non-democratic systems.

Democracy consists of more than government institutions and a well-defined collection of values, attitudes and practices that takes different forms and demonstrates different cultures in societies worldwide. Larry Diamond is another influential scholar of democracy. He argues that democracy is necessary to safeguard the freedom of the people in three meaningful ways: 1) democracy allows free and fair elections that encourage freedom of expression, assembly, and organisation 2) the right to self-determination through choosing a government. 3) democracy facilitates choice (De Jager, 2015:6). He further described democracy as a system of government comprising of four fundamentals:

- i) A system that allows for the appointment and re-appointment of government through free and fair elections.
- ii) The participation of citizens in politics and the social sphere.
- iii) The protection of human rights.
- iv) It upholds the rule of law that applies equally to all citizens (Diamond, 2004).

For Diamond (2004), democracy is about citizens' freedom and political rights to choose their government and hold their leaders accountable. Thus, government forms on the consent of those

who are governed. Popper explained in Jarvie (2006) that democracy contrasts with a dictatorship. Those living in a democracy can control/choose their leaders without resulting in a revolution. In addition, democracy and freedom are often used interchangeably. However, the two concepts are not synonymous and should not be used that way. Democracy is understood as a set of principles about freedom and individual liberty. Still, it is also built on ideas, practices, and procedures formed and developed throughout history (De Jager, 2015:5). Democracy is, therefore, the institutionalisation of freedom, and it is up to everyone to protect their freedom.

Today, democracy is at the forefront of foreign policy in most countries as it is considered an international norm and the ideal system of governance. Democratic principles promote freedom, equality, and peace among nations. In the international arena, democracy encourages cooperative relationships between countries with shared values and morals (Mengesha, 2013:18). In extreme cases, democracy is a human right, a measure of legitimacy, and a condition essential for a government to remain sovereign over its land and people (Mengesha, 2013:19). The debate becomes even more critical when considering post-9/11 events and how democratisation plays a vital role in securing the international sphere. The biggest challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to prevent wars and conflicts, contest terrorism, and defend human rights, all of which the promotion of democracy is essential (Axelrod, 2005). For this purpose, democracy has become the primary goal central to human development.

Furthermore, several international organisations (IOs) exist to promote and encourage democratic governance as their projects, policies, and activities on democratic principles resolve conflicts and provide humanitarian assistance (Mengesha, 2013:20). International organisations, including the United Nations, visibly stipulate the importance of democracy in their documents, such as the UN Charter on Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UN ensures that democracy becomes a criterion for any state to gain its place in the international system. Other international organisations follow the same path, including the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The concept of 'democracy from the outside' is not new, and IOs assist democratisation. Although the IOs' mission to encourage and assist in the democratisation process can seem contradictory because of the anarchic character of the international sphere. Since the essence of democracy is grounded on the rule and will of the people, external actors' involvement in democratisation is undemocratic (Sørensen, 2008). Democratisation is essentially the result of domestic political processes not influenced by external factors such as IOs. At the same time, Georg Sørensen (2008:81) argues that outside organisations could help encourage democracy if they can establish free and fair elections and empower people in society by providing education, information, and other political and civic participation. Thus, it is empowerment while also respecting the sovereignty of the people.

## **ii) Democratisation**

A central concept of democracy is democratisation, which should not be confused with the former. Democratisation is a process that expands the political space so that other civil and private actors can interact, negotiate, compete, and seek realisation within the set and permissible rules (Adejumobi, 2002:3). This process aims to create democratic institutions and full democratic citizenship fixed in a democratic political culture (De Jager, 2015:9). Democratisation is, therefore, a transitional process and not an immediate occurrence. Democratisation indicates a shift from authoritarian rule toward democratic governance that involves establishing structures, institutions, and authority to address all citizens' essential needs and rights. Democratisation also provides resources and opportunities for society to work with the government to ensure that individual and shared interests are successfully represented and addressed (Maseng, 2010:11).

Democratisation is not a sudden shift or a fixed circumstance from authoritarian rule, nor does it occur in only one regime at a time. For example, the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century saw several countries, like Belgium, Hungary, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Switzerland, all experienced revolutionary calls for democratic rule. However, most of them were swiftly overturned (Tilly, 2007:40). John Markoff (1996) explained in Tilly (2007:40) that during a democratic wave the organisation of government is changed, either peacefully or violently. During these democratic waves, social movements often demand more democracy, the virtues and values of democracy are discussed, and those in authority announce their democratic intentions. On the contrary, during anti-democratic (reverse) waves, governments are changed in ways that display undemocratic principles, social movements declare their intention to move away from democratic principles, and political elites arrogantly express their resentment toward democracy (Tilly, 2007:40).

These waves describe the significant bursts of democratic rule that happened throughout history. However, the transition to democracy does not occur as a linear process. History has taught us that the waves of democratisation were followed by reverse waves in which several democratic countries returned to non-democratic forms of rule. Today there exist many debates regarding the exact number of democratic waves. Samuel Huntington (1991) argued that there have been three distinct waves and reverse waves of democratisation.

- The first wave of democratisation is known as the 'slow' wave of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1920s. Many democracies reverted to autocracies (Gates *et al.*, 2003:1).
- The second wave of democratisation took place after World War II. This wave was shorter in duration than the first wave; by 1950, a second reverse wave began (Gates *et al.*, 2003:6).
- The third wave of democratisation occurred in the mid-1970s and experienced a vast increase after the Cold War in Southern Europe, Latin America Asia, and a late-third wave in Africa.

However, the 1990s indicated a reverse wave into autocracy by new democracies located primarily in Africa and the former Soviet Union (Gates *et al.*, 2003:17).

Interestingly, the collapse of numerous dictatorships in the Middle East and North Africa gave rise to the *Arab Spring* that inspired the prospects of the fourth wave of democratisation. This uprising was primarily a result of corruption, social injustice, unemployment, and autocratic political systems, which gained momentum through social media by mobilising collective action (Diamond, 2011). Yet, this possible fourth wave also experienced a reverse surge shortly after the transition when most Arab political positions retracted, causing an unavoidable reverse (Diamond, 2011). As such, scholars still challenge the thought of a fourth wave empirically.

### ***iii) Consolidation***

Democratic consolidation is the final phase in the process of democratisation. At first, consolidation was used interchangeably with stabilisation or sustainability. However, this understanding quickly changed when young democracies in Latin America persisted during a period of strong backlashes even with limited experience of the function of democracies (Faulenbach, 2007:6). Further, there is a general misunderstanding that the transitioning phase from non-democratic to democratic halts at some point – suggesting that the new system is consolidated, and legitimation is fully achieved. However, this is far from reality. Firstly, history has taught us that not all transitions lead to successful consolidation. Secondly, this does not mean that once a system is consolidated, it cannot undergo de-consolidation or that legitimation is forever guaranteed (Van Beek, 2006:54).

Masipa (2018:2) explains that O'Donnell (2013) views democracies as consolidated once power is divided between opponents, while Schmitter and Karl (1991) describe democratic consolidation within social associations, stating that social values turn out to be a frequent event and automate the inner functions of the society. Furthermore, one can differentiate between a 'consolidating' and a 'consolidated' democracy. Schedler (1998) argues that consolidating democracy includes removing the dangers to democracy, while a consolidated democracy aims to attain a higher standard of democratic principles, better known as the deepening of democracy (Masipa, 2018:2-3). In addition, Huntington extends his definition by including democratic culture. He argues that consolidation is not an instant occurrence but rather a process that takes a long time as people need to accept the new democratic institutions and internalise the norms (Huntington, 1991). Principally, citizens must *learn and know* democracy and its functioning. This statement is supported by Merkel (1996), who argues that civic culture forms the basis of consolidation as the norms and values need to be internalised. Some scholars even classify political tolerance and trust in institutions as critical to democratic consolidation (Van der Meer, 2017). This is because

a lack or decline of trust in government can result in "the crisis of democracy," which will directly influence the quality and ability of democracy, its institutions, and its actors (Van der Meer, 2017). Consolidation can be summarised as the strengthening and deepening of democracy in a country that is moving away from authoritarianism to a more free and open society. How is consolidation achieved?

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan's contribution, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (1996), were ground-breaking for our understanding of the consolidation of democracies. The authors defined democratic consolidation as the institutionalisation and internalisation of democratic norms, values, and practices (Linz & Stepan, 1996:7). Accordingly, certain conditions must exist within five arenas/sub-societies. These sub-societies/sectors also became known as the five criteria for consolidation. They include:

- The conditions to establish a free and active **civil society** must be present.
- The **political society** must be relatively autonomous and valued.
- The **rule of law** must exist to protect citizens' freedoms and exercise their right to association.
- A state **bureaucracy** must be present to protect the rights of citizens and deliver political goods and services to the population.
- An institutionalised **economic society** must produce policies that generate government-mandated public goods in education, healthcare, transportation, etc. There must also be economic safety nets (social grants) to alleviate poverty and inequality (Linz & Stepan, 1996:7-8).

This study will utilise three of Linz and Stepan's conditions of consolidation to assess whether South Africa is on a path of consolidation or decay. Even though this study acknowledges the five mentioned sub-societies/sectors, given the scope of this dissertation, there will only be a focus on the three primary and interrelated sectors: political, economic, and social. In the context of state dysfunction these sectors should not be studied in isolation because changes in one sector will naturally influence the other sectors. This could negatively (or positively) affect democratic consolidation. Thus, the political, economic, and social sectors are viewed as driving forces for democratic consolidation or state dysfunction. Though, it must be understood that not all democracies in transition successfully lead to consolidation. But this does not mean that unconsolidated democracies won't survive or thrive. We have seen several democracies surviving with relative stability for many years. This also means that unconsolidated democracies tend to be more vulnerable and are more likely to revert to autocratic rule if continuous efforts to uphold democratic processes and practices are not made (Gates *et al.*, 2003:12). This again is a reminder that the path to consolidation is not a *one-way street*, but a continuous effort to "become

*the only game in town*” (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Democratic consolidation can thus only happen when the majority of people in a country reject authoritarianism and accept and practice democratic values and principles (Foa, & Mounk, 2017:9). In the same way, should citizens demonstrate a lack of trust and participation in democracy and the government, democracy would become illegitimate and may be on a path of deconsolidation when democracy “ceases to be the only game in town” (Foa & Mounk, 2017:9). Deconsolidation is more concerned with the durability of democracy than assessing its quality, and thus focused on democratic regimes in regression rather than already collapsed regimes. According to (Fredricks, 2019:20), deconsolidation is likely to occur in the presence of civic fatigue with democratic regimes and poor governance. This is because poor governance undermines democratic values and principles, which causes citizens to withdraw from political and social processes as citizens perceive the quality of democracy and governance to be poor. Thus, the basic elements of a democratic state must be protected to ensure the legitimacy of the regime.

### **4.3 THE ELEMENTS OF A DEMOCRATIC STATE**

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world observed a significant political change as many undemocratic political systems collapsed. The pre-modern forms of rule before democracy — oligarchies, aristocracies – had lost their validity in the eyes of humankind. However, this does not mean that democracy has won global support from the people. On the contrary, anti-democratic beliefs and movements are still found in extreme forms of nationalism or religious fundamentalism. In 2021, 74 out of 167 countries were considered democratic, of which 21 countries were viewed as full democracies, and 53 identified as flawed democracies (EIU, 2021:4). In the same year, 59 countries were identified as authoritarian, and 34 were seen as hybrid (EIU, 2021:4). According to the European Intelligence Unit, 54.3% of the world’s population live in a non-democratic regime. Less than half (45.7%) live in a democratic regime (EIU, 2021:4).

These results reveal the continuous negative impact the Covid-19 pandemic brought on democracy and freedoms worldwide. We have witnessed how the pandemic resulted in the unprecedented withdrawal of human freedoms through the impositions of national lockdowns, the compulsory wearing of facemasks, travel restrictions, vaccination campaigns, and proof of vaccination certificates as a ‘green pass’ to participate ‘normally’ in public life and activities. Moreover, rife corruption during the pandemic has deepened the wounds of Covid-19 on Africa’s economy (Aikins, 2022). Therefore, to recover from the aftershocks of the pandemic, it is now more important than ever for governments to prioritise democratic values and international collaboration as a post-pandemic strategy that aims to create a more secure, stable, healthy and prosperous world (Albright, 2021). At this point, we want to know: Why democracy? What makes

democracy so desirable? Is it the best form of government? The following section will specifically address the features and advantages of democracy.

Accepting that the democratic theory is a broad discourse that brings about many approaches to its study, many academics differ on the critical dimensions when assessing whether a country is democratic. The elements of democracy differentiate between democratic rule and other types of government. Even though no country's democracy developed in the same way, there is overall citizen support for the same essential democratic elements and a desire for the same benefits from their government. These include:

- Political pluralism
- Democratic participation
- Representation
- Elections
- Rule of Law
- Human rights and individual freedoms
- Good governance and accountability
- Civic society and civic action (Konard Adenauer Stiftung, 2011:14-26).

Democracies can't guarantee that citizens will be happy with the system, prosperous, healthy, educated, or just. These goals define the ideal state beyond any government's capacity, including a well-established democracy. In reality, democracies have always fallen short of their principles. Like all previous efforts to achieve a more democratic government, modern democracies also suffer from many flaws. However, despite its flaws, one should not overlook the advantages that make democracy more desirable than any other form of government. Robert Dahl (2000:39) identified several benefits of democracy:

- Democracy protects the government from autocrats.
- Democracy guarantees its citizens of many rights and freedoms.
- Democracy helps people protect their fundamental interests.
- Democracy fosters human development more thoroughly than other forms of government.
- Democracies ensure a relatively high degree of political equality.
- Modern democracies do not fight in wars with other democracies.
- Democratic countries tend to be more prosperous than non-democratic governments.

Thus, despite the ongoing quarrel concerning the efficacy and viability of democracy, this form of government is undoubtedly a vital tool to achieve more equality, reduce poverty, and increase public participation – making it the best available form of government. However, democratic

countries do not all function under one condition or in the same manner, every democratic country interprets the meaning of democracy in its way. Therefore, we see such a broad spectrum of democratic forms of government. The following section will shed light on some of the most common and essential conditions of democracies.

## 4.4 TYPES OF DEMOCRACIES

Democracies fall into two basic categories: participatory and representative democracy.

### I. Participatory democracy

Murunga and Nasongo (2007:22) argue that direct democracy is a system of popular self-government, meaning citizens decide on their fate. Here, power is placed in the hands of its citizens. In this democracy, the citizens can participate in and make public decisions without acting as a mediator of elected or appointed political officials (Konard Adenauer Stiftung, 2011:4). A participatory democracy decreases the division between government and those governed and between the state and civil society (Christian, 1996:43). This type of democracy can also influence democratic performance by creating opportunities for civil society to influence decision-making in national governance (Pogrebinschi & Samuels, 2014:314). On the contrary, some believe that participation threatens democratic stability. This belief primarily stems from the dawn of the modern representative government and democratic theory, an era that demonstrated severe pessimism about the future of democracy (Pogrebinschi & Samuels, 2014:314). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, participation was seen as dysfunctional for democracy because politics were too complex to allow for the public's participation in the process of government (Pogrebinschi & Samuels, 2014:315).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, political participation is at the core of democracy, ensuring that citizens can directly participate in the decisions that concern their lives. The most general form of participation is by voting in elections. Today, we see people around the world advocating for human rights and liberties, inclusion, and equality, and advocating for sustainability and greener cities. In this case participation thus supplements democracy. However, if participation contributes to democratic performance, states must have democratic institutions that support transparency and openness and recognise the relevance of public opinion (Keugten, 2021).

### II. Representative democracy

Green and Luehrmann (2004:55) suggest that representative democracy is where citizens elect representatives to make political decisions, make laws, manage programs, and deliver goods and services to its people. Today, representative democracy is the most common system of

government found globally. It places importance on protecting the rights of all people within society (Mushemeza, 2009:24). This type of democracy is also limited as it is fixed in the sense that popular participation in government is occasional and restricted to the act of voting every few years (Mushemeza, 2009:24). As such, the primary distinction between representative and participatory democracy lies within the separation of powers.

#### **4.5 THE 'QUALITY' OF DEMOCRACY**

As democracy expanded to most continents over the past three decades, scholars, politicians, and activists have shifted their thinking away from asking *why* these transitions happen to asking *what* these new governments are like (Geissel *et al.*, 2016:571). This new attitude centres on what makes democracy good or better than the other types of regimes. Due to democracy's global influence, it is no surprise that scholars and international institutions consistently attempt to evaluate the performance of democracy by determining its quality, stability, and future.

Diamond and Morlino (2004, xi) define the quality of democracy as follows: "we consider a quality democracy to be one that provides its citizens a high degree of freedom, political equality, and popular control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions." These features are closely connected and tend to function together; either moving toward democratic improvement and deepening or decay. But why is the quality of democracy measured? Geissel *et al.* (2004:572) explains that the quality of democracy strives for two objectives: to know if a regime is democratic and, if it is, to determine the level of its democracy. If the results conform to a high standard, democracy is assessed as high quality. And if the results are low, democratic quality is considered low (Geissel *et al.*, 2004:572). But measuring the quality of democracy is not a straightforward task. A central issue in measuring the quality of democracy starts with the question of which definition of democracy is to identify as the basis. Since democracy is highly disputed, it is relatively ignorant to agree on the 'one' concept. This leaves room for many different measurement indices and perspectives, leading to the complexity of assessing democratic quality.

Scholars, corporate entities, and practitioners have implemented several means to measure the quality of democracy, ranging from definite measures, scale measures, and perceptions of democracy. Furthermore, there are numerous international institutions aimed at promoting democracy. Freedom House's Freedom in the World Index is a classical approach which plays a vital role in democracy promotion and has measured the state of political rights and civil liberties globally since 1973 (Freedom House, 2021). Here, countries are analysed and rated as free, partly free, or not free *according to their* electoral process, political pluralism and participation, the

functioning of the government, freedom of expression and belief, associational and organisational rights, the rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights (Freedom House, 2021).

Scholars have witnessed a shift in measuring the quality of democracy. While the classical indices aim to analyse the variety of regime types on a scale from democracy to autocracy, more recent approaches consider those democracies that are viewed as consolidated. Examples include the Democracy Barometer, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and the Varieties of Democracy Project (Geissel *et al.*, 2016:571). The procedural understanding of democracy includes the descriptive indicators/features of democracy, such as elections, pluralism, the rule of law, transparency, competition, and participation and representation, that protect civil and political liberties (De Jager, 2015:6). This means that the procedural approach measures those elements that lead to the deepening of democracy. In essence, measuring the quality of democracy is an attempt to analyse the facets that "make democracy good". For these reasons, Rotberg (2004) explains that democracies exist on a continuum; depending on the quality of democracy, they either move towards strengthening and deepening democracy or head towards democratic decay or decline.

In highly fragmented societies, the state and society must continuously deepen and strengthen democracy to prevent democratic decay. Adedeji (1992) once stated that democracies could not thrive on empty stomachs. The author meant that no democracy could flourish in situations of severe poverty and inequality (Adedeji, 1992:32). Consequently, reducing the socio-economic gap is essential for assessing the quality of democracy as it highlights the critical relationship between the quality of democracy and stability. If the socio-economic gap is not reduced, it may lead to unstable democracy, creating a breeding ground for more poverty, unemployment, and inequality, threatening democratic values and principles (Dahl, 1971:82). Reducing the socio-economic gap also requires a special relationship between the state and society. This is because democracy can't deepen if the government is unresponsive to the needs and demands of the community or if society functions outside democratic processes and institutions (De Jager, 2015:22). In essence, the quality of democracy will fundamentally determine the stability of democracy and how smooth or poor a democracy functions in a country.

Despite the significant changes and improvements democratic governance brought to citizens and governments worldwide, there is a debate on whether democracy is under threat or whether democracies fail. This is especially the case in Africa. It is commonly known that the African continent is overwhelmed with poverty, inequality, unemployment, corruption, and crime. But do these conditions in Africa mean democracy is failing on the continent? This assumption so easily made is somewhat misleading. The problem with this statement is that African development was never really on the agenda until very recently, and many indicators suggest that the situation in

Africa is not developing. Still, the most significant impediment is the political conditions in Africa. However, it is necessary to first briefly explain the relationship between democracy and development and how this relationship influences the success or failure of democracy.

#### **4.6 THE NEXUS BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT**

The third wave of democratisation has contributed to tremendous changes in the political systems, resulting in the introduction of democracy in several countries in Africa. We have witnessed the fall of numerous dictatorships that have cautiously paved the way for forming rule-of-law-based governance systems. The transformations seen in Africa over the past two decades are remarkable. We observed how Africa's democracy and development discourse becomes more inclined to focus on the possibilities and opportunities growing on the continent. The African tale takes on a different role and becomes viewed as the "African opportunity" instead of the "African threat". With this perspective, citizens, governments, and organisations globally will be better positioned to face challenges and encourage positive change.

However, it would be short-sighted to overlook the challenges of Africa's new era of democracy. The so-called Afro-pessimists smear attention to the problems in Africa, supporting the argument that Africa is a "hopeless continent" puzzled with poverty, conflict, corruption, and endemic diseases (World Bank, 2021:1). From this viewpoint, Africa meets several development challenges, which reveal the weakness of many perspectives and policies. Consequently, scholars and international development organisations are continuously engaging in the discourse by providing possible reasons for and solutions to the *failure* of African countries. These reasons for failure are endless, ranging from the consequences of the colonial legacy to the lack of entrepreneurial skills. However, Claude Ake (1996) firmly believes that Africa's problems and the continent's biggest obstacle are due to its poor political conditions. He argues that directly after the countries achieved independence from colonial rule, the absolute focus of the political environment was on the internal power struggle instead of on development and reconstruction (Ake, 1996:6). As a result, these countries found it challenging to deepen and institutionalise democracy and effectively combat poverty, inequality, and government impunity connected to abusing executive power and violating human rights (Mbaku, 2020).

Throughout this study, one cannot resist questioning whether there is a relationship between democracy and development. On the one hand, those supporting the linkage argue that the two concepts are entwined and depended on each other. On the other hand, contradictory perspectives claim that the concepts are separate and can easily be achieved without depending on others (Sikuka, 2017). To analyse this relationship, a point of departure would be to understand

these two concepts. Considering that the democratic discourse has already been discussed throughout this chapter, development is the concept that requires further attention.

Classical theorists essentially thought of development as a synonym for economic growth, driven by the revolution from traditional to the modern industrialised production of goods and services. However, the development discourse introduced a new perspective over the last six decades. Neo-liberal and modern development theorists view development as a continuous process to advance the quality of life and increase the self-sufficient capacity of economies globally (Remenyi, 2004:22). Sustainable development thus aims to create an environment where people will enjoy a long, healthy and liberating life.

The sustainable development discourse emerged in the late 1980s due to the actions of humanity that have resulted in unfavourable climate changes and increasing natural disasters, conflict, and economic, social, and political instability. This discourse has called upon the international society to effectively respond to these challenges to reconcile economic growth with environmental and social well-being. The 1972 Stockholm Declaration and the 1980 World Conservation Strategy were crucial for redefining development and setting its environmental scope (Voigt, 2009:11). Sustainable development is essentially grounded on human development, the concept of needs, and protecting and preserving future generations (Klarin, 2018:68). It is thus a process that aims to ensure the actualisation of basic human needs and socio-economic rights. The concept can further be understood in the same way as economic development that aims to meet the demands of the people without influencing the capability of future generations to meet their needs (Deardoff, 2010). In Klarin (2018), Sachs (2010:28) also proposes that there can be no development without sustainability or development. Sustainable development is further connected to the triple bottom line (TBL) notion, which implies that governments and corporate entities must balance environmental, social, and economic sectors (Klarin, 2018:69). The TBL has become a performance measuring tool concerning profits, people, and the planet. For this reason, sustainability has become the goal for businesses, non-profit organisations, and governments over the last decade.

In the same way, the United Nations adopted a more humanistic approach — stating that development should include a wide range of economic, social, and cultural progress, better known as *sustainable human development* (Boutros-Ghali, 2003:9). This approach is more multidimensional and is no longer narrowly understood to include only economic elements but also strives to fight against poverty, security, gender inequity, education for all, and access to healthcare (Maseng, 2010:14). The Sustainable Development Goals introduced in 2015 are often described as the best measure of progress about prosperity for the people and the planet. The SDGs comprise a set of 17 global goals, consisting of 169 targets and 230 indicators (UN, 2015).

This *tool* became the general standard for evaluating progress to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for all people. The SDGs can shift society's thinking from the mindset that prosperity is purely economic to a more holistic and sustainable approach. However, the success of such an approach rest purely on its implementation. Despite its optimistic vision for a better future, the SDG goals are far too ambitious for reality. The UN-adopted SDGs are frequently criticised for being inconsistent and difficult to quantify, implement, and monitor (Mair *et al.*, 2017). Hence, the SDG indicators should not be the primary basis for developing new policies but should be used to engage citizens in SDG debates and hold governments accountable (Mair *et al.*, 2017:13). This study, therefore, argues for a humanistic approach to development.

By adopting a human-centred developmental approach, the medium to long-term positive changes may include better healthcare and safety, better income, greater individual freedom, better accessible education and housing, and a higher quality of life. However, it is essential to acknowledge that development and consolidation are not final destinations or once-off events. Still, it requires continuous efforts to ensure that the lives of citizens are improved.

Now the question arises, is there a connection between democracy and development? Some schools of thought argue that there is no link between democracy and development. An excellent example of this statement is China and Singapore, which are not only seen as two of the least democratic countries but have somehow managed to demonstrate remarkable economic development much quicker than most democratic countries (Sikuka, 2017). In addition, we have witnessed the extensive efforts made by several African countries to democratise their political systems. Still, little progress has been made regarding economic development. For example, despite multiparty elections in Malawi in 1994, the country remains one of the poorest countries in Africa (Svířsand, 2011). But does this mean that democracy is failing in Africa?

There is generally little disagreement that democracy and development are mutually reinforcing. This claim rests upon the fact that no democracy has reverted after reaching a certain level of economic stability (Sikuka, 2017). This applies to all Western countries where economic development and political and social stability have been sustained and strengthened, indicating a higher likelihood of consolidation in economic growth and development (Amuwo, 2008:16). This perspective suggests that democracy and development must occur simultaneously in poorer countries, making development part of democratic consolidation. This can be achieved through public participation and empowerment, inclusive politics, and addressing the population's severe vulnerabilities (Amuwo, 2008:16). Thus, there can be no development without an effective and efficient state that delivers essential services to all sectors and people in society.

Although the relationship between democracy and development is often and frequently debated, some studies show links between development in a society and the connection of the quality of governance. Even though there are individual examples of democracies not delivering on the development section, the overall understanding is that democracy brings about the necessary tools to make the people's voices heard. Democracy does, furthermore, also enable people's demands and removes the political leaders that do not comply with those demands, which is a necessary criterion for stable development over time (United Nations – International IDEA, 2013:32). Although some findings show that governance seems to be more effective in authoritarian states than in younger democracies, more consolidated democracies show the highest effectiveness of governance. Furthermore, the effectiveness of governance also strengthens with the rise of economic development. This suggests that democracy and democratic governance is the greater option in a more extended period as any authoritarian regime's quality of governance in a consolidated democracy is unmatched (Tarverdi, Saha & Campbell 2019: 231-232).

*Good governance* is often used to explain the broader concept of democracy's contribution to development. However, democracy is essential for development, not only the principle of good governance. The reason is that democracy includes vital institutions and political processes and the notions of citizens' choice, participation, inclusion, and fostering democratic culture (United Nations & International IDEA, 2013:32). These features form part of the core characteristics of consolidation, which can influence development directly or indirectly. On the contrary, economic decline, increasing inequalities, and widespread poverty can decrease citizens' trust in formal democratic systems. Political trust in government is considered an essential requirement for representative democracy, and the erosion thereof threatens democracy (Van der Meer, 2017). Thus, democracy can enhance development, especially in developing countries. Still, the key is to guarantee better development outcomes in an environment where even the poorest and most marginalised can have a voice and help shape the country's development plan (United Nations & International IDEA, 2013:32).

Democratic consolidation has become a significant phenomenon in post-colonial literature and international affairs. Over the last two decades, we have witnessed how many African countries have gone through democratisation. A consolidated democracy is considered a prerequisite for countries to have a vibrant, free, active, and robust civil society (Katusiimeh, 2004:103). South Africa is one of the most noteworthy examples on the African continent that has embarked on the path to democratic consolidation. However, South Africa has not yet achieved democratic consolidation in its 28 years of democracy. The country remains to face challenges that obstruct democratic consolidation, including corruption, lack of government accountability, mass poverty,

unemployment, high crime levels, and ineffective civil society empowerment (World Bank, 2021). Civil society's contribution toward democratic consolidation has gained significant attention globally because scholars have realised that the effectiveness of civil society organisations can affect (negatively or positively) the consolidation process. The following section will analyse the importance of a vibrant, free, and robust civil society in democratic consolidation.

## 4.7 UNDERSTANDING CIVIL SOCIETY

Firstly, it is essential to recognise that civil society is yet another concept that is understood in many different ways within social sciences. The concept is often viewed as a collective noun, a call for action, or a solution to the state. As such, there exist no uniform *approach* to understanding civil society, but the concept is historically dependent and differs from country to country (Tobias, 2019:5).

The civil society discourse has roots within early political philosophy and has changed its definition over time. *Civilis societas* is the Latin notion used to refer to communities adapted to norms beyond the state's laws (Katusiimeh, 2004:100). There was no clear division between civil society and the state for centuries, and the two terms were often used interchangeably. It was alleged that the state represented the civil form of society, and this 'civility' became a necessity for good citizenship (Katusiimeh, 2004:100). This has resulted in an ever contradicting and unpredictable nature of defining the concept and often distorted the confines between the public and private spheres. Despite the contrasting views on civil society, most scholars tend to focus on the independent and voluntary role of CSOs.

Civil society is essentially understood as the third arena of government, which operates separately from business and politics and includes the family, also known as the private arena (Habib & Kotzé, 2003:3). It further acts as a representation of society, providing citizens with an opportunity to voice their needs to the larger public and government (Habib & Kotzé, 2003:3). Larry Diamond (1994:5) perceives civil society as the centre for an organised social life that is *voluntary, self-functioning* and *supporting, independent* from the state, and bound by *shared rules*. Thus, civil society is separated from 'society' at large. It entails citizens to work together in a public space to voice their interests, passions, and ideas and holding state officials accountable (Diamond, 1994:5). Thus, civil society achieves legitimacy by bringing new ideas and issues to the public agenda, providing information, acting independently (but not in isolation) from the state and market, and establishing close relations with the people.

Other scholars define civil society as broader than consisting only of a collection of formal organisations but characterise it as a sphere or space for voluntary and spontaneous activities

such as demonstrations, riots, and public rallies where citizens can collectively express their interests (Linz & Stepan, 1996:7). These public riots and protests have recognised civil society as a critical element in contributing toward democracy and the overall stability of a country. Consequently, the presence of a robust civil society presupposes a state with limited powers. Civil society further encourages public participation and community mobilisation. A wealth of scholarly literature explains the critical role of CSOs in promoting democratic development. Mercer (2002:7) argues that non-governmental organisations can strengthen civil society through their activities and engagements while at the same time strengthening the democratic process. This is primarily achieved by educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities as democratic citizens and encouraging them to vote in elections. In addition, the literature further explains that liberal democracies can only function properly with the presence of a diverse and active civil society that can balance the demands of different interest groups (Mercer, 2002:7).

Civil society comprises many actors populated by community groups, schools and universities, non-governmental organisations, labour unions, indigenous groups, non-profit and charity organisations, faith-based organisations, social movements, and other professional organisations and associations (De Jager, 2015:175). It also serves as an essential source of information and communication between citizens and the government. It is vigorously involved in business, while others play a proactive role in government. Hence, it operates in a triangular space between the state, family, and markets (Habib & Kotzé 2002:3). It is also possible to group the functions of civil society into three basic categories:

- *Adversarial*: Holding governments accountable; monitoring government policies and action; limiting state power; monitoring civil liberties and the rule of law.
- *Collaborative*: Engages in education and advocacy, including and integrating various sectors of society; offers alternative policies to the government, the private sector, and other institutions.
- *Communication*: Enhancing state responsiveness to the interests and needs of citizens; defending civil rights; opening communication channels between government and society; and upholding social norms and behaviours (Jacobs, 2011:1).

From the above arguments, one cannot overlook the important linkages between civil society and democratic consolidation. History has shown that civil society is a vital force driving political and social change. One of the key indicators of a healthy and sustainable democracy is found in the depths of its civil society (Botchway & Bendall, 2018:121). A robust civil society provides a breeding ground for democratic principles and values thus strengthening mutual trust and horizontal relations within a society (Putnam, 2001). Where civil society is strong, democracy is

said to be strong too. Diamond (1991:7-11) identified several functions of civil society in shaping democracy.

- Civil society plays a role in checking and monitoring the abuse of state power by encouraging government accountability and transparency and being more responsive to the public.
- Civil society organisations encourage public participation in politics.
- Civil society can stabilise the state as citizens will have a more profound role and function in society.
- Civil society provides room to recruit and train new political leaders.
- Civil society fights against authoritarianism.
- Civil society makes information available to citizens (free press and media).

In addition, before civil society can fully play its part as an active agent in democratic consolidation, political institutionalisation is a single and even more important factor. Diamond (1994:15) explains that democratic consolidation is first achieved when democracy becomes widely and profoundly legitimate among its elites and citizens. Consolidation cannot happen if elites are not fully committed to democracy and do not have trust in democratic principles. This commitment will bring behavioural and institutional changes to *normalise* democratic politics. Secondly, before this normalisation of democracy can happen, it requires increasing citizen access, developing democratic citizenship and culture, broadening leadership recruitment and training, and the other civil society functions mentioned above (Diamond, 1994:15). Thus, new democracies can only become consolidated when the larger public also believes that democracy is the most suitable form of government at that particular time. Thirdly, organisations such as political parties, social movements, civil society organisations, and other social organisations can also play a role in strengthening democracy by serving as an instrument for spreading democratic principles and norms and encouraging political participation and citizen mobilisation (Bunbongkarn, 2001:141).

Considering the functions of civil society, it is suitable to support the claim that a robust civil society is needed to safeguard the effective functioning of government. Even though civil society functions independently from the state, it is important to stress that it is not always in conflict. Besides, civil society plays a crucial role in by ensuring government legitimacy, state effectiveness, accountability, and transparency – in that way, a dynamic civil society strengthens citizens' trust and respect for the state and its functions. It encourages positive citizen engagement with it (Mercer, 2002:7-8). This forms an essential foundation of consolidation – democratic stability cannot be achieved without the support of its citizens (Mercer, 2002:7). Citizen engagement in decision-making and politics creates a more inclusive society. However, this engagement in political affairs requires some trust in their government. Political trust means having complete

confidence in state institutions, such as the executive, legislative, judiciary, media, police, bureaucracy, private sector and business, etc. Putnam (2001:137) argues that civic participation and trust are mutually reinforcing. Without civic participation, government efficiency will weaken, and political trust will decline. There is a basic formula to understanding political trust: government performance – expectations = political trust. (Kumagai & Lorio, 2020:6). This is better known as 'outcome-based' trust, which can be shaped irrespective of citizen engagement or political interactions. Simultaneously, 'process-based' trust depends on citizens' satisfaction with the government's decision-making (Kumagai & Lorio, 2020:6).

In contrast, the lack of political trust can have a reverse effect on democratisation. There are multiple reasons provided for the decline of trust in government. Research shows a strong relationship between the loss of trust and corruption, the failure to reduce economic inequality, exposure to violence and high levels of crime, and the immediate state of the country's economy (Kumagai & Lorio, 2020:5). The loss of trust can only be restored through better governance, such as providing citizens with high-quality services, managing public finances more responsibly, government transparency, open communication channels, and improving citizens' overall quality of life (OECD, 2017:2-8). As such, civil society does not only play an important role in the consolidation of democracy, but it is also critical for the effective functioning of the state. According to Müller (2006:320-321), there are four primary functions of civil society that are crucial for the state:

1. The protective function – this function relates to the provision of liberation from inequality, securing legal guarantees, and establishing a space for civic autonomy.
2. The participative function – related to the dimension of “positive freedom” that is centred on the quality of the social environment and political self-realisation.
3. The legitimisation function – this function relates to the critical role of civil society to establish the credibility of the state to the people and is responsible to instil public trust in state institutions.
4. The integration function - This function relates to civil society's ability to reproduce and establish itself as an independent society, and its ability to integrate and become part of political system.

These functions emphasise on the value and importance of individual freedom and interests, social cohesion, mutual norms, and values in a democracy. Without these critical functions secured by civil society, democracy cannot continue if members of society are not included in decision-making processes (Müller, 2006:321). Thus, civil society is a critical building block for development and democracy as it presents opportunities for collaboration between the state, society, and private stakeholders. In dysfunctional societies, civil society fills the gap of service

delivery, monitor state actions and government policies, engage in advocacy, and serves as a critical source of information to the public (Ingram, 2020).

In order to study the process of democratic consolidation, we need to understand the influence and role of civil society in this process and grasp a realistic image of the limits of civil society to contribute to democratic consolidation. Numerous scholars have argued that an active, diverse, resourceful, institutionalised, and independent civil society can effectively balance the pressures and challenges within the state. Moreover, it is understood that the presence of a robust civil society makes it more likely that democracy will emerge and endure. But how exactly does civil society contribute to democratic consolidation? The following section will elaborate on civil society's role in encouraging and strengthening democracy for consolidation.

#### **4.8 THE ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN A DEMOCRACY**

This study is based on the foundation that civil society plays a leading role in helping countries transition but is also able to help strengthen democracy for consolidation. As argued previously, civil society has been widely recognised as the third arena of democracy, which has the potential to influence policymaking and implementation. Further, civil society has long been viewed as a contributor to economic growth, human rights defender, and a relief provider. In addition, civil society is also seen as an important agent for promoting principles of good governance such as transparency, participation, and accountability. Recently, civil society has taken on an additional role as a civic and social infrastructure provider essential for improving citizens' quality of life. These approaches mirror four principal roles of civil society in democratic consolidation:

##### ***i) Civil Society as Advocates***

The advocacy role involves civil society's responsibility to identify unaddressed issues in society and bring them to the people's attention, protecting basic human rights and giving a voice to the broader political, environmental, social and community interests concerns (Ghaus-Pasha, 2005:5). Van Zyl (2014:351-352) argued that one of the important functions of civil society organization's (CSO) is gathering, distributing, and interpreting information. This role enhances the knowledge of the CSO, which could then be used to pressure governments to achieve a certain objective. Civil society thus represents the people's interests and asserts their rights and powers. Different advocacy groups represent different causes. For example, gender advocacy groups focus on expanding women's representation in legislatures and participation in public life. In contrast, issue-oriented advocacy organisations attempt to meet marginalised groups' social and economic needs in society. Thus, by advocating for different causes, civil society has a democratic consolidation potential.

In addition, civil society's advocate role contributes to democratic consolidation by opening communication channels and pluralising the flow of information. Governments worldwide rely widely on propaganda to exercise control. Often, these messages are untruthful and lack concrete facts (Mlambo, Zubane & Mlambo, 2019:4). Some civil society organisations exist to establish media platforms responsible for observing government corruption, reporting it, and disputing suspected government propaganda (Hardy, 2014). The recent Arab Spring movement is a modern example of the media's influence on political decisions and mobilising the masses. Although media reporting is a vital to foster good governance and exposing unethical behaviour by government officials, it can only be effective in countries where media freedom is protected and unregulated (Reif, 2004:55).

The global movement toward democratisation has unlocked a platform for CSOs to play a more active role in influencing policy. It has been argued that democracy only becomes 'real' when policymakers acknowledge citizens' voices and when citizens, especially the marginalised, begin to freely participate in politics and the marketplace (Ghaus-Pasha, 2005:18). Today, CSOs fulfil a much bigger role in implementing the policies articulated by the government, especially those aimed at addressing sustainable development and poverty reduction. Since civil society is at the forefront of fighting for people's needs and rights, their grassroots experiences can be useful to improve policies and strengthen state capacities and structures. CSOs can further provide important information for developing appropriate policies and pressure the government to safeguard the implementation of good policies (Ghaus-Pash, 2005:18). As such, civil society has the ability to promote individual and community knowledge that could lead to substantial policy changes. In the long run, CSOs' role in advocacy may create a well-informed society with the capacity to identify developmental concerns in the future (Pollard & Court, 2005).

## ***ii) Civil Society as Watchdogs: Transparency and Accountability***

The regulation of state affairs is essential for the democratic governance of society and addresses issues that decrease citizens' trust in democracy, government, and public goods and services. Through its watchdog role, civil society plays an important role in democratic consolidation by enhancing transparency and increasing the accessibility of information. At the same time, it can reduce corruption and government inefficiency (Devarajan, Khemani & Walton, 2013:21). Furthermore, civil society can increase the quality of public goods and services provided to the public and improve the effectiveness of the governance process. Muchadenyika (2017:186,191) explains how CSOs promoted accountability and transparency in Zimbabwe. Their strategy was to monitor service delivery, including budget and community-based planning. The CSOs helped build coalitions among the citizens and other local authorities to improve transport services, health, and water access.

Vukovic (2018: 539) divides civil society's role into a narrow and a wider part. In the narrow part, civil society monitors state functions, misconduct, and other forms of state functions. It monitors budget expenditures and contracts through the analysis of documents and thus is important in increasing the quality of transparency and accountability. Within the narrow part of accountability, civil society also engages in advocacy campaigns that strive for political reformation that increase transparency (Vukovic, 2018:539). Civil society acts by informing public policies focusing on strengthening communities and collectives in the wider part. Depending on the demands, strengthening communities and the public generate higher and more effective demands, resulting in less corruption and a higher quality service delivery (Vukovic, 2018:540).

One cannot overlook the important watchdog role of the media in society. Over the years, civil society deepened on the media to uncover poor governance and corruption allegations. The recent Rhodes Must Fall Movement in South Africa has shown the impact and influence of mainstream and social media on policy outcomes. However, media usage to promote government accountability can only be effective in countries where media freedom is permitted and respected (Mlambo, Zubane & Mlambo, 2019:5). The media's primary function in a democracy is to establish an environment favourable to democratic principles by promoting free choice of leadership, respect for the rule of law, social justice and equity, and respect for human rights (Obasanjo & Mobogunje, 1992:133). Thus, a vibrant civil society is needed to sustain and consolidate democracy by empowering people and exposing government actions and policies to the public. Whether SCOs are viewed positively or as a disturbance, their presence never goes overlooked.

### ***iii) Civil Society as Service Providers***

Political participation is essential for consolidation as it strengthens the legitimacy and the institutionalisation of democratic government (Bunbongkarn, 2001:141). In emerging democracies, countries are likely to report lower levels of civic participation in politics, which in turn may slow down the consolidation process. CSOs can thus encourage citizens to become more involved in politics by voting in elections. Regarding the role of CSOs and civic engagement, this study views CSOs acting directly to fulfil a service, especially to the marginalised and excluded society. Poverty reduction strategies are unlikely to succeed unless there is a significant investment in human capital, mostly in the poor (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004:14). There is enough evidence showing how advances in human security directly impact poverty reduction and safeguard a continuous supply of productive labour, which is important for economic growth (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004:14). Thus, it can be claimed that CSOs are key agents in bringing social and economic change in developing and transitioning countries.

However, due to the lack of basic service provision in developing countries, either unwilling or unable, civil society is at the forefront of providing certain common and public goods from which all citizens are intended to benefit. Of course, civil society is dependent on financial contributions from businesses and citizens to supply and maintain these public goods and services. This is what Greffrath and Van der Waladt (2016) call self-help governance, or typically the "do it yourself" approach by citizens as a response to state dysfunction. Moreover, in areas where these basic services are provided, it is often done inconsistently, which seriously threatens the livelihoods of communities (Greffrath & Van der Waladt, 2016:400). These goods and services include public infrastructure, water and electricity, healthcare, education, and transport. The inability or unwillingness to provide public service is essentially due to the common characteristics of developing countries. The overruling reason behind self-help governance approaches is that political institutions cannot or will not deliver basic services effectively (Sacks, 2009). Secondly, self-help governance occurs in the context of apparent corruption, maladministration, and unethical conduct of political institutions (McLoughlin, 2014).

It is widely acknowledged that no single agent or sector can take full responsibility to addressing the deep-rooted challenges of poverty and social exclusion. Therefore, the provision of public goods and services calls for a three-level partnership between local government, civil society, and the private sector. Poole (1995:2) explained that partnerships are relations between two or more people, groups, or organisations who collaborate to achieve a common goal that cannot be accomplished alone. Local municipalities' partnerships with community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations have the potential to establish effective ways to access external expertise and experience. In the same way, partnerships with the private sector can bring considerable practical, organisational, and entrepreneurial skills. The private sector contributes to the employment of local markets, investment opportunities, and technological innovations and creates opportunities for a wide network of enterprises (Matibane, 2010:40). However, it should be noted that partnerships do not replace the need for political leadership and citizen action (Smith, 2007:4). Stakeholder partnerships require a high level of transparency. If there is no trust or openness among the partners, tensions tend to increase, affecting the quantity and quality of service delivery (Matibane, 2010:28). Effective stakeholder partnerships are thus needed to build civic trust between those who are ruled and the rulers.

#### ***iv) Civil Society as drivers of Citizen Mobilisation***

Citizen participation in political decision-making is an important aspect of any functioning democracy. Yet globally, people face serious restrictions on freely exercising this basic right to participate in politics. We have learned that civil society acts as a link between the state and public sphere that influences and monitors government decisions, educates its population on their

rights, and influences government policies (Mlambo, Zubane & Mlambo, 2019:4). Accordingly, civil society creates a space for people to raise their voices and take action against inequality, injustice, corruption and poverty. However, conditions must exist before this can be achieved to develop a robust and independent civil society. Therefore, the processes and institutions representing, and articulating citizens' interests must function effectively.

Protests and demonstrations became a clear indication of the struggle for democracy. Lee and Chan (2010:97) argue that civil society could influence and mobilise citizens to protest against a policy or action considered unconstitutional or violate basic human rights and freedoms. Civil society has mobilised people to protest against unpopular laws or policies globally. Occasionally, these demonstrations have caused government officials to step down and abolish policies considered discriminatory or unconstitutional, for example, the Arab Spring movement, the #ZumaMustFall movement in South Africa, and the demonstrations in Nigeria to pressure the government to act against the kidnappings by Boko Haram. Chen (2012:81) argued that protests force governments to reconsider certain policies, resulting in many deaths and imprisonments. This is because many governments, especially in Africa, view protests as obstacles that delay the opportunity for proper conversations regarding issues of concern.

However, history has shown that protests are a good vehicle for political change since they allow people to voice their dissatisfaction. Most importantly, civil society inspires democratic participation, empowers citizens, encourages active citizenship, and improves the state's ability to fulfil its public service command. In doing so, citizen awareness and participation allow the public to hold governments accountable. The more people are involved, the more effective a protest can be. Civil society organisations thus play an important role in strengthening civic participation for mobilisation and creating meaningful long-term impacts that result in structural changes to a country's political, economic, and social environments.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The research objective of chapter four was to provide an understanding of the importance and roles of civil society in a democracy. This chapter commenced with a discussion of the concepts of democracy, democratisation, and consolidation. It is understood that democracy is a system of government, while democratisation is the process of achieving that system, and consolidation is a process of thriving for higher standards of democracy. Consolidation is the final step in the process of democratisation in becoming a consolidated democracy. Democratic consolidation is where the threats to democracy are removed and democratic values, norms and principles become institutionalised in everyday practices in politics, economics, and society. However, becoming a consolidated democracy is not a once-off event. Thus, the establishment of a

democratic culture is critical to ensure the institutionalisation, legitimation, and continuation of democracy. It is for this reason the measuring of democracy became important. The quality of democracy indicates the extent to which a country can be considered consolidated or dysfunctional. For example, countries with a high quality of democracy are also considered as strong states. On the contrary, countries that demonstrate a low level of democracy are often described as weak, fragile, failed, or in this case, dysfunctional.

Furthermore, there exists little disagreement regarding the link between democracy and development. This is because democracy is generally associated with individual freedom, human rights, and improved standards of living. However, this argument is only valid in the context where democracies have achieved legitimation, stability, and deliver quality public services. Countries that experience deep developmental challenges such as widespread poverty, unemployment, violence and inequality, lack the social trust, involvement and tolerance needed for democracy to thrive. In such countries, the developmental deficit creates an environment for political elites to enrich themselves. Therefore, development and democracy should occur simultaneously to overcome poverty and foster political accountability and improved governance.

Accordingly, the key to ensuring development and democratic deepening is to establish an enabling environment in which even the poorest and most marginalised people can participate in shaping the development agenda. This is when the role of civil society becomes critical in democracies. Civil society is often connected with the promotion of democracy, improved governance and development. This chapter also demonstrated that civil society acts as a bridge between the state and the people by providing a platform for citizens to participate in political processes and voice their interests and needs. Through their various roles, civil society can become the driving force for democratic consolidation as they provide a platform for the socialisation and institutionalisation of democratic principles, norms, and practices. In dysfunctional states, we have seen how civil society has become the answer to the abuse of state power, human rights violations, and service delivery failure. Furthermore, civil society deals with many essential factors for consolidation by dealing with poverty, promoting economic growth, advocacy and fighting against out-of-control corruption. A robust civil society is thus an indispensable mechanism for democratic transitioning and maintaining democracy to such an extent that civil society has become known as a prerequisite for democratic consolidation. Chapter five will address the nature and role of South Africa's civil society in strengthening democracy for consolidation.

# **CHAPTER FIVE: A TRAUMATIC PAST, TROUBLED PRESENT, AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE**

## **5. INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, the reader will notice that chapter five is rather extensive. This is because the researcher believes that the concepts of the state, democracy and civil society are intertwined and should therefore be analysed simultaneously to grasp a clearer understanding of democracy and its challenges. Chapter five focuses on the features that affect democratic consolidation in South Africa, with a critical examination of civil society's role in strengthening democracy to sustain the conditions needed for democracy to thrive. The first half of chapter five introduces the reader to the context of South Africa's political, economic, and social conditions. The aim is to remind the reader of the conditions in which South Africa's democracy was born and to draw the reader's attention to the present challenges threatening democratic consolidation and development in the country. These challenges range from accountability concerns, socio-economic development, and the lack of national unity and cohesion. This chapter then discusses the various features demonstrating state dysfunction in South Africa's political, economic, and social sectors. The analysis is based on the theoretical contributions of William Zartman, Robert Rotberg, James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu, and Joel Migdal. In addition, the Fragile States Index was utilised to identify the features of dysfunction. The final section of this chapter focusses on the role of civil society in strengthening democracy for consolidation. This section starts with a discussion on civil society's different roles and functions, strengths, and weaknesses, followed by a brief contextualising of civil society in South Africa and its role in encouraging democratic consolidation. Finally, chapter five will present five key roles of civil society to strengthen democracy in South Africa.

### **5.1 A BRIEF REFLECTION OF THE PAST**

Over sixty years ago, many former European colonies in Africa began to transition towards independence after many years of exploitation through a capitalist system that sought to maximise European gain by controlling most of the African continent (Welsh, 2015:30). These new nations adopted multi-party democratic systems inspired by their former colonial rulers. However, it wasn't long after their transition that some democracies changed into single-party dictatorships due to poor decisions and mismanagement. Consequently, the forty-eight independent African states became plagued by developmental, socio-economic and governance challenges, which has sparked the interest of many. Most of Africa is underdeveloped and thus rated as the least

developed continent in the world, suffering from the highest poverty levels and human insecurity (Schoeman, 2014:240). The harsh conditions in Africa are mostly represented in literature as 'weak', 'fragile', or 'failed', conditions that relate to the artificial way these states were created through Western influence and its history of colonialism (Schoeman, 2014:240). This chapter aims to analyse the features that demonstrate dysfunction in South Africa. However, to fully understand state dysfunction discourse, we must start by understanding the historical impact and the consequences of South Africa's legacy of separation that still dictates the kind of future that will unfold.

It is often supposed that South Africa's history of segregation started with the introduction of apartheid. However, this is misleading, as racial segregation and white minority rule existed long before apartheid was introduced in 1948. The institutionalised legacy of segregation can be traced back to 1909, in which the constitution of the Union of South Africa contained highly discriminatory policies that included practices from the former Trekker republics (Welsh, 2015:31). So, what made apartheid different from the earlier segregation policies? In principle, apartheid was not significantly different from the policy of segregation that existed before the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948. The key difference is that apartheid made racial segregation law in a period when other countries were moving away from discriminatory policies. The apartheid system intended to intentionally and forcibly separate people based on the colour of their skin and to implement systems that would benefit and uphold white minority rule (Van Beek, 2006:118). South Africa's long history of segregation and discrimination has greatly affected people and communities before 1994 and continues to do so today, causing hefty burdens on most South Africans. The legacy of racial segregation and its effect on contemporary South Africa will be discussed in the following section.

### ***5.1.1 Apartheid and its Racial Legacy***

South Africa remains a fascinating case study when considering the impact of past inequalities and how they can be repeated and preserved in the country's social structures. Despite the country's democratic agenda openly promoting the progression of an inclusive and equal society that enjoys economic and social rights, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world (IMF, 2022). These rights are still only an illusion for millions of people. The ever-worsening challenges of inequality and social and economic deprivation are evidence of the persistent legacy of apartheid. This section describes how a legally mandated system of racialised segregation and discrimination affected the lives of people and communities and continues to do so after 1994. At that time, South Africa was the only country whose political system and state institutions openly intended to ensure the advantage of one ethnic group at the expense of the rest of the population (Treiman, 2005:1). Hence, South Africa continues to attract great scholarly

interest in understanding how a system classified by racial domination and segregation was organised and its consequences for the new South Africa.

The South African apartheid government greatly affected the dimension of social engineering according to its radical racial separation agenda. A prime example of this exercise was brought by the Group Areas Act of 1950, which called for the forced removal of non-white citizens from their homes and businesses to enforce residential separation (De Jager, 2015:34). Once an area had been allocated for occupation by a certain racial group, one could only own land, live, attend school and trade in that specific area. This Act was one of the many examples of how race/ethnicity was used to control the non-white population and allowed the National Party to maintain the status quo of white supremacy. Today, the remains of apartheid architecture and infrastructure are still prevalent in South Africa, and it's surely not a thing of the past. Even though apartheid ended 28 years ago, South Africa still has a sense of *apartness*. It does not take long after exiting one of the prestigious airports in the country to note the visible and traumatically separated society. One can see that cities were designed for "whites only," while townships were established for the non-white labour force. These images echo throughout the country – from cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg to the smallest villages.

It would be surprising if the experiences of apartheid did not influence contemporary South Africa. The apartheid system's consequences are that it simultaneously produced racialised identities and fostered economic inequality through the unequal distribution of wealth and resources (Seekings, 2008:5). As a result, the ANC inherited the great task of dealing with the challenge of racialised social engineering. The country's social and economic inequality remains distinctive of the deep-rooted awareness of *race* that endures in its society. This is largely due to the choices and policies implemented by the apartheid government and the inability of the current government to change it. The continuing legacy of racial inequality remains stark and can be observed in the education, employment, and income sectors. Studies show that poverty can be defeated through education and by creating more employment opportunities (Reddy & Mncwango, 2021:31). However, South Africa experiences low levels of education and technical skills (both in quality and equal access), which immediately affects the poor's employability. Consequently, this creates a large skills gap as the workforce cannot participate in the country's economy.

The ANC introduced countless approaches and programmes to improve education and secure equal access to restore these inequalities. Many schools were built, which increased enrolment, curriculum changes occurred, increased budgets and resources prioritised the disadvantaged groups, and introduced social protection policies to benefit the poorest households (Reddy & Mncwango, 2021:32). Despite these successes, too few children complete school, which would allow them to enrol in post-school education and skills development, while the cost of tertiary

education remains too high and too few students receive financial assistance (Reddy & Mncwango, 2021:32). This results in the inability of the youth to secure high-paying jobs and explains the high youth unemployment rate we witness in South Africa. Thus, unequal access to education and employment opportunities hinders poverty reduction efforts.

The country's history has resulted in deep racial inequalities affecting its socio-political economy. It was always a utopian hope that South Africa would easily change itself from a race-obsessed society into a non-racist democracy. However, South Africa remains deeply racialised in culture, wealth, and opportunities. The government's failure to deal with the serious historical structural challenges, decrease poverty, create employment opportunities, and close the inequality gap will threaten its democratic stability and performance.

## **5.2 “ONE STEP FORWARD – TWO STEPS BACK”: SOUTH AFRICA AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION**

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a sudden increase in scholarly contributions on democratisation or the lack thereof. This period was also marked by a global wave of democratisation that marked the triumph of democracy which introduced individual freedom, human rights, equality, and the rule of law as the core values of a democracy (Silander *et al.*, 2022:1). Democratisation spread across the world influencing nearly all geographical states consisting of different historical developments, economic systems, and political cultures. Democracy's victory was further strengthened in the 1990s due to the fall of the Soviet Union in Europe, the abolishment of apartheid in South Africa, and the demise of authoritarian rule in Asia and Latin America (Silander *et al.*, 2022:11).

Chapter four explained that consolidation is a transitional process, not a once-off event. It is the transition from authoritarianism to democratic governance. South Africa, the country under analysis in this study, has successfully transitioned to democracy and is now on the path of consolidation after twenty-eight years of democratic rule. The momentous event that brought hope and opportunity to a once deeply divided society took place on 27 April 1994. This was when disadvantaged South Africans could practise their right to vote in the country's first democratic election after three centuries of white minority rule. The dawn of democracy marked the beginning of a new South Africa that belonged to all who lived in it. Since 1994, South Africa has successfully held five democratic elections, keeping the ANC in power. The Constitution of South Africa secures and fosters extensive political and civil rights and institutionalises the separation of powers with an independent judiciary (Habib, 2013:48-49). The constitution further lays out its goal to heal and restore the past's divisions and create a society built on democratic values, social justice, and human rights (Masipa, 2018:3). The constitution further promises an open society

whereby the government is created on the people's will, and everyone is equally protected by law while improving the quality of life for all citizens (Masipa, 2018:3). Consequently, South Africa became a symbol of hope, freedom, change and democracy for the African continent and globally.

To address the past injustices, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 1995 with the main goal of revealing the past cruelties and gross human rights violations by the apartheid government and restoring dignity and inspiring a sense of compassion between the victims and offenders (Fikeni, 2012). The TRC was considered an important component in South Africa's democratic transition. Further, the government introduced numerous policy reforms to transform South African society, including Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa, and the National Development Plan. However, the transition to a democratic state brought formidable challenges to transforming the state and society. Mbeki (1998) argued that the transformation's main objective is to establish a society defined by equality and racial balance. However, despite some progress made to enhance the well-being of society, South Africa is still wrestling with socio-economic problems that damage the stability and sustainability of the country's democracy and hinders its consolidation process. Democratic consolidation requires much more than citizens heading to the polls every four years to cast their ballots; rather, consolidation should be understood as a precondition to alleviating the socio-economic challenges confronting the nation, and it can only be achieved once there is democratic stability (De Jager, 2015:9). Thus, it is not a once-off event but a continuous effort to enhance the citizens' political, economic, and social opportunities. If this does not materialise, democratic distemper is inevitable and often manifested through civil unrest and protests.

South Africa has successfully established a democratic dispensation to promote democracy. However, its democratic transition from white minority rule is not enough to establish and consolidate a democratic state. The conclusion is that the country's democracy is consolidating regarding institutional building, yet these institutions' existence and performance are insufficient to label South Africa as consolidated. These institutions must be protected and strengthened to sustain their trust and confidence. The literature in chapter four argued that a democracy could only become consolidated when the new regime is capable of serving the nation's interest in a way that is conducive to the values of its constitution. This is a major obstacle for South Africa as the country remains divided and continues to face socio-economic challenges. Some of the main hurdles to achieving consolidation in South Africa are discussed in the following section.

## **5.3 CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africans once believed that the transition to democracy would significantly change their lives and transform society through quality and equal opportunity. Almost three decades ago, the country was a universal symbol of freedom and democratisation. In 2022, South Africa celebrated 28 years of democracy during a time when democracy was globally under attack in the setting of growing scepticism in democratic institutions. For the majority, this hope for a better future has not been realised. The country's traumatic history left a series of governance challenges which negatively affect its society and democracy, ranging from poor education and health care to poor service provision and unemployment.

As explained previously, democratic consolidation is a complicated process. It is a continuous process that institutionalises functional, stable, and transparent democratic institutions and instils pro-democratic norms and values in its people and society (Silander *et al.*, 2022:188). Moreover, democratic consolidation depends on the extent the state meets the demands and needs of its citizens (Silander *et al.*, 2022:188). The experiences over the last fifteen years in South Africa have been an important wake-up call for academics to investigate the challenges that hamper democratic consolidation. Wieczorek (2012) recognises issues such as poverty, inequality, and crime as valid indicators to verify the state of democracy in a country. As witnessed in South Africa, these socio-economic challenges often result in deep social instabilities when citizens demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the state through violent protests and political apathy. The state's lack of capacity to deliver basic goods and services to its people directly impedes the process of democratic consolidation. The question now is, what are the fundamental challenges that threaten democratic consolidation in South Africa?

### **5.3.1 The Challenge of Political Accountability and Service Delivery**

The accountability challenge primarily relates to civic distrust in government at all levels of government. In its broadest sense, accountability is understood as an obligation to expose, explain, and justify the actions of politicians and officials (Van der Nest *et al.*, 2008:546). It ought to make political elites more responsible and responsive to the population's needs and not to their or the party's interests. Accountability refers to more than public expenditure but also includes reporting, performance, the use and abuse of power and authority, and the conduct of public institutions (Van der Nest *et al.*, 2008:545). Therefore, those trusted and elected to run public offices must be answerable and justify their actions to a higher authority.

South Africa is going into its third decade of democracy with a limp. Even before the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture (Zondo Commission) investigated great-scale corruption allegations (Southhall, 2019). At the same time, student protests flooded the media, Parliament was taking the necessary steps to have the Public Protector removed, and political chaos continued as a consistent feature of the political scene (Dryding, 2020). In July 2021, the news media were flooded with dramatic images of violent riots and looting causing infrastructural damage exceeding R50 billion and the loss of nearly 400 lives (De Waal, 2021). The looting and riots lasted eight days and left a mark as one of the darkest days of democracy in South Africa. These factors suggest that South Africa entered a democratic downturn even before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Due to the lack of accountability in government, the ANC is experiencing turbulence displayed in ever-worsening protests (Ngcamu, 2019:1). There has been an increasing concern regarding the government's incompetence in delivering public services to its people. Poor service delivery resulted in South Africa being labelled as the "protest capital of the world", as citizens frequently demonstrate their frustration and struggle, often violently, destroying infrastructure, private and public property, and causing death (Koelble & LiPuma, 2009). Protest movements are often sparked by the government's consistent failure to provide its people with political goods and services, which explicitly paint an image of the harsh realities in South Africa. Alexander (2010:28-27) argues that protests are largely motivated by poor service delivery and accountability concerns, which he called a "rebellion of the poor". Service delivery protests refer not only to the local government's lack of public services provided to the people but are also fuelled by low productivity, poor communication, poor civic participation in decision-making processes, corruption, poor management, and a lack of transparency (Ngcamu, 2019:2).

The lack of public participation in decision-making at the local level is an additional cause of poor service delivery and lack of accountability by municipal officers and councillors. Public participation is crucial for enhancing accountable governance. The Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000, states that communities have the right to participate in any public discussion and decision-making processes in the local sphere (Republic of South Africa, 2000). This includes participation in ward committees, budget consultations, and Integrated Development Planning forums (IDP). Why is public participation important at a local level? Public participation opens important communication channels between communities and municipalities, encouraging citizens' sense of responsibility and ownership for implementing and evaluating community projects and developments (Vivier *et al.*, 2015:83). Not only does public participation (potentially) improve service delivery, but it also improves civic trust in government and democracy, strengthens political accountability, and prevents corruption and maladministration (Tuftes, 2017:143). It also

provides a platform for the poor to raise concerns that can influence policy and larger institutions (Pandeya, 2015:93).

However, research shows a steep decline in public participation in the local government sphere in South Africa, possibly contributing to poor service delivery, tensions between municipal officials, and violent service delivery protests (Fuo, 2015:174). This is not because of civic apathy, but studies have uncovered that municipal officials are doubtful about sharing their decision-making powers. Kanyane (2014:104) argued that municipal officials feel capable enough to find *the best solutions* for these issues and should be trusted with their roles. In addition, there is an overall lack of knowledge among South African communities about where or how to report service delivery concerns due to poor communication between municipal officers and citizens (Mdlongwa, 2014). Poor communication by municipalities results in communities feeling excluded from decision-making processes and disempowered to bring about change. These factors lead to civic unrest.

### **5.3.2 The Challenge of Poverty, Inequality, and Unemployment**

Labelled as *the triple challenge*, poverty, inequality and unemployment (PIU) are interrelated phenomena that severely influence a country's socio-economic landscape. Given the country's history, the post-1994 South African government went to 'war' with poverty by introducing over 40 programmes to address poverty, inequality and unemployment challenges (De Jager, 2015:217). These programmes include expanding public works, access to health care, free housing for the poor, the expansion of social grants, basic service delivery provision, and job creation (Public Service Commission, 2007:44-46). Additional initiatives were also taken to expand the social welfare system to include children and people with disabilities. Although these interventions have greatly reduced poverty over the years, unemployment and inequality remain overriding concerns. The policies introduced have failed to solve the deep unemployment and poverty crisis, and the social security system has failed to provide a sufficient and stable income net for unemployed people (Taylor, 2002).

Scholars have been intrigued by the PIU nexus to understand and solve the world poverty crisis. Even though this relationship is unclear, there are strong arguments that unemployment increases the risk of poverty and adds to inequality which can also give rise to a series of social issues that affect people and communities (Saunders, 2002:5). Thus, unemployment is at the core of poverty and labour is often the only means people can use to secure their well-being and survival. Unemployment affects poverty directly through the loss of income, leaving many families without sufficient income to meet their basic needs. Coupled with high levels of youth unemployment, people are often stuck in poverty cycles which tend to result in generational

poverty curses (Hinteregger, 2017). Consequently, crime rates increase to support families and escape poverty. Rural poverty is essentially the result of long-term unemployment, making it more difficult to get employed due to impoverished areas' lack of resources and tools (Hinteregger, 2017). Thus, poverty and employment go hand-in-hand; therefore, much more needs to be done to assist people in escaping this vicious cycle.

Poverty remains widespread mainly due to the economic structure that does not benefit all South Africans but reproduces inequality and increases unemployment. Consequently, to undo the wrongs of the past, the National Development Plan is one of the most comprehensive action plans introduced by the government. The primary focus of the NDP is to find ways to significantly reduce poverty and inequality in South Africa by the year 2030 (De Jager, 2015:238). The NDP attempts to achieve this through economic growth that would reduce the number of unemployed persons in the country, thereby reducing the inequality gap. As its guiding principle, the NDP stipulates that “no political democracy can survive and flourish if the mass of our people remains in poverty, without land, without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation must be the priority of a democratic government” (NDP, 2021:24). In essence, the NDP can only be regarded as successful when the lives of the poorest South Africans have improved. The core of the NDP aims to achieve a “decent standard of living” for all South Africans (National Planning Commission, 2022); which includes: access to housing, water and sanitation; safe and reliable transport; quality education and skills development; safety and security; quality healthcare; social protection; employment; recreation and leisure; a clean environment; and adequate nutrition.

However, the government acknowledges that “a decent standard of living” cannot be achieved without the actions of the private sector as a key actor. The NDP is applauded for being brave enough to face the realities of South Africa, but it does not demonstrate what must be done to overcome these harsh realities. Some policy analysts label the NDP as a mere exercise in *smoke and mirrors* and say that there is no real long-term vision for South Africa nor the political will to make that vision a reality (Cronjé, 2014:47). Cronjé (2014:91) argued that the NDP is nothing more than previous or existing policies that have been tampered with, yet the government expects different social and economic results. Thus, it does not serve as a roadmap for South Africa to turn its economy around and meet the needs of its people.

### **5.3.3 The Challenge of Diversity and Identity**

South Africa is privileged to enjoy rich diversity that offers a range of differences in culture, race, religion, and language that is protected and recognised. For this reason, South Africa became known as the Rainbow Nation. However, diversity can become a complicated matter. Racial differences in South Africa are considered the primary trajectory of inequality and still determine

its citizens' socio-political life and experiences (Stinson, 2009:2-3). One of the most asked and studied questions remains: How do we create a single unified nation of different communities, religions, backgrounds, and racial groups?

The year 1994 marked the rebirth of a new nation. It was the first time all South Africans could vote in the country's democratic election. The victory of the African National Congress followed the appointment of Nelson Mandela as the first black President of South Africa. After many years of racial discrimination, the commitment to strive for national unity became a consistent goal for the new government. Nelson Mandela stated in his inaugural speech, "the moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come... we must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation-building, for the birth of a new world" (Mandela, 1994). Subsequently, the ANC government sought to develop unity and collaboration through their nation-building program that intentionally aimed to construct a new united national identity among its citizens. With this, South Africa introduced a new ideology, unofficially called "Rainbowism", which hoped to shift the focus from *difference* to *sameness* to solve the fight against discrimination (Gachago & Ngoasheng, 2016). This became an important factor in the creation of a post-apartheid national identity.

Nearly three decades post-apartheid, the notion of a single united national identity remains elusive, and diversity remains deep and wide (Bently, 2005:25). How is it possible to build a unified national identity in a country with such deep diversities? Bryan Barry (2001:79) states that creating a homogenous national identity is not the answer, but real change can only occur when a national identity is built on the principles of empathy, tolerance, and the ability to identify and relate with each other. However, a sense of solidarity can only be achieved when inequalities are reduced since cultural and racial differences are indeed based on social class (Bently, 2005:27). In addition, the triumph of liberal democracy depends largely on the citizens' attitudes toward one another. This is what Barry (2001) calls *civic nationality*, which does not explicitly mention culture/race or exclude it. Culture and race are only two facets that bring up the complex identities of people and should not replace one identity with the other. This mutual recognition must exist for democracy to thrive. "Being an Indian-South African or a Jewish-South African is a way of being South African, not an alternative to it", Barry (2001:82) argues. Thus, national civic identity should not be based on cultural legitimacy, but rather manifest itself through the establishment of sense of community-based empathy coupled with efforts to reduce socio-economic inequalities between races.

South Africa's democracy is constantly under a magnifying glass, being analysed by scholars and international organisations that attempt to predict the country's future. The arguments above convincingly show that South Africa is amidst unprecedented social, economic and political

challenges due to the country's poor performance since the Mbeki presidency. Coupled with rampant corruption, lack of political accountability, poor service delivery, and high levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment, we are left questioning the stability and future of South Africa and its democracy. Due to the country's economic position, the state of race relations, and the worrying economic and political trends, there has been a sharp increase in media reports and scholarly works questioning whether South Africa is heading towards a failed state scenario. While the country's institutions are surviving, democracy seems to have been weakened by the socio-economic ills discussed in this chapter. Consequently, there appears to be growing democratic discontent, as shown in the intensified social protests and demonstrations as citizens are pleading for the government to play their part and secure a better future for all South Africans.

The following section will analyse, with some detail, the current condition of South Africa to understand the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in the country's political, economic, and social sectors, which will provide us with some direction for the kind of future that will unfold.

## **ANALYSING THE FEATURES THAT DEMONSTRATE STATE DYSFUNCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### ***i) Determining dysfunction***

South Africa experienced much bloodshed, violence, and social turmoil throughout its history and thus became deeply divided not only by race but also economically and socially. However, it would be wrong to argue that no improvements have been made since the 1994 democratic transition. In fact, major victories have been made in areas usually related to failures, such as education and housing.

The current challenges in South Africa are a microcosm of the challenges faced by many young democracies worldwide, inspiring this dissertation to further study the importance of encouraging and safeguarding the consolidation of democratic institutions. This study is relevant in facing global threats to democracy to prevent democratic decay and minimise the possibility of reverse waves of authoritarianism. Democratic consolidation is, therefore, crucial to establishing stable and sustainable democratic societies. The chaotic and contradictory nature of South Africa has brought us to the point of questioning the direction its future will unfold, which will be determined by the current trends in the country's political, economic, and social sectors. This chapter will analyse the features demonstrating state dysfunction in the following way.

**TABLE 4: A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTION TO DETERMINE STATE DYSFUNCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>	<b>STATE DYSFUNCTION OCCUR WHEN...</b>	<b>FSI INDICATORS</b>
Political Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W. Zartman</li> <li>• R. Rotberg</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The basic functions of the state are no longer performed.</li> <li>• States are unable to provide citizens with political goods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State legitimacy</li> <li>• Public services</li> <li>• Openness and fairness of political processes</li> </ul>
Economic Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J. Robinson and D. Acemoglu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States adopt extractive economic institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic decline</li> <li>• Uneven economic development</li> <li>• Human flight and brain drain.</li> </ul>
Social Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joel. S Migdal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States display fragmented social control.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National identity</li> <li>• Communal violence</li> <li>• Fractionated elites</li> </ul>

(Own construct)

Firstly, this dissertation does not aim to further complicate the failed state discourse by arguing for another gradient of state failure but argues that a dysfunctional state represents a deviation from the ideal-type Weberian state. Thus, any state failing to function according to the accepted norms of the Weberian state is considered dysfunctional. However, the nature and degree of dysfunction are widely debated, forming part of this study's main objective: To determine the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa.

The Fragile States Index shows that South Africa has rapidly declined since 2007. In ten years, the country moved from bright green status (relative stability) in 2007 to yellow-orange (warning) in 2017. The higher a country scores, the more fragile it's considered. In 2007, South Africa was ranked 132<sup>nd</sup> with a score of 57.4. Later in 2017, the country was ranked 96<sup>th</sup> with a score of 72.3 (Fund for Peace, 2022). Even more concerning, the country remains stagnant five years later, with a score of 72 by August 2022 (Fund for Peace, 2022). There are many reasons for South Africa's appalling performance, however, the overriding reason is related to economic challenges, fractured leadership, and social divisions (Fund for Peace, 2017). These features will be analysed in three major sectors of South Africa: the political, economic, and social sectors. These sectors

do not exist or function in isolation. Thus, poor performance in one sector would have consequences for the other two sectors. For this study, the social sector does not refer to demographic concerns but focuses on the fragmentation of democratic institutions along racial and ethnic divisions. The theoretical framework on state dysfunction is based on the contributions of Robert Rotberg, William Zartman, James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu, and Joel S. Migdal. Each author argued for state dysfunction in a specific sector of the state (as discussed in chapter three)

State dysfunction in South Africa will then be analysed by adopting these authors' core statements of state dysfunction and analysing them against the indicators presented by the Fragile State Index (FSI) relevant to South Africa. This study (and the FSI) acknowledges that states do not fail in the same way; thus, the extensive list of indicators provided by the SFI serves as a starting point for analysis and leaves room for further interpretation suitable for each country under investigation. It must also be mentioned that the social sector analysis in South Africa will not focus on demographic pressures as presented in the FSI, but is inspired by the works of Joel S. Migdal, will rather look at the features that display power struggles, violence, identity, and divisions that influence and shape its society and relationships.

## **5.4 THE FEATURES THAT DEMONSTRATE DYSFUNCTION IN THE POLITICAL SECTOR**

The theoretical foundation that assisted with identifying the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa's political sector is constructed on the works of William Zartman's *Collapsed States: The disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority* (1995) and Robert Rotberg's contribution on *Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators* (2004). William Zartman explains that states fail when "they can no longer perform the basic functions required for them to pass as states" (Zartman, 1995:5). So, what are the basic functions of a state? Zartman (Zartman, 1995:5-6) distinguished between three primary roles of the state that relates to the Weberian ideal-type state: the state as a sovereign authority, the state as an institution, and the state as a security guarantor.

When states become dysfunctional in their decision-making role, laws are not respected or implemented, social cohesion is not enhanced, and the state becomes inoperative. This would cause the state to become unresponsive to the needs of the people. Thus, the state will lose legitimacy, and citizen support and trust in government will decline (Zartman, 1995:5). These state functions are interrelated and cannot be performed independently. Therefore, weakness in one function will influence the others too. In the South African context, the state's role as a security provider takes on the human approach as a service provider and not as a protector. Robert

Rotberg introduced his article with his hypothesis: “Nation-states fail because they are convulsed by internal violence and can no longer deliver political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose legitimacy...and becomes illegitimate in the eyes and hearts of a growing plurality of its citizens” (Rotberg, 2004:1). The political goods Rotberg referred to include a range of services the state should provide to its citizens, such as human security, democratic institutions, participation, service delivery and infrastructure (Rotberg, 2004:3-5). Rotberg (2004:5) declares that states will either become dysfunctional or consolidated depending on the extent to which these services are provided or not provided to the people. Thus, strong states provide a high and sufficient degree of political goods to their people, and weak states provide insufficient political goods.

Thus, this study understands dysfunction in the political sector as the state’s inability to perform the basic functions of the state (W. Zartman), which is to provide citizens with a range of political goods (R. Rotberg). Accordingly, the FSI indicators to be analysed are State Legitimacy and Public Services.

#### **5.4.1 Public Services**

As a feature of state dysfunction, the public service indicator focuses on the state’s ability to deliver political goods to its people that would increase their trust and confidence in the government and its institutions. Rotberg’s (2004) hierarchy of political goods includes service delivery and infrastructure provision. This section will not analyse the different types of services or public goods the government should provide, but it will reflect on the problematic nature of service delivery failure in South Africa.

Service delivery refers to the distribution of basic needs by local government, such as housing, water and sanitation, electricity, and infrastructure. Municipalities are regarded as the custodians of public funds and are thus responsible for utilising these resources to deliver basic needs to the population (Reddy, 2016:2). Globally, service delivery provision is a significant challenge for developing countries. Many countries succeed at policy development; however the implementation of those policies is less successful (Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2017:169). Dysfunction in the public sector significantly impedes a country’s growth as it plays a key role in economic development and improving the general well-being of society. Thus, the public sector must effectively and efficiently fulfil its responsibilities to provide goods and services. It is known that the South African government (more specifically local governments) is often accused of public service delivery failure in the eyes of its people. The people’s dissatisfaction with service delivery inadequacy is often displayed in the form of protests and riots in the mass media, which has been

a long-lasting legacy of the apartheid regime as a means for the black population to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the lack of service delivery (Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2017:172).

Protests in South Africa take many forms, ranging from confrontations with the police, looting, stay-aways, tyre-burning, destruction of property, and road blockades. In the post-apartheid era, protest movements form part of everyday political life largely due to neo-liberal policy failures and other challenges such as unemployment, poverty and inequality among South Africans (Reddy, 2016:3). In the first half of 2021, South Africa recorded 900 service delivery protests (Martin, 2021). In addition, there is a spatial dimension attached to service delivery. Most of these protests occurred in poor communities and informal settlements rather than urban areas, which reflects what some scholars call *the rebellion of the poor* (Reddy, 2016:3). As a result of the rapid pace of urbanisation in South Africa, poorer communities have become even more affected by the lack of resources and service delivery. This is because service delivery is mostly prioritised in urban areas to match tax contributions and where there is economic growth potential (Sartorius & Sartorius, 2015:3337). In addition, municipalities in poor communities have limited infrastructure and resources as economic activities in these areas are small-scale. In these areas, there are also high levels of poverty and unemployment, making it unlikely for people to pay for services. South African municipalities are mirrors that reflect the deep-rooted problems in its society as an indication of poor performance in all spheres of government. Thus, the government must address the root causes of the service delivery problem if interventions are to be successful and bring meaningful impact.

It is important to realise that there is no single factor that causes service delivery failure, thus, cases should be examined individually. However, some general reasons include incompetent public servants, lack of resources, poor financial management, corruption and nepotism, and unskilled civil servants (Janse van Rensburg, 2014:3–35). Granting that all these aspects can cause dysfunction in local government, Francis (2013:29) believes that the main driver of local government dysfunction is ineffective leadership demonstrated through employing incompetent officials and the lack of accountability and political will. Ethical leadership is critical to promoting good governance practices and the delivery of services. Booysen (2012) explains that the appointment of unskilled and unqualified officials based on nepotism and patronage is a major constraint on the effectiveness of local government and therefore holds serious consequences for service delivery.

The state of a country is often judged by its local government's performance and ability to provide people with public services. Therefore, poor service delivery reflects its leaders' incompetence and unethical organisational culture. In 2016, the Good Governance in Africa (GGA) research group found that nine of the worst-performing municipalities in South Africa are located in

KwaZulu-Natal, and the Eastern Cape provinces (Good-Governance-Africa, 2016:2). The bedrock of these municipalities' failure was said to be the lack of ethical leadership which undermines accountability and impedes service delivery (Zamokuhle *et al.*, 2020: 24991). In addition, politics also interferes with service delivery. Political parties often make promises to the people during their election campaigning as part of their strategy to secure votes. In doing so, political parties only give people false hope while placing high pressure on the local government to fulfil these promises. Unfulfilled promises only result in more community dissatisfaction and anger, reinforcing the circle of poverty and unemployment that only leads to more protest action (Managa, 2012:2). Thus, because the local government is situated nearest to the people, South Africans have little trust in the effectiveness and efficiency of local government.

Despite the relative progress made since 1994, South Africa is still facing serious challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment which frequently result in protest action due to citizen dissatisfaction with the government. South Africa's legislation may be deemed "world-class", but its implementation is concerning. Poor municipal performance, coupled with corruption and mismanagement, has led to a lack of trust in government. Therefore, unless local government and leadership are strengthened, South Africa will only experience more protest action that often turns violent, resulting in the destruction of existing infrastructure. It is, therefore, crucial to employ accountable officials in local government who are committed to serving the people through service delivery and who respect the law. In addition, those in leadership positions should ensure that municipal staff frequently receive the necessary skills training to be well- capacitated to fulfilling their roles.

#### **5.4.2 State Legitimacy**

As a feature of state dysfunction, the state legitimacy indicator does not focus on democratic governance but considers government transparency and citizens' confidence level in state institutions (Fund for Peace, 2017). It also assesses the results where confidence is missing, expressed through public demonstrations and civil disobedience.

The concept of state legitimacy is understood as "a political order, institution or actor is legitimate to the extent that people regard it as satisfactory and believe that no available alternative would be vastly superior" (Bonnell & Breslauer, 2001). Scholars often employ this understanding to define state legitimacy in the context of state weakness. On the contrary, the lack of legitimacy contributes to state fragility as it challenges state authority and capacity (OECD, 2010:7). In simple terms, legitimacy refers to the quality of the relationship between the state and society, that is, the extent to which political institutions and state officials are recognised as just by the

people (Sutter, Renouard & Roca, 2016:2). So how is legitimacy achieved? There are four primary sources of legitimacy identified:

- *Input of performance legitimacy* – agreed rules of procedure.
- *Output/performance legitimacy* – effectiveness and quality of public goods.
- *Shared beliefs* – a sense of community, belonging and identity shaped by political leaders, tradition, or religion.
- *International legitimacy* – external recognition of the state's legitimacy and sovereignty (OECD, 2010:8).

The sources of legitimacy are context dependent and have different effects in different social and political contexts. While Western societies view patronage as a form of corruption that undermines performance legitimacy, in fragile states it could be a means to create social stability or manage conflicts. Thus, sources that aid legitimacy depends on *home-grown* expectations of what the state should provide its people (McLoughlin, 2015L343). Sources of legitimacy in one country may undermine legitimacy in another. However, states cannot rely on one source of legitimacy, but different sources of legitimacy interact or co-exist (OECD, 2010:35). Therefore, a single source cannot legitimise power. In fragile states, reconciling traditional Western sources of legitimacy would not be valid as these states are often hybrid regimes (pluralism) with different sources of legitimacy that co-exist to shape society and institutions (OECD, 2010:37). These sources can either exist harmoniously or conflicting as in fragile states, posing a significant challenge for policy formulation to integrate customary practises into formal state law. Thus, achieving legitimacy in fragile states is a complex process. So how should states manage diversity without weakening the authority of the state? A solution is found in the principles of *grounded legitimacy*, which seeks ways to connect formal law and governance with local experiences to improve the effectiveness of new types of statehood (OECD, 2010:43).

While it is recognised that no single source can result in ultimate legitimacy, the state's capacity to provide its population with basic goods and services is a key source of state legitimacy. Rotberg's (2004:2-3) hierarchy of political goods, public services, and infrastructure are important determinants of a state's performance as it highlights the relationship between the state and society. Accordingly, a visible link exists between the state and society. Citizens pay taxes to the state, and, in turn, the state provides society with political goods and services (McLoughlin, 2015:342). In addition, service delivery does not only enhance the state's legitimacy, but this legitimacy provides the state with greater capacity and support to rule (McLoughlin, 2015:343). Thus, legitimacy cannot be achieved if the state does not guarantee population of growth and security.

As discussed in the previous section, the South African government have persistently experienced significant governance challenges in all spheres of government. This has resulted in poor service delivery, primarily due to maladministration, corruption, poor leadership, and the lack of resources. The lack of service delivery, coupled with the challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, often results in protest action as a means for communities to demonstrate their frustration and dissatisfaction with the government. In addition, the persistence of corruption in South Africa occurs in all three spheres of government which is a significant impediment to development and, therefore, not making progress in improving the lives of South Africans (Mfundo & Nokukhanya, 2019:7). In addition, many government institutions, organisations, and state-owned enterprises have failed to achieve their respective mandates (Gumede, 2019). For these reasons, most South Africans have lost their trust in the government's capacity to govern and are therefore viewed as ineffective and insufficient by its population (Masuku, 2019:118).

In addition, the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer showed that South Africa ranked lowest in trust in the four government institutions: government, business, NGO, and media (Zolfaghari, 2020). Consequently, the lack of trust in government results in citizens' loss of confidence and disappointment in democracy. Thus, the mere existence of government does not guarantee state legitimacy; what is needed is effective governance that prioritises development principles to ensure the delivery of basic public goods and services (Masuku, 2019:118). In the same way, trust in government is not found in progressive economic and social policies but rather in implementing those policies (Mantzaris & Pillay, 2017:66).

Trust in government is an important barometer of democracy's health in a country as it highlights the extent to which legitimacy is internalised by the people and their willingness to participate in political processes. On the contrary, a culture of distrust in government has resulted in the lack of government transparency and accountability in all spheres of government (Masuku, 2019:118). How can governments better connect with their people to restore trust and increase state legitimacy? A response to this complex question rests in the simple saying that *trust is earned* through accountability and transparency in political processes. If these elements are well enforced, trust in the government will increase state legitimacy. If these elements are disrespected, public trust in government will decrease, and the state will become illegitimate. These will be analysed below and applied to the South African context.

### ***i. Accountability and Transparency***

Trust in government is built on various social, economic, and political factors. There is no doubt that the principles of good governance are at the core of gaining citizen trust. Good governance refers to the existence of ethical codes and accountability and transparency mechanisms structured to detect poor governance and corruption and establish monitoring and evaluation

processes (Mantzaris & Pillay, 2017:65). Good governance is what makes “governance good” and includes principles such as accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, corruption control, openness, and the rule of law. (Mantzaris & Pillay, 2017:65). Thus, good governance refers to the internalised values and norms the government uses to govern. On the contrary, the factors that lead to the erosion of trust in government include corruption, violence, economic decline, poor performance, lack of service delivery, and the quality of government. Thus, it could be assumed that improvements in these areas could assist in rebuilding trust and prevent further erosion. Rebuilding citizen trust in government to increase state legitimacy would require government officials, organisations, and state institutions to be accountable and transparent to function effectively and efficiently. Accordingly, accountability and transparency initiatives have emerged to address developmental concerns and democratic deficits. Through accountability mechanisms, corruption allegations are uncovered, inefficiency is repaired, and public goods are delivered (Gaventa & McGee, 2016:2).

While transparency values the openness of democratic processes through feedback and reporting, promoting accountability by providing information about government activities, procedures, functioning and performance (Maropo, 2018:3-4). Consequently, governments globally are finding better ways of enhancing transparency by making information public and accessible. Transparency is believed to increase trust in government if citizens are included and made aware of the outcomes of government policies and decisions (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2012:139). Sharing information with the public can strengthen citizen understanding and satisfaction with public services. Thus, openness and transparency are key elements to fostering accountability and increasing trust in government which are essential for the functioning of democracy. It can be regarded as an advocate of legitimacy and accountability that establishes confidence between citizens and the government. On the contrary, the lack of transparency directly influences distrust in government and leads to citizen apathy in political processes (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2012:142).

South Africa is not unfamiliar with the lack of transparency and accountability and its consequences on trust and service delivery. Due to South Africa’s historical context, the democratic government has established various processes and structures to strengthen accountability through legislation and regulations to identify gaps, weaknesses, and inconsistencies. However, little success was achieved nearly 30 years into the new democratic dispensation. Most South Africans live below the poverty line, which makes them dependent on social grants, corruption is widespread, crime rates are higher than ever, service delivery is failing, and the unemployment rate reached a record high (Mbandlwa & Dorasamy, 2021:4). In addition, various measuring tools of income inequality indicate that the inequality gap in South Africa keeps

growing. Even though the inequality category changed from gaps between races to inequality gaps within races (Luyt, 2008:2). It would be wrong not to give credit to some of the achievements of the ANC-led government, such as access to water and sanitation, housing, and free education for the poor, however, these achievements did not result in lower poverty levels or job creation. Thus, the socio-economic challenges persist, which impedes development and poverty alleviation. To add to these problems, South Africa also has some of the highest reported crime rates in the world (Luyt, 2008:3). The mismanagement of state-owned enterprises has resulted in the collapse of many state institutions. For example, loadshedding results from corruption and mismanagement in South Africa's only major electricity provider, Eskom, which affects the country's daily operations and disrupts the population's livelihoods (Mbandlwa & Dorasamy, 2021:5). SAA (South African Airways) is another state-owned enterprise that became dysfunctional due to poor leadership, corruption and mismanagement, and all attempts to rescue the airline have failed (Mbandlwa & Dorasamy, 2021:5). These are only a few of the governance challenges that have caused the population to lose their trust in the government to provide solutions to the problems in the country.

Despite the government's pro-poor interventions, twenty-eight years of democracy do not have a good story to tell for the majority of South Africans. This is a clear indication of the government's failure to attend to the needs of the people. Ironically, while South Africa faces significant governance challenges, the ANC is deemed legitimate by the majority of the population as they have secured nearly three decades of rule. Above South Africa's socio-economic challenges, it is believed that the major obstacle to development in the country is poor governance. Poor governance does not only refer to corruption, but it also includes the generally poor performance of government institutions and officials that mismanages public resources, and the absence of political will to act against under-performance (Luyt, 2008:3). This results in poor service delivery implementation that eventually comes to undermine development objectives. The key source to improving the social outcomes for the poor is for government to improve service delivery, which requires managerial accountability and efficiency. In simple terms, accountability stresses endeavours to overcome unethical conduct since it is one of the biggest challenges to development and detrimental to governance (Kgobe and Mamokhere, 2021:2). It is the willingness and obligation to accept responsibility. Thus, all government officials, stakeholders, the private sector, and civil society should be accountable to the public for the execution of their duties (Kgobe & Mamokhere, 2021:3).

Accountability and transparency have become very important for South Africa, especially in local and provincial governments at the forefront of developmental agendas and poverty alleviation. However, the absence of effective accountability mechanisms only causes further frustration with

service delivery and results in protests that have spread like wildfire across South Africa. However, the former also indicates that citizens have a role to play in ensuring political accountability as a solution to service delivery failure and corruption. Citizens are responsible for reporting public officials' misconduct to the Public Protector's office. This calls for South Africans and civil society to take on a more active role in politics to hold the government accountable for their actions and address unethical conduct to foster poverty alleviation and development.

## **5.5 THE FEATURES THAT DEMONSTRATE DYSFUNCTION IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR**

The theoretical foundation that assisted with identifying the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa's economic sector was inspired by the works of Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. As explained in chapter three, *Why Nations Fail* (2013) sought to provide reasons why some countries prosper while others are plagued with poverty. Their answer to the problem is institutions. Robinson and Acemoglu (2013:372) argued that states fail because they adopt extractive economic institutions that does not provide citizens with the opportunities and resources to needed to save, invest, and innovate. As seen in Africa, extractive institutions are set to keep poor countries poor and ensure they do not embark on a path of economic growth (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013:398). The elite designs the economic institutions in such a way that would only benefit themselves at the expense of the people. Thus, extractive economic institutions create room for extractive political institutions to endure. This results in a vicious cycle that is not easy to overcome. Even more destructive, should extractive institutions create large inequalities in society without decent control, extractive institutions would allow the next regime, which will be even more extractive, to provoke continuous civic unrest that will result in more suffering for the people (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013:367). They provide a solution to redirect extractive institutions toward adopting inclusive institutions. Successful countries have inclusive institutions and pluralism and create opportunities to benefit all people (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013: 309). Acemoglu and Robinson's theory is simple; nations fail when they adopt extractive institutions, and they succeed when they adopt inclusive institutions.

The burning question is, where does this leave South Africa? South Africa is known to be an interesting and often difficult case to discuss. Right in the middle of the book, Acemoglu and Robinson (2013:160) provide an image of the order that separates the old Transkei and Natal. This image shows prosperity and development on one side (Natal) of the border and poverty on the other (old Transkei). Due to the country's long history of segregation and discrimination that resulted in high inequality and poor economic growth, South Africa developed a dual economy. Former president Thabo Mbeki explained metaphorically that South Africa is like a double-story

house without a connecting staircase. The top floor represents the wealthy and modern economy, and the bottom floor represents a different economy where the poor are trapped with limited opportunities and access to resources and facilities (Pressly, 2003). Thus, those trapped on the first floor can't enter the *formal economy* on the top floor because there is no staircase to lead them there (*staircase* is used metaphorically for education, employment, lack of skills etc.). In the same way, the prosperous Natal formed part of white South Africa that benefited from inclusive institutions, while the poor Transkei suffered under extractive institutions (Fowkes, 2012:72). Thus, the country's DNA comprises both extractive and inclusive institutions, and its future depends on which will dominate.

Inclusive institutions are democratic institutions that pave the way for prosperity by supporting plural interests, checks and balances, upholding the rule of law, and creating opportunities for people in society (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). These are all features present in South Africa. However, even though South Africa demonstrates inclusive institutions, they produce unsatisfactory results that lead to a highly unequal society. Inclusive failure is thus the result when democratic states have *unhealed trauma from the past* and are unprepared to deal with the threats that come with inclusive institutions.

There is a danger in establishing strong institutions combined with widespread inequalities. For the first decade in post-apartheid South Africa, the country experienced effective institutions supported and encouraged through cooperation with stakeholders and civil society. This resulted in economic growth that created opportunities for many, at least until limitations were reached. The achievements thus far have not changed the difficult living conditions for many South Africans, which created discontent and anger with the government for not keeping its promises of creating a better life for all (Levy *et al.*, 2021:40). Stagnant economic growth coupled with increased poverty and inequality resulted in economic decline and uneven economic development, significantly impacting South Africa's economic sector and showing clear signs of economic dysfunction. The three prominent features that demonstrate dysfunction in South Africa's economic sector will be discussed next.

### **5.5.1 Economic Decline and Poverty**

Economic decline and poverty as indicators of dysfunction focus on the patterns that display ongoing economic decay in society (Fund for Peace, 2017:8). The FSI provides an extensive list of possible indicators that can be used for analysis. This study will examine per capita income, gross national product (GNP), living standards, corruption, and capital flight issues in South Africa.

The economy of South Africa is rated the second largest on the African continent and the most industrialised and technologically advanced, with an upper-middle-income economy (Statista, 2021). The new democratic government brought about a relatively healthy economic growth rate that lasted until the 2008 global financial crisis, with economic growth comfortably moving between 4% and 6% (Trading Economics, 2015). Since then, the country has struggled to recover from the great tremor that hit the world economy in 2008. During the recession, almost one million jobs were lost, resulting in an unemployment rate of 25% in 2009 (Ravinder & Malindi, 2014:17). Since then, the path to economic recovery has been delicate.

The GDP provides the clearest indication of economic growth in a country. In 2020 the South African GDP decreased by 6.4% to a total of 335.44 billion U.S dollars, the lowest since 2016 (World Bank, 2021). It is inevitable that the Covid-19 pandemic greatly influenced GDPs globally, with the transport, construction, manufacturing and tourism sectors being the hardest hit for the longest time. A year after the pandemic, South Africa's GDP returned to pre-pandemic levels, which yielded a GDP growth rate of 4.9%, a total of 419.95 billion U.S dollars (World Bank, 2021). This is also the highest increase since 2012.

Despite having a vibrant economy and abundant resources in South Africa, the country still faces great economic disparities and poverty that hinder economic growth (World Bank, 2018: xiv). For nearly three decades, South Africa's government has placed poverty reduction and inequality as priority objectives in the many policies and programmes introduced. These policies can be traced back to the Reconstruction and Development Program introduced in 1993 to the current National Development Plan that aims to significantly reduce poverty and inequality by 2030 (NDP, 2021). Even though poverty has been reduced since 1994, inequality and unemployment remain stark, reversing the progress made and reproducing poverty. Thus, the country's economic position is unsustainable. The persistence and intensity of these challenges serve as a significant obstacle to democratic consolidation, as economic growth is conducive for democracy to thrive. So, does South Africa have a functioning economic sector? An analysis of the following indicators will provide us with the answer.

#### ***i. Standard of living***

Historically, development and growth were understood in terms of economic performance. This macroeconomic perspective uses the GDP to measure the standard of living, however, it does not measure the well-being of people. Thus, data may be misleading as the GDP does not distinguish between consumer and capital goods. However, the rationale and measures of development have changed over the years. Today, development and growth do not only entail economic performance, but the importance of human well-being is at the centre of development

that focuses on enabling conditions for people to live long and healthy lives, receive the education they are entitled to, and enjoy a good standard of living (Stewart, 2019:135). An important measurement tool is the Human Development Index, which measures human development in three categories: life expectancy, education, and decent living standard. Thus, the general standard of living in developing countries is low, as reflected in their limited access to education and resources, poor health, low incomes, and overall well-being. While the opposite accounts for developed or wealthier nations.

South Africa's democratic transition made great strides toward improving the lives of all South Africans, especially those who fell victim to an exploitative system. The transition has brought liberation and the importance of human dignity; however, the economic conditions for the majority remain unmoved. South Africa was ranked 114<sup>th</sup> on the HDI, placing the country in the 'high' development category (HDI, 2019). The graph also shows that the living standard has gradually increased since 2000; however, the country's growth rate has been lower than the global average. In addition, the average person in South Africa has a life expectancy of 64.1 years, he/she would attend school for 13.8 years and can expect an average annual income of 12.29 US dollars (HDI, 2019). Norway, ranked as the most developed country) has a life expectancy of 82.4 years, the average years of school received are 18.2 years, and the average income per capita is 66 494 US dollars (HDI, 2019).

This makes South Africa's 'high' development categorisation questionable. Is the HDI slightly too optimistic about South Africa's socio-economic prospects? The data shows that in 2020, 16.31 million South Africans lived below the poverty line, earning 1.90 U.S. dollars *daily* (Statista, 2021). That is one million more people who have moved into poverty since 2019. The figures are even more frightening when coupled with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, child hunger, household food insecurity and astonishing high unemployment rates. While there is no doubt that living standards have improved for many South Africans, poverty remains a defining feature of its society. Motloutse and Mears (2022:533) explained that poverty had become so deeply rooted in South Africa that it's considered a subculture that is passed on from one generation to the next. As such, poverty cycles are difficult to escape if the unemployment crisis is not addressed to secure income security.

## ***ii. Foreign Investment***

One of the biggest challenges the ANC government inherited was to restore and rebuild an inclusive, democratic, and economically stable society. Immediately after their successful election, the government implemented various socio-economic policies that focused on rebuilding a fragile economy, poverty alleviation and job creation. The analysis in this study has shown that

poverty, unemployment and inequality remain major constraints to South Africa's growth and development. Considering that the country's economic growth has been significant since its transition, South Africa's consolidation challenge remains to reduce the inequality gap and poverty (Kearsy, 2007:74). Foreign direct investment (FDI) is often viewed as a solution to encourage sustainable economic development. The World Bank (2002) argued that FDI helps to encourage development through exports, technology, skills transfer, and job creation. FDI can also alleviate the socio-economic struggles of unemployment and poverty. Thus, job creation should not be the only solution to increase economic growth, but the government should also introduce policies and establish attractive and favourable environments to draw foreign investors. Thus, the quality of a country's economic environment will determine how much FDI will impact growth (Masipa, 2014:22). FDI can only flourish in countries with a stable economic and political environment that encourages freedom of trade, movement and capital governed by market forces with minimal government interference (Vincent, 2014:180). Even though developing countries have experienced an increase in FDI over the years, Africa remains marginalised due to its unfriendly investment environments. Some factors that can negatively affect the flow of FDI in a country include low return on investments, high cost of labour, lack of natural resources, political instability and widespread corruption, and market size (Masipa, 2014:20-22).

Despite structural challenges, South Africa is considered to have one of the most developed and progressive economies on the continent. South Africa is also rich in mineral resources, such as gold, copper, diamonds and iron. Further, South Africa has a distinct manufacturing industry that is globally recognised for its railway rolling stock, artificial fuels, and mining equipment and machinery (Clark & Borgan, 1999:338). Thus, it is undeniable that South Africa is an appealing country for investment. The FDI increased from R22.7 billion in 2021 to R 27.2 billion in the first quarter of 2022 (Trading Economics, 2022). South Africa's foreign investor environment is primarily made up of investors from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Switzerland, China, and Canada (Masipa, 2018:4). However, the current rate of FDI is said to be somewhat disappointing and insufficient considering the country's economic size compared to other emerging market countries.

Many international investors regard South Africa as a country of concern and uncertainty (Cronjé, 2014:56). For example, despite South Africa's abundance of minerals, the country's mining investment was placed 64<sup>th</sup> out of 96 countries in 2013. Later in 2011, Trevor Manuel (then minister responsible for national planning) declared that South Africa's failing education system significantly threatened the country's economic growth. Furthermore, South Africa was recently downgraded to *junk status* by Moody's and Standard and Poor's (credit rating agencies) (Wasserman, 2020). This downgrade signals to investors that the country's debt has increased.

This means the government may not be able to repay borrowed money. A credit downgrade holds significant consequences for society and the people, such as increased taxes, increased inflation rates, and less money to spend on infrastructure and public services. Consequently, deteriorating investor sentiment is visible in the country.

Thus, South Africa should strive to attract FDI to facilitate socio-economic growth. But first, the country needs to focus on poverty reduction and job creation to improve the country's economic performance and create a stable and sustainable political and economic environment that would attract more FDIs.

### ***iii. Corruption***

Corruption has been a key economic impediment to many African countries and is often at the centre of analysis as a major indicator that affects economic growth and human development. Corruption is not only responsible for economic decline, but it also affects how resources are shared across a country, investment, taxation, and increases income inequality which results in lower levels of human development (Chêne, 2014:2). There is also a direct relationship between corruption and lower GDP rates that could undermine the achievement of long-term sustainable development (Chêne, 2014:3). Corruption in South Africa comes as no shock, and it's perhaps the country's oldest tradition. By 1994, corruption had been so deeply rooted in the functioning of government and politics in South Africa despite the efforts made to improve governance. Thus, dealing with challenges created over centuries would require more than removing high-profile individuals from top positions (Friedman, 2020). For example, even though former president Jacob Zuma has been impeached, corruption still thrives as the corrupt networks survive.

High levels of corruption are contrary to accountability which weakens democratic governance as it causes damage to the rule of law, social justice and lowers citizens' trust in political institutions and processes (Kubbe & Engelbert, 2017:175-178). Accordingly, corruption causes citizens to lose their confidence in the government. As experienced in South Africa, citizens often demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the government through violent protests due to the increased corruption and the economic impact it brings to citizens. Kroukamp (2006:209) argues that South Africans view "corruption as a major concern" in the public sector as it directly affects their livelihoods through poor service delivery, the erosion of legitimacy and the overall functioning of the state. The Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International, 2021) ranked South Africa in 70<sup>th</sup> place (out of 180 countries) with a score of 44 out of 100 based on its degree of corruption. Countries with scores lower than 50 are believed to be in real danger. This means that South Africa demonstrates high corruption in the public sector.

Corruption in South Africa is widespread and occurs in many forms and sectors throughout society. Corruption Watch, a civil society organisation, released in its annual report for 2021 that over 3000 whistleblowers across the country have reported allegations of corruption and mismanagement (Corruption Watch, 2021:30). Thus, bringing the number of corruption reports to a cumulative total of 36 224 since 2012 (Corruption Watch, 2021:30). In addition, the majority of complaints were from the Gauteng province (45%), followed by the Western Cape (10%) and KwaZulu-Natal (10%) (Corruption Watch, 2021:32). Despite a robust civil society and anti-corruption efforts, "government spending that has not been either recovered, condoned or written off stood at R488.14-billion" (Heywood, 2022). Thus, to combat public sector corruption, there must first be a clear and deep understanding of what allows corruption to thrive and then develop long-term anti-corruption strategies that the public sector should fully implement to reduce opportunities for corruption and corrupt behaviour to take place (Manyaka & Nkuna, 2014:1577). Furthermore, Wright (2022) argued that whistleblower protection in South Africa must be improved to ensure they can participate throughout the investigation. By protecting whistleblowers, it may encourage more people to expose corruption.

### ***5.5.2 Uneven Economic Development***

Unequal economic development as a feature of dysfunction has little to do with the actual performance of the economy, but it looks at the structural inequalities that exist within an economy (Fund for Peace, 2017:9). Structural inequalities pay specific attention to groups (racial, ethnic or identity), education and economic status, or region (urban-rural divide).

Inequality in South Africa has long been a striking feature of its society, rooted in a history of colonialism and apartheid, which exacerbate economic challenges. Not only is inequality widespread, but it also remains persistent. The Gini coefficient, a measurement of inequality, provides a clear image of South Africa's unequal distribution of income and wealth. For many years, South Africa's Gini coefficient was the highest in the world, leading to the country being labelled as the most unequal country, with a Gini score of 67 in 2018 (World bank, 2022). This is a significantly high score which indicates the country's skewed distribution of wealth and income. Despite the many policy initiatives and programmes implemented by the democratic government to redress the injustice of the past, progress has been minimal. Inequality in South Africa is very complex and challenging to overcome. Not only are there disparities in income between people, but a racial dimension was inherited that creates even wider gaps between the white and black populations (Cronjé, 2017:47). The variations of structural inequality in South Africa are extensive, ranging from income, assets, education, healthcare, basic services and infrastructure, life expectancy, crime, consumer goods etc. It is impossible to address all these inequalities in South

African society, therefore, this study will examine the most significant dimension of inequality that impacts South Africa.

### **i. Income inequality and unemployment**

The economic sector arguably provides the sharpest indication of a country's functionality and civic well-being. By looking at economic statistics, we can identify the extent to which citizens can access and participate in the economy (Cronjé, 2014:54). The driver of income inequalities rests within the employment dimension. In South Africa, very few people actively participate in the country's economy through employment, as the country reached a record-high unemployment rate of 34.9% in the third quarter of 2021 (Stats SA, 2021). South Africa's performance is far worse than its BRICS alliance partners. In 2020, the unemployment rate in South Africa was 29.2%, followed by Brazil (11.6%), Russia (5.8%), India (4.8%) and China at 4.2% (BRICS, 2021:2). The difference in income inequality can further be narrowed down to national statistics. In addition, the data shows that the labour market is more favourable to men than women: the unemployment rate among men is at 32.9%, and women at 37.3% in 2021 (Stats SA, 2021). Adding a racial dimension complicates the matter further. The official unemployment rate for black women in 2021 was 41.5%, compared to coloured women at 29% and white women at 9.9% (Stats SA, 2021).

Even more alarming is the youth (15-34 years) unemployment rate at 55% in the first quarter of 2022 (Stats SA, 2022). No country can expect to grow socially or economically when most of its youth are unemployed with few career opportunities. At first, unemployment is regarded as an economic issue; however, it also threatens people's quality of life and human dignity. Even though many reasons contribute to unemployment, one of the biggest drivers of youth unemployment is the lack of education and skill shortages and the slow labour market absorption of young people (Cloete, 2015:514-515). In addition, the demand for labour has decreased due to the shift to capital-intensive resources that require highly skilled and experienced labour, leaving both the graduate student and the uneducated at risk (Mabaso, 2013:4). Consequently, young people are left feeling betrayed by the government and excluded from the economy and society as they realise their lives have not changed for the better as they hoped (Cloete, 2015:514). The unemployment rate in South Africa is far beyond the level of only looking to the government to solve the problem. The solution relies on the cooperation between the state and private sector to implement long-term and short-term schemes and policies to reduce youth unemployment by improving and increasing access to education, skills training, and job creation (Mabaso, 2013:5).

The discriminatory segregation policies introduced by the apartheid regime have had a deep influence on inequality in South Africa (Kearsy, 2007:64). Health, education, and

other public services were only available to the white population at the expense of the black population. In addition, despite various initiatives aimed at creating an environment for inclusive growth that would improve the living standards of the poor in South Africa, the country remains a highly unequal society in terms of income and earnings. South Africa is a country where the richest 10% of the population owns more than 85% of household wealth (Sguazzin, 2021). The slogan “black is poor, white is rich” is no longer valid as data shows that there are more black South Africans than whites making up the richest 10% of the population (Cronjé, 2014:46). However, this does not solve the inequality problem as the gap between the wealthy and the poor remains significant and poverty is still a challenge for most of the population, living paycheck-to-paycheck. The reality is that in 2015, 47% of black households were living in poverty, compared to 23% of coloured households, and only 1% of white households were experiencing poverty (World Bank, 2018:13). Six years later, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) recorded that 64% of the black population are living in poverty, followed by 40% of the coloured population (Nqola, 2021). These statistics reflect that racial disparity remains predominant in South Africa as an enduring and unresolved legacy of apartheid and colonialism.

There is a negative and mutually reinforcing relationship that exists between unemployment and income inequality in South Africa. The levels of racialised unemployment and inequality are mainly a result of the country's apartheid legacy that intentionally and legally excluded the non-white population from political, economic and social life. Income inequality itself is a challenge but coupled with high levels of unemployment is detrimental to economic growth. This essentially means that higher inequality means higher poverty rates and slower growth. In addition, inequality also weakens social cohesion (UNDP, 2013). Research shows that deep economic, social, political and cultural inequalities among different social groups can increase violent conflict (Rohwerder, 2016:41). Thus, if income inequality is not addressed, the consequences are increased crime rates, decreased health, political instability and corruption, poor access to education, unemployment, and economic decay (Birdsong, 2015). There is also a connection between different inequalities; one kind can reinforce the other. This interconnectedness can result in some groups (gender, race, religion or economic status) being excluded from certain opportunities or services (UNDP, 2013). For example, income inequality causes the poor to have fewer opportunities or access than wealthier citizens. Thus, reducing income inequality is vital to reducing other inequalities and improving opportunities (UNDP, 2013). What effect does income inequality have on the people of South Africa? In essence, people's income or wealth will eventually determine the quality of services and infrastructure they will have access to or can afford.

As a result of the high unemployment rate and racial income discrepancies, vast inequalities exist among South Africans that will determine their access to public sector services. The high levels of unemployment labelled South Africa as having one of the highest percentages of people living below the poverty line, affecting most of the population. School attendance is largely dependent on the socio-economic status of households. The data shows that 49.2% of the adult population in South Africa lives in poverty (Stats SA, 2019). This means that almost half of the population doesn't have access to quality and sufficient services. Consider education as an example.

Inequalities in education are largely a consequence of the rural-urban divide brought by the apartheid government that is still present today. The rural areas (former Bantustans) became known as "sites of struggle" characterised by poverty, weak infrastructure and poor services that have spilled over into democratic South Africa (De Jager, 2015:43). Consequently, there is a dangerous relationship between inequality, education, and poverty in South Africa. The data shows school attendance was at 18.1% for the poorest income group and 60.3% for the highest income group (Stats SA, 2022). In addition, only 20% of schools in South Africa are said to be functional, leaving 80% of schools indicating poor performance (De Clercq, 2020:2). The country's bimodal educational system mirrors the harsh socio-economic realities for the majority of the people. The new democratic government acknowledged the importance of education and made many commitments to make education inclusive and accessible for all. Despite some progress, poverty and inequality prevent many children and youth from accessing the quality education they need and are entitled to. Their future and opportunities largely depend on which side of the divide they are based.

### ***5.5.3 Human Flight and Brain Drain***

The African continent is experiencing major losses of skilled individuals, affecting its development and growth, ranging from information technology specialists, nurses, engineers, teachers, and academics. Brain drain, a process in which a country loses its skilled and educated population through migration for better opportunities (Sajjad, 2011:33), holds significant challenges for a country's socio-economic development as it depends greatly on a skilled workforce. The causes of brain drain are presented by Lee's simple push-pull model. The push factors relate to unfavourable conditions in the country of emigration (leaving one's country) that encourage skilled individuals to "look for greener pastures" (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius, 2006:30). Some of the most common push factors include human insecurity, crime and violence, poor economic prospects and stagnation, and dissatisfaction with political and social conditions. On the contrary, pull factors refer to the favourable and attractive conditions in the immigrating country (to live in a foreign country) (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius, 2006:30). Pull factors can include human security, safety, better work and educational opportunities, and economic and political stability.

This section will analyse the impact of emigration due to brain drain and human flight on South Africa's socio-economic development by utilising the indicators (but are not limited to) presented by the Failed States Index (FSI). According to the FSI, brain drain and human flight as features of dysfunction look at the economic causes and consequences of human displacement due to economic and political motivations focusing on (not limited to) features such as a widening economic gap, extractive systems, equal access to education and skills training, job creation or job losses, safety, and human security (Fund for Peace, 2017:9).

Brain drain is no different in South Africa. Post-apartheid South Africa has seen more skilled individuals emigrating to other countries (Western countries), which undoubtedly affects economic growth (Mlambo & Adetiba, 2019:1). Moreover, so does the young and educated population strive for better prospects by looking beyond the African continent. Recent statistics showed that almost 12% of educated graduates in South Africa actively consider emigrating in the next two years with no intention of returning (Montsho, 2022). Should this materialise, South Africa is set to face a significant brain drain due to skill shortages. Interestingly, many young people in other African countries are increasingly immigrating to South Africa as they view South Africa as "the land of milk and honey". The most common destinations young South Africans seek to immigrate to are Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Europe, the UK, or the US (Crush, 2002:151). Besides, South Africa has arguably the most advanced higher education sector on the African continent, providing educated people with transferable skills valued and needed in other industrial countries. This results in other countries scooping up skilled South Africans, an action referred to as "brain raiding" (Crush, 2002:155).

Lee's push and pull factors can help us understand why skilled South Africans choose to emigrate. These are some of the most common reasons.

#### **i. Push-factors**

The push factors are those conditions that force people to leave their country of residence due to socio-economic or political reasons (Mlambo & Adetiba, 2019:5). Brain drain and human flight are certainly not new phenomena in South Africa and can be traced back to pre-apartheid era when people (mostly white) emigrated due to political and economic uncertainty. However, in post-apartheid South Africa the reasons for emigration range from corruption and a lack of accountability, increased crime levels, poor living conditions, a stagnant economy, civic unrest, discriminatory economic policies, poor education and healthcare, and unemployment (Mlambo & Adetiba, 2019:5; Mattes & Mniki, 2007:25; Montsho, 2022).

#### **ii. Pull-factors**

Pull factors do exactly the opposite by providing attractive conditions that pull foreigners into a certain location (Mlambo & Adetiba, 2019:5). Typical pull factors include; better employment opportunities and growth, improved living conditions, political stability, religious/individual freedom, greater education and welfare systems, efficient public transportation, safe societies, free or improved healthcare systems, and security (Kazlauskienė & Rinkevičius, 2006:30-3; Mlambo & Adetiba, 2019:5).

Most literature is focused on the negative aspects of brain drain and human flight. Although, some scholars focus on the positive aspects arguing that 'loss' also brings 'gains' (Mattes & Mniki, 2007:25). Not only do emigrants earn a good income abroad, but they also acquire skills that will be passed on when they return. Thus, some prefer to use the terms 'transfer', 'exchange' and 'circulation' instead of brain drain (Mattes & Mniki, 2007:25). Attracting foreign talent is important to enhance expertise in various sectors as it contributes significantly to economic growth. Even though South Africa has managed to attract international skills (mainly from Asia and Africa), the environments must exist for "pull factors" to flourish to continue to attract skilled professionals. This is an unsustainable method. Due to the country's worrying socio-economic conditions, skilled professionals can decide to leave South Africa anytime, reinforcing the challenges of an unskilled labour force. One of the biggest barriers for South Africa to attracting foreign talent is xenophobic attacks on other African nationals (Mlambo & Adetiba, 2019:4). The basic understanding behind xenophobic attacks rests upon the idea that South Africans believe that foreign (African) nationals are stealing their jobs at a time when the country's unemployment rate broke record level, and poverty raged. Over ten attacks on foreign nationals were recorded between 2008 and 2015 throughout the country, resulting in many injuries and deaths (Bekker, 2015). The government's inability to successfully solve xenophobia deprives South Africa of knowledge and skills, which threatens the country's image as an inclusive, welcoming, and tolerant country.

South Africa's economic growth depends highly on the availability of a skilled and educated nation. Due to the dire socio-economic conditions in the country, experts and professionals from different sectors are slowly emigrating as the government is losing the battle against brain drain. Thus, the government's vision of South Africa as an infrastructural and economic hotspot on the African continent may only be another dream. However, many factors fall outside the government's control to deal with the challenge of brain drain, such as curiosity and desire for international exposure. However, a good start would be implementing effective policies focused on economic growth and development that creates education and job opportunities for all.

## 5.6 THE FEATURES THAT DEMONSTRATE DYSFUNCTION IN THE SOCIAL SECTORS

The theoretical foundation that assisted with identifying the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa's social sector was inspired by Joel S Migdal's State-in-Society approach is discussed in chapter three of this study. This approach provides an alternative perspective to understanding the nature of politics in the context of state weakness. The normative understanding of the state rests upon the claim that the state is the sole paradigm of political order. Thus, it believes the state is the only entity to impose binding rules on its citizens (Lambach, 2004:4). This thinking places great pressure on state institutions as it is seen as the only solution to society's problems. Even though Migdal recognises the state's central role, he argued that it does not exist or operate in isolation, but "states may help mould, but they are also continually moulded by the societies within which they are embedded" (Lambach, 2004:3). Migdal interprets society not as a monolithic entity but as "a mélange of social organisations" made up of families, businesses, organisations, cultures, etc. (Migdal, 1988:37). Thus, the state is only one organisation between many communities that shape society.

Consequently, a power struggle emerges between the state and society, and the distribution of social control determines whether the state will grow stronger or weaker. This is what Migdal termed *fragmented social control* – when many organisations and the state compete for dominance (Migdal, 1988:36-37). Should the state lose its social control over society, society will dominate the state. Migdal identified three indicators that would assist us in determining the state's social control level: compliance, participation, and legitimation. The level of social control that the state has is determined by how many people obey (compliance) and apply (participation) its rules and believe them to be right and good (legitimation) (Migdal, 2088:3-33). Thus, how the state experiences and exercises social control in society will determine whether consolidation will be reached, or dysfunction will occur. Where the state's social control is high, there the state is strong.

In developing countries, states continue to struggle to achieve predominance. The ineffectiveness of these states in gaining predominance is largely due to the resistance from society and its different groups and organisations (Migdal, 1988:33). The high level of group diversity in *web-like* society (see chapter 3 for definition) is a great obstacle to the state to define its role in society and establish social control (Migdal, 1988:37). In such countries, there is great structural conflict over how social life should be organised. Thus, state dysfunction occurs when states display fragmented social control. However, this does not mean that web-like societies are doomed to failure. We have seen how web-like societies survive with fragmented social control among

various organs of society by having their own rules instead of a centralised state or organisations endorsed by the state. In countries that display a high fragmentation of social control, the state and its leaders would want to prevent any external forces from dominating by making non-merit appointments, cabinet reshuffling, blackmail and other “dirty tricks” (Migdal, 1988:214-226)

By Utilising the Fragile States Index, the two indicators that could best assist in analysing the extent of fragmented social control in South Africa, are fractionalised elites and group grievance.

### **5.6.1 Group Grievance**

The group grievance indicator of state dysfunction emphasises the divisions based on social and political traits that exist in society (FSI, 2017:7). Group grievances usually have a historical element that causes pain and grief to certain groups as a result of past injustices that continues to influence and shape their role in society and relationships with other groups (FSI, 2017:7).

The apartheid regime in South Africa was a far right-wing government that advocated for racial separation that eventually transformed society along racial divisions. The consequences of the white minority regime are so deep that the country still faces many obstacles that hinder its process of democratic consolidation. Apartheid reinforced fragmentation in South Africa that is difficult to reverse. The new democracy is continuously doubted and questioned whether the state can manage political and social conflict and unrest in a highly divided and poor society. These questions highlight the uncertainty of South Africa’s consolidation and stress that the future of democracy in the country cannot be guaranteed (Southall, 1998:443). Although the apartheid regime was abolished almost three decades ago, restoration is an ongoing and difficult process. Shortly after the country’s democratic transition, a new constitution was built on the principles that promote individual freedom, equality and human dignity (Bornman, 2006:385). Many developmental policies, schemes, and programs were introduced to transform society and improve South Africans’ lives. In addition, the Constitution of South Africa is celebrated and respected globally. Yet, progress has been slow. As mentioned throughout this study, the country still faces many social, economic, and political challenges. In addition, South Africa remains a deeply divided society along racial lines as a legacy of the oppressive regime. Therefore, the mere existence of democratic institutions alone is not sufficient to transform a deeply divided society. Thus, having pro-poor and developmental agendas in place does not guarantee economic growth or stability, but the outcomes and effectiveness of these policies and schemes depend on the implementation thereof. The divisions that exist in society today can be understood by investigating the South African government’s post-conflict response to determine their successes or failures.

### ***i. Post-conflict response***

The post-conflict response indicator deals with the South African government's response in the post-1994 era to address past injustices. It typically looks at whether the disadvantaged groups have been reintegrated into society, the success or failure of reconstruction and development policies and programmes, and whether resources are distributed equally amongst all citizens (FSI, 2017).

After a negotiated transition to democracy, South Africa established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to address past human violations suffered by the majority and to restore structural injustice (Stanley, 2001:525). The TRC is considered the most ambitious attempt to bring restoration amongst its people through a process of *truth-telling* about human rights violations that occurred during the previous regime (Norval, 1998:251). However, the TRC's approach to justice does not relate to the meting out of punishment for a crime committed, but it is built on the foundation of justice as *acknowledgement*. It was believed that public recognition and acknowledgement of injustices create the possibility of reconciliation (Norval, 1998:254). Thus, through the TRC, South Africa decided to remember the past but chose forgiveness over amnesty and prosecutions for the crimes committed against humanity. However, the TRC was greatly criticised for addressing social and economic transformation. Firstly, the transition to democracy occurred through a process of negotiated settlements rather than by a revolution. This process shaped the TRC's approach to not "rock the structural boat", which led to a reconciliation plan that would not challenge the status quo (Stanley, 2001:526). The ANC aimed to avoid further social fragmentation and therefore prioritised the *victims* at the centre of legislation and developmental and transformation agendas (Krog, 1998:5).

Secondly, even though the TRC succeeded in publicly acknowledging the suffering and hardships caused by the exploitative system, the TRC failed to meet its objective to restore injustices through transformation and reparations. Instead, the new government introduced the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) to restore the fragmented social structures bequeathed by apartheid (Habib, 2013:6). It is acknowledged that GEAR succeeded in facilitating economic growth, but it also left millions unemployed that resulted in a rising gap between the rich and the poor (Habib, 2013:7). A third critique of the TRC lies in the argument that the "J" (justice) is missing in TRC (Tuazon, 2019). The apartheid system legalised separation, exclusion, relocation, and discrimination along racial lines. Consequently, the TRC pursued a restorative approach that would prevent any form of human violations in the future. However, this approach was unsuccessful in redressing the wrongs of the past, and so the government has failed to promote unity and social cohesion as the victims are expected to carry on as usual (Tuazon, 2019). Justice had not been served even though it formed part of the objectives of the TRC. Thus,

it could be argued that the divisions in South Africa today are not only due to failed economic policies but also the failure of the government to successfully restore the injustices of the past to enable unity and social cohesion amongst all South Africans.

## *ii. Group Divisions*

South African society is a product of racial segregation and conflict caused by three centuries of slavery, colonialism, and apartheid. The latter enforced subgroup identities through strict spatial, political, social, and cultural engineering processes, creating separate spaces for whites, blacks, coloured and Indians (Bornman, 2014:181). The forced segregation resulted in minimal social and cultural interaction between racial groups. Consequently, one of the most challenging tasks the post-apartheid government inherited was to create a new social, cultural, economic and symbolic infrastructure for all South Africans. Even after the abolishment of racial segregation in 1994, it was argued that South Africa lacked a sense of nationhood and an overarching national identity (Bornman, 2014:182). Thus, despite efforts made since 1994, the country remains deeply divided spatially, economically, and socially. Professor Steven Friedman provided a simple yet complex solution to the problem: “The fault lies not in our transition but in ourselves” (Bradfield, 2013). He argued that the complex set of socio-economic challenges the country is faced with is the consequence of the ANC's inability to successfully deal with the first transition that was supposed to create a strategy that would steer us through inequalities (Bradfield, 2013). Thus, the government should realise that any significant and sustainable change cannot be achieved without negotiating with vital societal actors. The solution to closing and addressing the divisions in society starts with reducing the inequality gap that exists in the country's economic and social structures.

One example of segregation can be found in South Africa's educational system. Segregation along racial and socio-economic lines remains a critical concern in post-apartheid South Africa. The current education system is a legacy of the apartheid regime that deprived the black population of quality education which was also poorly resourced. Today, the narrative has not changed much. Even though “whites-only” schools no longer exist, the reality is that most white students are wealthy while most black students are poor (Sikhakane & Reddy, 2011). In addition, a study by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) found that the former “white” schools are not only desirable, but they also perform the best (Madiba, 2022). The same study also concluded that “the average white child attends a school that is 70% white, and the average black child attends a school that is 96% black” (Madiba, 2022). Thus, if inequality in the education system is not addressed, it will become more difficult to overcome the problem that only reproduces the cycle of inequality. Inclusive and quality education for all can be the vehicle for greater equality

and economic growth by reducing poverty and creating opportunities that can bring people together and boost democracy (Walker et al., 2019:6).

### **5.6.2 Fractionalised Elites**

The fractionalised elite indicator as a feature of dysfunction considers power struggles, defectors, and political competition (FSI, 2017). It also looks at the use of nationalistic political expressions by ruling elites. This study will specifically analyse the features of representative leadership and national identity in South Africa.

It is evident that underdevelopment in Africa is not only due to the legacy of colonialism but, even more so, they are intensified by global changes and demands that cause excessive burdens on African leaders, resulting in poor decisions and mismanagement (Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2020:32). The lack of ethical leadership poses significant challenges to the development of Africa. Many African leaders lack a commitment to good governance, respect for the rule of law, human rights, and accountability which are often manifested by the abuse of power, corruption, and a lack of political will (Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2020:33). The crisis of leadership coupled with the legacy of poverty, hunger and inequality is why many African countries are labelled as weak, fragile, or failed. Now we can ask how good governance and democratic consolidation are possible under such conditions. Establishing democratic governance that fosters human security, functional institutions, and social justice can only be achieved through ethical leadership (Mayanja, 2013). However, this is not a spontaneous process to instil ethical values in leaders. Strengthening leadership requires a “mental and structural revolution” to change the system and thinking of leaders (Ngwane 2003:1). Consequently, achieving sustainable structural transformation requires breaking the cycle of self-serving and ignorant leaders.

While battling the unfavourable challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, the lack of ethical leadership is not unfamiliar in South Africa. The current state of dysfunction and civic restlessness in the country is due to the ANC's lack of response to address the socio-economic ills of society coupled with widespread corruption and mismanagement. This has left the ruling party on the defensive in explaining itself and the leadership style it represents. The following section will analyse the leadership crisis in South Africa as a feature that demonstrates state dysfunction.

#### ***i) Representative Leadership***

In 1994, a collective decision was made through a process of negotiations to adopt a decentralised system to shift political, fiscal and administrative power from a centralised government to subnational governments (Faguet, 2014:3). The main reason for adopting the

decentralised theory rests upon the proximity of local government to the people, as a centralised government is “too far” removed from communities to deliver goods and services efficiently to the people (Khambule, 2021:24). Furthermore, decentralisation can create inclusive societies through participation and strengthen democracy (Khambule, 2021:24). Despite the theory's importance in promising accountability and better service provision, decentralisation has not positively impacted developing countries. In South Africa, the challenges inherited from the apartheid regime were aggravated by local governments' inability to address developmental and service delivery challenges. Consequently, protest action has increased significantly, which is mostly due to poor service delivery concerns (Cronjé, 2014:60). Bearing in mind the nation's current state, one is left asking whether the decentralised approach was the best decision for South Africa, considering the massive service delivery backlog that needed to be addressed.

The shift to decentralisation was adopted as it was believed that the central government lacked direct access, knowledge, and experience of communities to develop policies aimed at development for the micro level (Grindle, 2007). Section 152 of the Constitution makes specific provisions for municipalities to “promote social and economic development, structure and manage its administration, budget and planning processes to give priority to meet the basic needs of communities” (RSA, 1996:187). Thus, local government was assigned the important task of ensuring that the millions of people drowning in poverty and unemployment are provided with opportunities and services to improve their lives. However, many South African municipalities have failed to meet these objectives due to a lack of capacity, poor understanding of local communities, inability to plan and budget, and lack of coordination between the central state and local government (Khambule, 2021:23). Moreover, local government became synonymous with corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of political will (Twalla, 2012:200). Thus, effective decentralisation requires more than having the right policies and meeting legislative requirements. There is a need for ethical leadership and the political will that would foster the existence of a capable bureaucracy. Due to the fragmentation of political, administrative and fiscal power brought by decentralisation, the ANC is showing fragmentation of social control and tends to display “politics of survival” behaviour as a means to retain their power through cabinet/elite reshuffling, making non-merit appointments, and play all kinds of “dirty tricks” as explained by Migdal (1988). However, playing the “politics of survival” game does not mean government leaders have the interest of the people or the state at heart, but the game is played for the mere survival or benefit of the political party or themselves, often at the cost of the people.

Decentralisation entails the fragmentation of power among various subsectors in society, which can be detrimental to new democracies if effective coordination and management are not applied. Perhaps decentralisation was not the best option to rebuild a democratic and inclusive South

Africa; what was needed was the deconcentration of power. Through deconcentration, responsibilities, administrative powers, and resources are transferred to local and regional governments, yet power still rests in the central government and would exercise its oversight role (Khambule, 2021: 26). Even though the deconcentration approach is criticised for not allowing local government political, fiscal, and administrative autonomy, South Africa could have adopted a model proposed by Utomo (2009), that deconcentration paves the way for decentralisation. The model proposes that once a new democracy has built the required capacity and institutional structures to thrive, deconcentration can lead to fully decentralised subnational governments. Indonesia is an excellent example of a country that effectively adopted a deconcentration approach. Today, Indonesia remains one of the world's fastest-growing economies (World Bank, 2022).

### ***ii) National Identity***

After the successful democratic transition, the new South African government abolished racial segregation and restored territorial unity. After 48 years of racial segregation, the country began a long process of reconstructing the country's political, economic, and social landscapes. Yet, South Africa is thought to demonstrate a lack of nationhood and a sense of unity, and a South African nation is still to be formed (Bornman, 2014:181). A logical point of departure for the ANC was to embark on a path towards nation-building, a process in which many symbols and events were introduced to construct a united democratic South Africa. The first distinct symbol was the introduction of the new national flag, followed by the draft of a new national anthem and a constitution constructed on human dignity, equality, freedom, and the rule of law (Bornman, 2006:385). And finally, South Africa became known as a symbol of hope and reconciliation, unity in diversity, otherwise known as the Rainbow Nation. The rainbow metaphor represents the different cultural and racial groups living in harmony and unity (Bornman, 2006:384).

The ANC's Rainbow Nation strategy was found on the principles of interculturalism, which acknowledges sameness by reducing conflict and fostering social collaborations among different cultural groups (Stinson, 2009:2). In addition, the new government established a national civic culture centred on the values of liberal democracy, equality, anti-racism, and the protection of individual rights (Stinson, 2009:2). These are crucial features the ANC adopted to promote participation in establishing a sense of public unity and building a just and democratic South Africa. Rather than containing a single national identity, race continues to define the identities of many. South African society is still deeply divided along spatial, racial and cultural lines; therefore, the vision of a united South Africa remains only an illusion.

South Africa's approach to nation-building has been debated and highly criticised. According to Bauman (1998), the purpose of any nation-building initiative is to replace subnational cultures and identities and to create a supra-national identity that symbolises "one state, one nation". This approach to achieving a single national identity is also reflected in former president Nelson Mandela's words that South Africa only consists of South Africans, not whites or blacks (Ramsamy, 2007:471). However, this nation-building approach is unsuitable for a country rich in cultural diversity, such as South Africa. Degenaar (1994), as cited in Bornman (2006:389), argues that cultural diversity should be valued and respected in a country and not be melted down into one identity. Creating one national identity in a country with a magnitude of diversity can result in some groups not feeling that they belong or being unable to express their individuality and culture, thereby creating even more division and fraction in society. Even though many citizens identify as South African, most strongly identify with their cultural and racial identity or language groups. Thus, the kind of national identity South Africa should strive for should be based on loyalty to the constitution and the country and not on melting down a multitude of diversities into one single identity.

However, South Africa has received little support from its people regarding having one national identity. The primary reason rests upon the vast inequalities in the country. Even though a handful of people benefit from poverty relief initiatives and empowerment programs, most South Africans suffer from ever-worsening socio-economic conditions. Consequently, the greatest obstacle to achieving a national united South Africa is the increasing discontent with the government's inability to provide citizens with basic services. As such, civil society has stepped up in the face of the government's failure to perform its basic functions and has since been regarded as a prerequisite for consolidation. The section below will discuss the importance and role of civil society in strengthening democracy.

## **5.7 CIVIL SOCIETY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Civil society in South Africa played a significant role in the fight against a system of segregation that resulted in the abolishment of apartheid and transformed society into a multiparty democracy. Not often does regime change significantly impact society, but South Africa's transition to democracy fundamentally transformed its society to the extent that civil society was remoulded as experienced today (Habib, 2013:147). The outcome was the emergence of three distinct blocks encompassing non-government organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs) and community-based organisations, and survivalist and informal communities, all of which have different relationships with the state. Hence, civil society shape, and was also shaped by the country's political and economic history. Before South Africa's transition from autocratic rule, civil

society organisations (CSOs) were largely racially divided, of which most of the white civil society formed a collaborative (pro-apartheid) relationship with the state.

In contrast, the black civil society adopted a conflictual relationship (anti-apartheid) with the state (National Development Agency, 2008:3). During this time, the primary objective of anti-apartheid organisations was to advocate for social and economic justice. The racial divide amongst CSOs began to dissolve during the democratic negotiation period as large parts of white civil society removed themselves from the apartheid regime. Under apartheid, CSOs were closely aligned with the ANC in the fight toward freedom and liberation, however, in post-apartheid South Africa this relationship became conflictual (Asuelime, 2017:55). In contemporary South Africa, the focus of CSOs has shifted to service delivery and development as the country is facing a series of governance challenges (Graham, 2015:177). Accordingly, civil society has an important role in safeguarding democracy and protecting human and civil liberties.

South Africa's robust civil society became the last line of defence against corruption, the abuse of power by elected government officials, service delivery failure, and holding government officials accountable (Gumede, 2018). The success of the South African civil society is demonstrated by its ability to force two ANC presidents – former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma — out of power as a consequence of their undemocratic behaviour (Gumede, 2018). In addition, civil society has called out anti-democratic principles, provided public services where the government failed to do so, educated the public on their democratic rights, advocated for socio-economic reform, and continues to fight against out-of-control corruption (Gumede, 2018). The media in South Africa also play a significant role in overseeing the political and social landscapes. Over the years, the media and whistleblowers have played an important watchdog role, calling out misconduct and corruption allegations by the ANC and individual government officials (Graham, 2015:178).

An important segment of South African civil society is the role of protest movements and demonstrations. The country's protest culture dates back to the apartheid era as a means to fight against the oppressive regime. Today protest action continues as a means for citizens to demonstrate against the abuse of power or the lack of service delivery and are more likely to occur in areas with the highest levels of economic and social deprivation. (Freedom House, 2020). South Africa is commonly known as “the protest capital” of the world (Runciman, 2017), as a “violent democracy” due to the consistent rate at which protests are increasing and becoming destructive to society (Von Holdt, 2013:590), or as the “restless nation” as people are faced with challenges of corruption, poverty, poor service delivery and unemployment (Gumede, 2012:89). Moreover, Alexander (2010) describes the frequency and intensity of protests in South Africa as “a rebellion of the poor” as communities take to the streets their frustration and dissatisfaction

with service delivery and the poor quality of democracy. The latter highlights that protest action had become a form of expression by the people against the decline of democracy. This approach believes that protest action mainly happens due to increasing inequalities, corruption, and undermining of the right and quality of life of South Africans (Runciman, 2017:423). On the other hand, protests occur to hold governments accountable and are essentially about demanding better service delivery (Booyesen, 2007:21).

Post-apartheid social movements in South Africa are largely a response to the governments' embrace of neoliberal policies which was meant to rid the country of economic inequality and poverty. However, these legacies are not only left unresolved but has intensified and became deeply entrenched in the country's social, economic, and political landscapes. Therefore, socio-economic rights such as access to housing, water and sanitation, employment, social security, and health care remains a far-reaching dream for many South Africans. In effect, post-apartheid South Africa has demonstrated a sharp increase in social inequality, especially in the environment of neo-liberal macroeconomic policies (Stokke & Oldfield, 2005:127). As a result, national and local resistance to economic disempowerment and poor service delivery are widespread and occur frequently across the country. This "double movement", defined as resistance against neoliberal pressures, is most obviously manifested around service protests, electricity and sanitation, high tertiary education fees, and access to retroviral medications (Bond & Mottiar, 2018:393).

The severity of protests in South Africa brings significant financial losses to the economy. Violent protests result in infrastructural damage and loss of lives. In addition, the frequency of demonstrations is a sign of political and social instability that can affect foreign investment in the country (Botes, 2018:251). For these reasons, democracy needs to be widened and consolidated to support state-building that would re-legitimise the relationship between the state and society. That is, a balance must be found between the needs of the people and the capacity of the state. As Mkhize (2015:13) put is: "The South African government needs to create, widen, enhance and harness spaces for public participation in development initiatives so that its citizens can regard themselves as the architects of their own development and future". Thus, legitimation can only occur once people see tangible improvements in their lives and communities. Civil society is an important pillar of democracy and is regarded as a crucial variable in defining the success or failure of democracy (Kearsy, 2007:81). In the same way, Linz and Stepan (1996) emphasised the importance of a free and fair civil society as one of the conditions for democracies to be consolidated. The dominance of the ANC, combined with low levels of trust in government and poor service delivery, has weakened civil society in South Africa (Mafunisa 2004). The sections below will investigate the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in South Africa.

### **5.7.1 Strengths of Civil Society in South Africa**

Civil society is often described as the third sector of the state and is made up of different social groups and organisations outside the state and does not operate purely for profit but to advance public interest (Asuelime, 2018:49). Broadly speaking, civil society is the space between the state and society that makes democracy possible. It is where various groups and organisations have the freedom to express their opinions and views on the state and the functioning of democracy. Thus, civil society is a precondition for democracy. Some of civil society's roles include their role as watchdogs, experts, advocates, capacity builders, and service providers. Accordingly, their role is primarily linked to promoting democracy, good governance, and development (Asuelime, 2018:50). Functional CSOs are important agents for democratic consolidation. Not only do they hold national, provincial, and local governments accountable, but civil society can also strengthen their capacity, efficiency and accessibility (Gumede, 2018a:3). Civil society in South Africa has been given a special place and role in the Constitution to act as a voice for the poor and marginalised and oversee democratic institutions (Gumede, 2018a:3). The following section will briefly discuss the strengths of civil society in South Africa.

One of the most important functions of civil society is to protect democratic principles such as accountability, transparency, and participation and to ensure that governments comply with them (Märke, 2013:28). Most CSOs take this responsibility seriously, as corruption and maladministration impede growth and development. In addition, civil society can influence policy, programmes and strategies that promote good governance and development (Mlambo, 2019:2). Civil society organisations are seen as a representation of the people, advocates of the voiceless, and agents of change (Märke, 2013:14). Consequently, civil became known as the *watchdogs* of society as they can hold governments accountable, improve public service delivery, reduces corruption and inefficiency, and ensuring that the needs of the people are met (Mlambo, 2019:2). This watchdog role does not go unseen in South Africa. Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has experienced a dramatic mobilisation of CSOs against poor governance. South Africa is thus fortunate to have several CSOs whose primary focus is to promote transparency and accountability. For example, Corruption Watch has been on the frontline, fighting against corruption and ensuring that corruption scandals are on the public agenda. In doing so, civil society successfully removed two former state presidents from their seats. Former President Thabo Mbeki had to endure a long battle with civil society to make HIV Aids treatment available in all hospitals during the HIV/Aids pandemic (Gumede, 2018b). This has resulted in mass anti-Mbeki mobilisations to prevent his re-election as ANC President. Further, civil society has resulted in former President Jacob Zuma facing a series of court trials over multiple corruption cases, which also caused thousands of citizens to take to the streets against him (Gumede, 2018b).

There are countless more examples of civil society's role and importance for democracy, but it is evident that CSOs play a major role in protecting the democratic principles of accountability, transparency, and participation.

The second strength of civil society in South Africa is that they actively provide public services when the government has failed to do so (Gumede, 2018a). Civil society emerged in South Africa as an important factor in socio-economic development. Even though South Africa's political environment is not on the brink of failure, several indicators indicate dysfunction, such as the inability of states to provide their population with basic public services (Rotberg, 2004). Thus, without the efforts of civil society, violent service delivery protests would have been extensive, and the conditions in South Africa would have been much worse. Civil society is more effective in reaching poor communities than the public sector. Through close engagement with members of communities, CSOs ensure that the needs of communities are taken into account in the project and programme development process (Clayton, Oakley & Taylor, 2000:7). For example, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) fought persistently to make HIV/Aids treatment available and also educated the public about the illness, prevention options and treatment. Furthermore, as a response to the government's failure to address the challenges in the country, survivalist community-based organisations have effortlessly helped the poor and marginalised with basic needs for their survival, such as orphanages, care facilities for the aged, safe havens for abuse and soup kitchens (Habib, 2013:152). These informal and community-based organisations enhance democracy in the most basic way, they enable people to survive.

Thirdly, the development discourse argues for a strong connection between public participation and the strengthening of democracy. This is because public participation allows people and communities to advance or defend their interests and needs while strengthening democracy (Asuelime, 2016:51). The more people participate in politics, the more democratic the state becomes. Simply casting votes during elections and paying taxes is not the only way for citizens to participate in democracy. Citizens have an active leadership role to play in society and should remain vigilant in state affairs to ensure responsiveness to their needs and to foster political accountability and transparency (Lues, 2014:791). Meaningful and effective public participation requires knowledge of the workings of government. Therefore, CSOs have a role in educating communities and citizens about their democratic rights and responsibilities in sustaining democracy. An educated nation that is aware of its rights is the basis of a strong democracy, while an apathetic and uninformed nation provides a breeding ground for corruption, mismanagement, and poor governance (Maphazi *et al.*, 2013:61). The Constitution of South Africa considers public participation as the foundation of a well-functioning democracy (Maphazi *et al.*, 2013:56). Therefore, participating in political affairs is a Constitutional right, not a privilege.

From the discussion above, civil society plays a significant role in strengthening democracy and promoting human rights. Civil society in South Africa has accepted the challenges to protect and defend democratic principles and is, therefore, persistently fighting against corruption and unethical behaviour, providing the public with goods and services in the face of the state's inability, and strengthening democracy through encouraging public participation. The robustness of CSOs has played a significant role in addressing the gap between the people and the state. However, to fully appreciate and apply the strength of civil society, it is important to understand its flaws and how civil society can weaken democracy and have an adverse effect.

### ***5.7.2 Weaknesses of Civil Society in South Africa***

Most literature reflects on the positive effect and relationship between the state and civil society. The powerful mobilisation of people and organisations in South Africa has been a crucial source of pressure to uphold democratic values and principles. As such, civil society is seen as an important component of strengthening democracy. Even though this perspective is most adopted, there are criticisms of the view that civil society promotes democracy. As such, civil society's role is much more complex than what the liberal model implies.

Even though South Africa enjoys a pluralistic society consisting of different groups and organisations, pluralism can lead to the dispersion of interests and social forces. As such, civil society's pluralist nature cannot guarantee the strengthening of democracy. Mercer (2002) argued that too much diversity in civil society could harm democratisation when there is fragmentation and weakness in society that could result in conflict, destruction, and disruption. Where there is social fragmentation, neither the state nor civil society can achieve national control (Migdal, 1998). Dispersed domination is thus harmful to democracy as the state is no longer viewed as the legitimate authority. This argument is based on the thought that democracy is weakened when society and organisations act as a replacement for political parties or aim to overpower democratic institutions (White, 2008:70). When civil society is viewed with higher respect than the state, it may generate patronage (or clientelism) and not development and democracy (White, 2008:70). The role of civil society is not supposed to support freedom and fairness better than the state.

Social mobilisation is the heart of democracy. It allows citizens to demonstrate and communicate their discontent with the government or political processes. Protest movements against the apartheid regime were crucial for the democratic transition and continued to dominate post-apartheid South Africa. However, protests in South Africa are unlikely to remain peaceful due to their historical roots of using violence to achieve social justice results (Habib, 2020). Social mobilisation and protests require rage, not violence. Rage is important to inspire people to support the movement, however, violence is detrimental to democracy as it results in structural damage,

injuries and even death (Habib, 2020). Civil society can weaken democracy when it shows undemocratic conflict, as not all actions by civil society are civil. For example, violent social movements and protest resistance to the state may be lawless, anomic, and angry (White, 2008:72).

Examples of protests that started peacefully and ended violently include the #FeesMustFall movement. The #FeesMustFall movement started with university students protesting against high education fees but soon made international headlines as the movement turned violent and destructive, resulting in an estimated cost in property damage of R800 million (Dentlinger, 2018). In some instances, the state appears to take a more authoritarian stance towards protests and uprisings through police and military forces. A dark day in South Africa was marked by the 2012 Marikana massacre, where 112 mineworkers were shot down, and thirty-four were killed by the South African police in a wildcat strike from a platinum mine (Davies, 2015). Another notable example of force used by the state occurred during the 2021 unrest when people looted stores and caused significant destruction and massive economic damage across the country. During this devastating event, people clashed with the police leaving more than 350 people dead (Africa, 2022). In addition, the South African Defence Force was deployed to assist the outnumbered police force and restore the chaos. The significance of this event was so severe that people did not know how to define it. Some terms used to explain the event include civil unrest, looting, rebellion, counter-revolution, social media mobilisation, and uprising (Africa, 2022). The reoccurrence of such a devastating event is not unlikely in South Africa. Daily, we see people demanding accountability and justice. South Africans feel betrayed by poor governance, political dysfunction, unemployment, and economic inequality (Africa, 2022). To prevent a similar occurrence, the country needs a political and security sector that is efficient, accountable and responsive to the needs of the people. The state cannot outsource its role as a security provider to guarantee public safety and security.

The lack of funding for civil society can also threaten the impact of democracy. Civil society organisations have the important function of promoting human rights and ensuring society's overall well-being by providing humanitarian assistance and relief, welfare, service provision, education of democratic rights, advocacy, development, and innovation (National Development Agency, 2008:5-6). Therefore, access to funding and resources is of utmost importance to ensure the effective functioning CSOs to meet their objectives. Many CSOs cannot receive funding due to the external control they are subject to. CSOs also depend on the international community for funding which may affect their sustainability, stability, and internal legitimacy (White, 2008:71). Unexpected global trends and events can also influence CSOs' ability to secure funding. For example, national lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in many CSOs losing donor

funding and were also forced to stop income-generating activities (CIVICUS, 2020). As a result, CSO could not serve their communities, and their continuation was threatened. Depriving civil society of funding will cause corruption to flourish, poor governance will be common, poverty and inequality will rise, and violence will be even more widespread (Gumede, 2018b).

An additional concern of civil society in South Africa is the lack of protection for whistle-blowers and other activists in society. Whistle-blowers and political activists are key sources for fighting corruption and ensuring accountability in South Africa. Corruption is a significant impediment to democratic consolidation as it hinders economic development and undermines stability, trust, and democratic value (Botha, 2021). Consequently, whistle-blowers' and activists' roles are important mechanisms to deter corruption as they foster accountability, good governance, and transparency in public and private spheres. Because whistle-blowers help combat criminal acts and injustice, the state should provide the necessary protection for those who blow the whistle (Botha, 2021). However, South Africa's system does the opposite. There are numerous examples in South Africa of people who spoke up about corruption or irregularities and did not receive the protection they deserved. For example, Paul Theron was a prison doctor who exposed the poor conditions in the Pollsmoor prison in the Western Cape. As a result, Dr Theron was suspended after he blew the whistle. Furthermore, Babita Keokaran exposed a multi-million-rand corruption scandal in the Gauteng Health Department right before she was shot dead. These are only two examples of how the whistle-blowing environment in South Africa is failing. Failure in this area holds significant consequences for democratic consolidation as it prevents the public from speaking up against corruption, injustice, or irregularities (Wright, 2022).

The mere existence of civil society does not guarantee democratic consolidation. As discussed above, civil society can be a source of inequality due to its pluralistic nature, decreasing citizen confidence in government, demonstrating non-democratic principles through violent and destructive actions, and undermining the legitimacy of the state to manage conflict and provide public and political goods to the people. Consequently, researchers should carefully examine the status of civil society in a country to determine whether civil society contributes to or hinders the strengthening of democracy. Thus, the analysis would be case-dependent as various historical and cultural elements need to be considered.

### ***5.7.3 Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation***

Democratic consolidation is briefly understood as the process of making new democracies sustainable. It involves continuous efforts to extend the longevity and stability of democracy and to prevent a reverse wave of authoritarianism (Kali, 2022:3). Thus, the primary goal of consolidation is to prevent instability, vulnerability, fragility, and, ultimately, the demise of

democracy (Kali, 2022:4). Furthermore, consolidation refers to much more than the institutionalisation of democratic norms and values within the political sphere, but it also refers to the internalisation of these norms in the society and become routinised in all aspects of society (Van Riet & Silander, 2022:113). However, the state alone cannot guarantee a path to consolidation. A pluralistic and robust civil society accompanies the transition to democracy and the sustaining thereof. Thus, there is a relationship between civil society and democratic consolidation. Scholars have pointed out that civil society cannot perform checks and balances in undemocratic regimes to foster political accountability, protect human rights, or successfully mobilise citizens for a cause (Solioz, 2011). However, in democratic regimes, civil society has the autonomy and power to closely monitor and act upon anti-democratic behaviour that violates human rights. The latter argument accepts that a vibrant civil society can promote democratic values, improving the state's consolidation momentum.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, the concept of civil society has been central to analysis in the wake of a global spread of democratic transitions. Scholars have focused on the different meanings, features, and roles of civil society, which have changed over time and space. With this in mind, civil society consists of many organisations and actors concerned with the well-being of communities, people, and democracy, ranging from social movements, NGOs, faith-based organisations, interest groups, the media, developmental organisations, and civic groups (Van Leeuwen & Verkoren, 2012:81). Thus, civil society is not synonymous with society or made up of everything that is not the state. The concept has become rather ambiguous and has different meanings for everyone. While the Gramscian tradition views civil society as a space consisting of many organisations that challenge and uphold the current order (Lewis, 2002), the De Tocqueville tradition views civil society as a precondition for democracy and creates a space for various groups to express their needs and opinions, holding the state accountable, and being a voice for the voiceless (White, 2008:65). Modern political science accepts civil society as an intermediary between the state and society and activities within this space has become a driving force for democratisation in promoting freedom, questioning undemocratic principles demonstrated by the state, socialising popular support for pro-democratic movements, and empowering communities and institutions to strengthen democratic consolidation (Van Riet & Silander, 2022:115).

A perennial question that attracted the interest of many scholars asks whether a strong civil society can facilitate the sustainability of democracy. According to Diamond (1994), civil society can contribute to the deepening of democracy in six fundamental ways. Firstly, the presence of multiple independent organisations and media are responsible for controlling and monitoring the abuse of state power to promote good governance (Diamond, 1994:59). Through mobilisation and popular protests, civil society is also a means of containing the abuse of power through

monitoring democratic violations and holding them accountable to the public. This requires that civil society uphold the principles of plurality and openness in the flow of information, and only then can accountability and transparency be achieved. Secondly, civil society generates a rich associational life that allows citizens to participate voluntarily in activities within or outside the state (Diamond, 1994:59). Citizens' voluntary participation allows them to exercise their democratic rights and increases political participation. Thirdly, civil society serves democracy by organising multiple channels of representation and expression, providing citizens with access to decision-making and policy processes (Diamond, 1994:59). Civic participation in all levels of government is critical for strengthening democracy and increasing feelings of state legitimacy and political efficiency. It allows the poorest and most marginalised to participate in and influence politics. Fourthly, a strong civil society has the capacity to recruit and train new political leaders to promote the effective functioning of government (Diamond, 1994:61). Activists and CSOs acquire a range of leadership skills that are transferrable and qualify them to participate in politics and government, such as fundraising, motivation, negotiation and debating current issues. Fifthly, civil society empowers citizens through information dissemination and educates people on their democratic rights (Diamond, 1994:61). A pluralistic and autonomous press and media reach a wider audience by providing different perspectives and information about government and political activities. Finally, civil society strengthens the state's ability to govern by enhancing political accountability, transparency, effectiveness, inclusion and legitimacy (Diamond, 1994:62). A robust civil society can increase citizen trust in government, facilitating citizens' voluntary obedience to the state.

Theoretically, civil society positively influences democracy and development and is, therefore, a primary requirement to improve democratic performance. Civil society contributes to the deepening of democracy by holding governments accountable and defending human rights, encouraging citizen participation, stimulating civic activity, and protecting the people's interests. Thus, a strong civil society can become a boon for enhancing democratic sustainability and promoting good governance and increased performance. The level of civil society's impact on consolidation depends on the degree to which these organisations exercise their responsibilities and allow citizens to participate voluntarily in different levels of society. The goal of the following section is to evaluate the current condition of democracy in South Africa, followed by an analysis of the role of civil society in strengthening democracy for consolidation.

## **5.8 THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Democratic consolidation intrigued the attention of many scholars with the advent of democracy worldwide. South Africa is an example of a country that has successfully transitioned to democracy after many years under authoritarian rule. The numerous definitions and indicators of democratic consolidation make it difficult to determine the exact features of consolidation and, therefore, contribute to the concept's vagueness. However, most definitions agree that consolidation refers to the sustainability and continuity of democracy (O'Donnell, 1996). Arguably, democratic consolidation has become a versatile concept that is case- and context-dependent. Linz & Stepan (1996) provided one of the most accepted and widely utilised definitions of consolidation within political science. They identified five interconnected arenas in which mutually reinforcing conditions must exist for democracies to become consolidated. However, for this study, there was a focus on three primary arenas: the political, economic, and social sectors. The criteria for democratic consolidation require the political sector to be autonomous and uphold democratic principles; the economic sector is required to implement economic policies that enhance growth and development, and the social sector should possess a free and vibrant civil society that enables a democratic political culture (Linz & Stepan, 1996). The state's performance in these sectors will determine whether South Africa is on a path of deepening democracy or experiencing democratic decay. After a careful and extensive analysis of the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa, the findings indicate that many obstacles in the country's political, economic, and social sectors hinder its democracy from becoming consolidated.

South Africa's peaceful political transition is often regarded as a democratic miracle. After many decades of oppression under white minority rule that resulted in the political exclusion of the majority, the country successfully transitioned to democracy in 1994 through negotiation phases. As a result, South Africa has become a global symbol of hope, change and democracy. Ever since the ANC's first victory in 1994, South Africa has held six national democratic elections, all of which the ANC dominated. The young democracy has experienced many social, economic, and political challenges since its transition. As a result, the ANC introduced many policies, programs, and strategies to undo past injustices by reducing poverty and inequality and creating more employment opportunities. Yet, 28 years after the country's transition, South Africans are unsatisfied with the poor progress democracy has brought. Democracy was introduced to the people with the promise that their lives would improve for the better through opportunity and equality. On the contrary, the lives of the majority remain unchanged, and the legacy of apartheid persists as the country is plagued with poverty, high unemployment rates, widespread corruption

and crime rates, and some of the world's highest levels of inequality (Cronjé, 2017:39-61). These are all factors that threaten democratic consolidation. Determining the state of democracy in South Africa is not easy as there are significant differences between the formal requirements of democracy stipulated on paper and the quality and experience of democracy by its citizens. The formal requirements of democracy include regular free and fair elections, the rule of law, assurance of basic human rights and freedoms, public participation, and the separation of powers (Tilly, 2007:2-3). Thus, "on paper" South Africa meets all these requirements and is certainly something to be celebrated. However, the success of democracy in South Africa should be defined by its quality and the extent to which it serves the people.

According to Huntington (1991), as cited in De Kadt and Hudson (2014:7), democracies become consolidated if the ruling party at the time loses the election and, in turn, peacefully turns power over to the new successful party. This is also known as the *Huntington two turnover test* (De Kadt & Hudson, 2014)). Yet, we can question how this statement is applicable in a one party dominant democracy such as South Africa. According to the two turnover test, South Africa is not yet consolidate as the ANC has dominated the polls since the country's democratic transition. The ANC's dominance in parliament has crowded the political scene with democratic challenges. Today, South Africa is often described as a flawed democracy that combines free and fair elections and respect for liberty with poor governance, underdeveloped democratic culture, and low levels of public participation (Silander *et al.*, 2022:7). The political scene has experienced significant setbacks since the early 2000s. The state under ANC rule has transformed into selfishness, inefficiency, and greed, where patronage and corruption define the political scene (Southall, 2019:202). In addition, the economic sector is overwhelmed by poverty and unemployment, affecting economic growth and development (Habib, 2013:7). Not only does instability in the political sphere impact the economic sector, but the economic decline is further threatened by an unskilled population, infrastructure constraints, unemployment, and low levels of entrepreneurship (Cronjé, 2014:104-105). The social sector in South Africa is still characterised by record-high global rates of inequality along racial lines (Cronjé, 2014:112). The country is also suffocating under significantly high crime rates and corruption, which has led to increased discontent with the ANC, as demonstrated through political apathy and violent protests. Consequently, South Africa's democracy is at a crossroads (Silander *et al.*, 2022:8). Even though democracy has survived for 28 years, the quality thereof is concerning as South Africa displays a weakening of democracy in its political, economic, and social sectors.

Against this backdrop, this study has argued for a human-centred approach to democratic consolidation; therefore, civil society's role cannot be overlooked. By definition, one of the requirements for a functional state is the relationship that exists between the government,

business and civil society sectors (Asuelime, 2018:48). A collaborative relationship between the government and civil society is needed to build a society capable of meeting the needs of its people. However, the relationship between the ANC government and civil society is not always rosy and often described as a paradoxical relationship. For example, the government will support CSOs' involvement in service delivery concerns yet remain wary of CSOs' watchdog role and power to mobilise the masses in opposition to the state (National Development Agency, 2008: 18). Thus, to increase the pace of consolidation and encourage development, civil society must remain independent from the state. This study has argued that civil society plays a significant role in strengthening democracy through its many roles and functions. Some of their roles include limiting the use and abuse of state power, exposing corruption and poor governance, promoting public participation in political affairs, developing democratic values, educating the public on their democratic rights, representing the interest of the people, and informing the public about important issues (Diamond, 2004). Consequently, democracies cannot become consolidated without legitimacy, efficiency, and the support of the people.

As analysed in this study, all indicators of state dysfunction in South Africa point in one direction, namely towards decay. It is evident that democracy in South Africa has reached a crossroads, where the next decade will determine whether consolidation is possible or whether the country has reached a tipping point where political, economic, and social damages become irreversible. The political landscape indicates failing politics, inefficiency and weak leadership, while the economic sector is also underperforming and not benefiting the people. Furthermore, the social sector indicates the lack of social cohesion and national identity among people largely caused by inequality and socio-economic differences. Unless these challenges are addressed, democracy will weaken, and the country will likely reach a tipping point. So now the question is, what is to be done? How can civil society strengthen democracy in the context of state dysfunction in South Africa?

### ***5.8.1 Clean up the House***

South Africans live in unsettling times that bring feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and fear. The political sector is largely a tale of corruption and inefficiency that damages the economy and affects people's lives. Corruption, broadly understood as the misuse of public office for private gain (Venard, 2019), undermines not only democracy but also decreases trust in the state and its leaders. In addition, countries with high levels of public corruption often display a combination of weak infrastructure, declining health, poor-quality education, lack of resources, and civic unrest (Venard, 2019). Corruption is rife in South Africa, and the failure to overcome corruption is mirrored in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. South Africa was ranked as the 70<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country in the world. In 2012, South Africa ranked 69<sup>th</sup> out of 176 countries

(Transparency International, 2022). The release of the CPI reveals that efforts against corruption has reached a standstill in South Africa and that human rights violations and democratic decay are thriving. Even though little progress has been made in addressing some of the worst public sector corruption allegations, no significant prosecutions have been made, and while some assets have been recovered, corruption still flourishes (Mashaba, 2022). Thus, the government's efforts to implement effective and progressive anti-corruption legislation and strategies have not been successful. As a result, civil society organisations have been working persistently to expose corruption and encourage accountability.

Civil society's first role in strengthening democracy is to "clean up the house", which means to make government more transparent, democratic, and responsive. In addition, to combat corruption on a national scale, political corruption should be the first focus, as corruption in the political sphere provides a breeding ground for it to occur in any sector and level of government (Gumede, 2012:97). This is because once a culture of corruption is embedded in the values and practices of the ANC, it will spill over into the rest of society which makes it difficult to uproot. Thus, to reduce corruption in South Africa, we must first clean up the ANC house by simply voting them out of power. Civil society's greatest achievement in South Africa dates to the collapse of apartheid due to civil society's pressure against the oppressive regime. Civil society is often regarded as the people's last hope and is especially known to fight corruption, support and promote democratic principles, and make governments more accountable (Akwu, 2022). Thus, enhancing political accountability and transparency is a collective responsibility in South Africa. So, how can civil society hold governments accountable and enhance transparency to deepen democracy?

All countries have mechanisms to promote accountability, either based on a top-down approach, such as elections and hearings or a bottom-up approach, such as participation, mobilisation, and citizen monitoring (Combaz & McLoughlin, 2014). The top-down mechanisms, also known as internal mechanisms, include *political mechanisms* such as the separation of powers; *fiscal mechanisms* such as systems of auditing and financial management; *administrative mechanisms* such as codes of conduct and hierarchical reporting; and legal mechanisms (Malena, Forster & Singh, 2004:2). These mechanisms are set to monitor government actions, enhance efficiency, and promote accountability. Yet, their effectiveness is questionable, considering the depths of corruption and inefficiency in South Africa. In principle, elections are an internal mechanism to foster accountability and prevent stagnation. Through elections, citizens are provided with an opportunity to elect their political representatives. However, there are some challenges to this approach. Firstly, South Africans are given a limited number of opposition parties to vote for, and secondly, the ANC is too dominant (Gumede, 2014:39). As such, the limited options available

coupled with a corrupt dominant party is the reason South Africa has seen a major voter decline during the 2021 local government elections; less than half of registered voters cast their ballots (Runciman & Bekker, 2021). This is rather concerning as how or for whom citizens vote is a matter of ideology and representation, but whether citizens show up at the polls or not tells a tale of citizens' experience of democracy and government. It is evident that South Africa is amidst a leadership crisis, and civil society has a major role to play in ensuring improved leadership and political accountability.

Consequently, increasing accountability efforts is thus dependent on civil society through direct participation in political processes, advocacy, and oversight (Combaz & McLoughlin, 2014). An often-forgotten mechanism, social accountability, provides a range of actions (besides elections) the public can use to hold governments accountable. Social accountability is a bottom-up approach, also known as external mechanisms, which focuses on building political accountability through civic engagement whereby ordinary citizens and civil society organisations can promote political accountability (Malena, Forster & Singh, 2004:3). Social accountability, therefore, complements and enhance internal mechanisms of accountability. However, for social accountability to be effective, four conditions must exist. These conditions include organised groups and capable citizens, a political environment that encourages public participation, government champions, and the free flow of information (Combaz & McLoughlin, 2014:20).

Corruption holds significant negative impacts on democracy and the lives of ordinary citizens. The severe consequences of corruption result in unequal access to public services, increasing poverty, reduced investor confidence, violence, and civic unrest (Neuman, 2002:5). Countries with high levels of corruption experience low citizen trust and confidence in democratic institutions, undermining the rule of law. Democracy can only thrive when the people who live in it know about their democratic rights and enjoy access to information that enables them to participate in public life (Neuman, 2002:5). Thus, poor access to information provides room for corruption to flourish. This is because the lack of access to information prevents citizens from assessing government officials' actions and making informed decisions not based on empty promises and false hopes during elections. It also decreases the public's ability to hold governments accountable. Progressively, civil society and governments regard to access information as a key component for fighting corruption and increasing the people's capacity to exercise their democratic rights. Civil society can increase the flow of information from government to citizens in the following ways.

- i. *Advocacy* – Citizens' right to information provides a strong motivation for civil society to advocate for access to policies and documents regarding the primary needs of the people, such as housing, healthcare and education.

- ii. *Awareness* – Civil society can make the conscious decision to create awareness among communities about their democratic rights and educate activists and community leaders about these rights to speak on behalf of the people to demand accountability and transparency.
- iii. *Media* – The media act as a watchdog by exposing and reporting political issues to the public but also have an advocacy role in educating citizens and creating awareness.
- iv. *Partnership with the state* – Through partnerships with the government, civil society can improve access to information by strengthening participatory mechanisms (Centre of Good Governance, 2006:28-30).

As such, securing access to information for all people is a crucial function of civil society to deepen democracy. Not only would it create a better relationship between the government and communities, but the free flow of information improves transparency and accountability, strengthens the fight against corruption, and increases citizen trust in the government. It also allows ordinary citizens to participate freely in political processes and influence policy.

Literature on accountability mechanisms hardly considers civil society's impact on mobilising the masses as a mechanism to encourage political accountability. It is known that new democracies often lack effective mechanisms of accountability or that these mechanisms are weak and poorly implemented (Almén & Burell, 2018:716). However, civil society and social movements can pressure governments to increase public accountability, especially concerning corruption and service delivery concerns. We have witnessed the strength of civil society in paving the way for the transition to democracy in South Africa. Protests and demonstrations are one of the most effective ways of influencing policy and can also deepen democracy under the condition that protests do not undermine the values of a democracy (Kali, 2022:1). Yet, protests have not disappeared from the South African landscape. Since the early 2000s, there has been an incline in protests across the country, which are often violent and demonstrate authoritarian characteristics (De Juan & Wegner, 2019). However, the focus of this section is not on the violent nature of protests in South Africa but on how social movements and protests can become mechanisms to foster political accountability. Civil society formed a crucial source of pressure for democratic transition; therefore, the attention needs to be on how civil society serves development and democratic consolidation.

The government's poor service delivery efforts are one of the primary challenges communities face that ignite protests in South Africa. As a result, citizens ought to hold the government accountable for service delivery. Poor service delivery is often the result of corruption in the public sector, mismanagement, lack of trust in government, and poor leadership. Traditionally, accountability was fostered through voting, however, elections as a mechanism to promote

accountability often fail and are distorted, especially in Africa (Fransman, 2021:3). Thus, it appears that South Africans consider protesting an alternative path to demand accountability and responsiveness. In turn, protests and social movements are important elements for deepening democracy. This is because it requires the voluntary participation of citizens for or against a cause while acting as a means to exercise checks on the government. Thus, the government cannot be successful or stable without civic participation. CSOs have an important role in encouraging citizens to become proactive in politics to facilitate development and combat corruption (Sikhakane & Reddy, 2011:94). Through public participation, communities can express their most pressing needs, eliminate corruption, receive information and feedback regarding policies and projects, and exercise their democratic rights (Sikhakane & Reddy, 2011:94). Therefore, to prevent corruption and poor leadership ethics within government, ordinary citizens must not only support anti-corruption organisations and movements, but they should become corruption fighters themselves.

From the discussion above, it is evident that social accountability plays an important role in deepening democracy by improving governance, increasing responsiveness and accountability, and empowering citizens through participation and access to information. Social accountability also can reduce poverty and improve service delivery, especially for the poor and marginalised. In addition, it has been argued that the only effective way to combat corruption is to involve communities and civil society to monitor government performance and actions, demanding transparency and accountability and exposing government failures and abuse of power. As such, social accountability is a vital mechanism for the continuation of democracy.

### ***5.8.2 Back to the Basics***

Despite the improved standard of living since the democratic transition, service delivery remains a major challenge on South Africa's path to becoming a consolidated democracy. Even though regulatory and institutional frameworks are in place, municipalities are still struggling to deliver the basic needs of the people. The enormous infrastructural backlog is one of the legacies of apartheid which deprived millions of South Africans of access to basic services such as water and sanitation, electricity, and waste removal (Joseph, 2002:5). Yet, service delivery refers to much more than giving people access to drinking water and electricity, but the availability of services is also of symbolic importance for equality and justice (Greffrath & Van der Walddt, 2016:7). Citizens' access to these basic goods and services is critical for the survival of democracy as it promotes their quality of life, provides economic and social opportunities, increases safety, and enhances the quality of education and recreation (Joseph, 2002:5). On the contrary, many South Africans are living in poverty, unemployed, and are homeless, whereas elected leaders and officials are living high lives on taxpayers' money and earning excessive bonuses (Gumede, 2012:27).

Citizens often demonstrate their dissatisfaction with poor service delivery through protests and demonstrations. Service delivery protests in South Africa are not driven by ideology but are an outcome of dysfunction and poor governance (Greffrath & Van der Waldt, 2016:8). The increasing frequency and intensity of service delivery protests across the country provide a clear indication of local government dysfunction and people's level of impatience and frustration with the lack of service provision. In the face of the government's failure to deliver basic goods and services to communities, civil society has entered the widening service delivery gap. Civil society's role in strengthening democracy through service provision has emphasised the government's key function of returning *to basics* and serving the people.

The phenomenon of self-help governance is directed toward civil society's reaction to the government's failure to service delivery. It is often described as a "do it yourself" approach to governance. Self-help governance is best defined as the collaboration of citizens and CSOs' of a municipal area to perform basic functions and provide services usually rendered by local government (Greffrath & Van der Waldt, 2016:14). The study's analysis of state dysfunction has revealed that South Africa's government is generally incapable of effectively delivering sufficient and quality public goods and services, and where this function is performed, it is often of poor quality. Greffrath and van der Waldt (2016:16-18) identified the following key characteristics of self-help governance.

- Self-help governance enhances the quality of life and impacts livelihoods
- A promoter of citizen mobilisation and participation
- Self-help governance is constructive and non-violent
- It is non-political and solely focused on improving communities and people's lives.
- Self-help governance is primarily rural-focused, where severe poverty and poor service delivery are prevalent.

It is evident that civil society's role through a self-help governance approach can deepen democracy and meet the needs of the people. Civil society is more effective in reaching the poorest in society, contributing to poverty alleviation and improved living conditions. In turn, civil society can also strengthen the state's service delivery capacity through partnerships with local government. The White Paper on local government states that partnerships with community-based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs can increase access to external expertise, skills and experience (RSA, 1998). As such, local government's collaboration with these organisations can significantly impact community development and service provision. Not only would this partnership be more cost-effective, but it would also improve access to services, community empowerment, and improve governance (Matibane, 2010:35). In addition, self-help governance promotes public participation in political affairs as a response to improving government

performance, providing a decentralised approach to achieving good governance (Cheema, 2007:171). This approach allows citizens and communities to participate freely in decision-making and voice the challenges that affect their lives, which in turn strengthens decentralisation that improves service delivery, reduces corruption, and encourages efficiency and accountability (Muriu, 2014:2). Public participation is intended to reduce poverty and injustice by allowing citizens to voice their needs, influence policy, and improve accountability and governance (Taylor & Fransman, 2004:1). Thus, participation is an important mechanism to strengthen democracy as it does not only hold governments accountable and promote improved governance but also encourages citizen participation and creating a space for the poorest to express their needs and frustrations. However, the challenge remains to deepen a democratic culture amongst South Africans that would foster unity and redress the social and structural legacies of apartheid.

### **5.8.3 Development of a Democratic Culture**

The existence of a democratic culture is crucial when analysing South Africa's possibility of becoming a consolidated democracy. Even though democracy is built on the existence of institutions and laws, these institutions cannot fulfil their roles without a culture of democracy, that is, democratic values, beliefs and practices (Council of Europe, 2016:9). Therefore, civil society has the role of educating citizens on their democratic rights and responsibilities and teaching South Africans to foster a culture of democracy. According to Diamond (1994:68-69), the important features critical to establishing a strong culture of democracy include participation, trust and tolerance, moderation, and accommodation. At the same time, these features can only contribute to the deepening of democracy and bring stability and development when they have become internalised into the belief and value systems of society and politics (Diamond, 1994:86). This is also what Dankwart Rustow (1970) termed *habituation* – when democratic values and practices become internalised in society after an extensive period of repeated democratic successes. Habituation is not solely dependent on the political sphere but even more on civil society in their capacity as agents of change through mobilisation, empowerment, and participation (Rustow, 1970:360). Thus, democracy does not come naturally and requires practice for any newly transitioned country, not only in the political arena but also in the functioning of civil society.

So, now we can ask how South Africans view and experience democracy. Do they experience a deep sense of democratic culture based on participation, freedom and unity? Or do they experience democracy through the lens of authoritarianism, where the state has a more intrusive role? South Africa's peaceful transition is globally regarded and appreciated as a victory for freedom and democracy. Significant achievements have been made since 1994, yet the structural imbalances from the past persist in extreme poverty and inequality, a fractured ruling party and

elite are driven by personal and material gain, and social divisions within society that drive South Africans even further apart, calls into question the achievement of a democratic culture in South Africa (Steyn-Kotzé, 2021). The three crucial factors for consolidation are 1) a growing economy that reduces poverty and inequality, 2) stable political institutions and 3) an inclusive democratic culture (Mattes, 2002:22). Considering the conditions of the new democracy, one's enthusiasm and hope for a better future for South Africa are tempered. In each of the three sectors analysed, the country presents a paradox. Politically, South Africa posts an internationally recognised Constitution designed to encourage multiparty democracy, accountability, and individual freedom, yet the political scene is overcrowded by a dominant political party, corruption, and poor governance. Economically, the country's relatively macroeconomic stability and low inflation are threatened by slow economic growth, increasing unemployment and inequality, and weak business confidence (Mattes, 2002:23). And lastly, South African society played a significant role in the country's fight for freedom, yet there is an overall lack of participation among citizens and a decline of trust in government and democracy. As such, the overall image of South Africa is that of a relatively healthy democracy coupled with an overload of challenges that brings early signs of democratic decay.

A country's democratic culture is learnt through its history, politics and socio-economic trends, influencing public opinion about the political system and regime (De Jager, 2015:249). These perceptions shape our ideas, values, and opinions about democracy and the legitimacy thereof. As such, people's perceptions of democracy influence the legitimacy of the political process. Thus, democratic values and attitudes are central to the continuation and consolidation of democracy. So then, what does South Africa's political culture look like? Recent studies have shown that citizen support for democracy in South Africa is rather lukewarm (Steyn-Kotzé, 2021). As such, the country's culture of democracy is not mature enough to be considered consolidated. Even though there is strong support for democracy, satisfaction with the regime is low as South Africans are not entirely committed to the values and practices of democracy but view democracy as instrumental in improving their lives (Steyn-Kotzé, 2015:256). Yet, South Africans reject authoritarian alternatives. Nearly three decades after the transition, democracy is losing its glow as South Africans are unsatisfied with the outcomes of the new political system, which has not brought opportunities and equality as they hoped. On the contrary, South Africans are experiencing democratic fatigue due to dysfunctional politics, economic decline, and a highly fragmented society. Further, the current socioeconomic conditions of the majority have altered the commitment of citizens to democracy. Poor service delivery coupled with poverty, unemployment and inequality has resulted in a lack of trust in government and the loss of commitment to democracy (Steenkamp, 2017:72).

Any democratic government needs the support and trust of the people to sustain its legitimacy. Thus far, we have learned that a democracy cannot survive on institutions alone, however, the existence of a democratic culture is critical for democratic consolidation. Yet, it is important to remember that the existence of strong institutions and the establishment of a democratic culture is not one of automatic reciprocation (Steyn-Kotzé, 2015:261). Thus, citizens' perceptions of democracy are shaped by the government's attitudes, values, functioning and behaviour, which will impact the political culture that emerges in the young democracy. South Africa's Constitution explicitly makes room for democratic values and practises such as tolerance, participation and trust, yet, the political culture of South Africa seems to display undemocratic behaviour built on voter apathy and violence. Violence is primarily displayed through protests and citizen behaviour towards foreigners. South Africa is turning into a loud, angry and intolerant nation. Even though protests and mobilisation are the core of a healthy democracy, violent protests often have the opposite result. Due to poor service delivery and incompetent elites, citizens often demonstrate their frustrations through protests. Yet, protests rarely bring significant change, and violence is often the only way of getting the government's attention. However, not only do violent protests cause infrastructural damage, injuries and major financial losses, violent protests affect the poor and vulnerable in society the most (Habib, 2020). Secondly, xenophobic attacks are largely the outcome of the government's failure to provide sufficient public goods and services, and in turn, competition for resources arises in which foreigners are to be targeted (Gumede, 2012:90). This stems from the premise that foreigners "take away" the limited resources, jobs, houses, and opportunities from ordinary South Africans. Thus, the challenge for the government remains to empower citizens through service delivery and resources. Should the service delivery crisis not be progressively dealt with, xenophobic attacks would increase and even cause conflict among ordinary citizens.

South Africans show some of the highest participation rates in protest action and mobilisation (Mattes, 2002:33). Thus, there is an element of voter apathy, not political apathy, as people are still politically engaged. However, we have witnessed a decline in voter participation during elections. In the 2019 national elections, South Africa had more than 26 million eligible voters, of which only 65.35% voted (IEC, 2019). This is the lowest recorded proportion in South African history, 8 percentage points less than in 2014 (IEC, 2019). Many reasons have been provided to explain the apathetic attitude to electoral participation. The primary reason that explained the perspectives of the majority is that their current living circumstances of poverty, inequality, and unemployment are discouraging and demotivating as political parties continue to promise a "brighter future", yet their lives remain unchanged (Tracey, 2013).

Citizen apathy in political processes and distrust in government hinder democratic deepening as it weakens the legitimacy of the state or the ruling party. Democratic institutions thus alone cannot safeguard the continuation of democracy, but it requires a deep culture of democracy within society and politics that appreciates the values, norms and practices of democracy. However, establishing a culture of democracy requires competent citizens to participate effectively and exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities. These competencies are summarised as follows:

- a) **Values:** Competent citizens values democracy, justice and equality, human rights, cultural diversity, and the rule of law.
- b) **Attitudes:** Competent citizens show behaviour that demonstrates civic-mindedness, tolerance, respect, responsibility, and self-efficacy.
- c) **Skills:** Competent citizens demonstrates empathy, adaptability, conflict-resolution, critical thinking and cooperation skills (Council of Europe, 2016:12-14).

Thus, educating citizens about their democratic rights and responsibilities while taking proactive steps towards reducing poverty, inequality, and unemployment is critical for competent citizenship and ensuring the consolidation and establishment of a deep culture of democracy. Civic mindedness refers to an attitude among communities and groups that creates a sense of belonging and cohesion through the principles of respect and tolerance among members of society (Council of Europe, 2016:12). Civic mindedness builds a culture where people feel empowered, included, and valued in a democracy. In a culturally diverse society, it is often difficult to establish a single national identity, therefore, embedding the principles of civic-mindedness into the values and attitudes of citizens can strengthen a culture of democracy. Intercultural dialogue is critical to encourage cohesion and tolerance in a culturally diverse society. These dialogues occur between different groups or individuals to express their views, opinions, and concerns in decision-making processes (Council of Europe, 2016:15). Intercultural dialogue is thus the first step to establishing a democratic culture as it can only be established once citizens consider themselves as democratic equals and act truly respectful towards each other. Educating citizens on their democratic values, rights and responsibilities is important to fostering democratic discussions.

Considering the current state of South Africa's political, economic, and social sectors, does this mean South Africa is at the bridge of becoming a failed state? The young democracy is confronted with this question as citizens are reminded daily of the triple challenge of poverty, inequality, and unemployment which weighs heavily on the country's social, political, and economic developments. South Africa is overwhelmed with problems regarding individual security, high levels of corruption, discrimination, inequality, poor governance, and widespread poverty. Thus,

it is too early to argue that South Africa is heading towards state failure, however, there are clear indicators of democratic decay. Yet, this study has argued that civil society has an important role to play in strengthening democracy in the face of state dysfunction. Undoubtedly, South Africa has a vibrant civil society that is constantly fighting on behalf of citizens against corruption and advocating for human rights and freedoms. Civil society in South Africa is pluralistic in nature, encompassing a wide range of organisations that represent a diverse array of interests. A robust civil society is arguably one of the most important elements for democratic consolidation.

The transition to democracy can have significant effects on any society. We have seen how regime change has completely transformed South Africa's political, economic, and social landscapes, and in the same process, civil society was reshaped in considerable ways. Civil society is known to act as representatives of society and communities and serve a great role in advocating the needs and concerns of the people. In this way, civil society encourages accessibility and participation in political processes and represents various interests. As such, the depth of civil society is a key determinant of a healthy democracy. The historical development of South Africa has shown that civil society played a critical role in the liberation struggle, and even today, civil society is advocating on behalf of citizens against corruption, poor governance and leadership. As such, through their various roles discussed in this chapter, civil society can strengthen democracy and increase the pace for South Africa to become consolidated. It has been argued that democratic institutions alone are insufficient to ensure the consolidation, but a culture of democracy in society is required among people and institutions that uphold the principles of democracy to such an extent that democratic values, attitudes, and practices become part of their existence. As such, the plurality of civil society and their special relationship with the state and communities offers the best guarantee for democratic consolidation in South Africa.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter commenced with a brief overview of South Africa's path to democratic consolidation. South Africa experienced a somewhat peaceful transition to democracy in 1994 after centuries of authoritarian rule. The literature has proved that significant progress has been made since the country transitioned to democracy, however, the progress made has not been sufficient to coin the country as consolidated. Because of apartheid and its discriminatory nature, poverty, unemployment, and inequality are viewed as the main obstacles that hinder democracy to deepen. The dominant political party (ANC) since 1994 has thus been unsuccessful in addressing past injustices and creating innovative and sustainable solutions to address these challenges. As such, this study claims that South Africa has become a dysfunctional state. With the help of the

Fragile States Index, this was achieved by analysing the features that demonstrate dysfunction in three primary areas of consolidation.

Dysfunction in the political sector can be identified when states fail to perform their basic functions, of which the provision of political goods is most important. These political goods range from human security, infrastructure, service delivery and public participation. Section 5.4 found that the political sector in South Africa demonstrates features of dysfunction which is primarily a consequence of the weak leadership of the ruling party. Section 5.4.1 has shown that the government is unable to deliver efficient and quality public services to the people which often sparks violent protests as a response to the government's failure to do so. The service delivery crisis is worsened by ineffective leadership in the form of political corruption, lack of resources, poor management, lack of political will and unskilled public servants. As such, citizens' trust in the government decreases which results in the decline of the state's legitimacy. Accordingly, accountability and transparency are prerequisites for a functioning political sector.

Dysfunction in the economic sector can be identified when states exhibit extractive economic institutions that do not create opportunities for citizens to work, invest, and innovate. Section 5.5 has shown that extractive economic institutions, coupled with a dysfunctional political landscape, exploitive elites and self-serving institutions are the primary cause of economic decay and widespread poverty. It is interesting to note that South Africa has inclusive institutions that are set to enable equal opportunities, and foster economic growth, and participation, yet the system produces the opposite results. South Africa has a functioning economic sector with many policy initiatives and programmes that are set to encourage growth and development, however, these initiatives have been unsuccessful in their endeavours to create a prosperous society, reduce unemployment and close the inequality gap. Even though the standard of living has increased since 1994, the quality of people's lives remains unchanged, or in some instances, has worsened. Inequality in South Africa is also one of the highest in the world. These unfavourable economic conditions have a direct impact on foreign investments and the loss of skilled and experienced workers through migration for better opportunities.

Dysfunction in the social sector can be identified when states demonstrate a fragmentation of social control when states must compete with other organisations or groups for dominance in society. This power struggle would cause the state to grow weaker until its legitimacy is lost. Section 5.6 provided two primary elements that could result in social fragmentation in South Africa. Firstly, group grievance is the result of social inequality that continue to persist in society as a consequence of discriminatory policies during apartheid. Accordingly, South Africa remains a highly divided country along racial lines that are difficult to reverse. Secondly, the ruling party's inability to establish a national identity to create a sense of belonging to deepen democracy.

From the analysis in this chapter, it is evident that South Africa demonstrates features of dysfunction that hamper its process of becoming a consolidated democracy. The country is facing an overload of challenges that should be dealt with simultaneously to have a positive effect on democracy. As such, civil society can play a key role in deepening democracy. Civil society organisations in South Africa have long played a critical role in strengthening democracy and continue to do so today. In the face of state dysfunction, civil society can strengthen democracy by monitoring the abuse of power by acting as a watchdog in making government more transparent, democratic, and responsive to the needs of the people. Secondly, civil society can strengthen democracy by providing public services to the people when the state fails to do so. And thirdly, civil society can strengthen democracy by fostering a democratic culture that values the values, principles, and practices of democracy. Thus, the survival of democracy in South Africa is dependent on the willingness of civil society to defend the regime against undemocratic attacks.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH METHOD**

Over the past three decades, we have witnessed an increase in new democracies and the labels attached to them, such as 'fragile', 'failed', 'weak', 'collapsed', and others in the media and scholarly contributions. Not only has the extensive lists of gradients of state weakness resulted in the ambiguity of the phenomenon, but it also suggests that the state weakness discourse has not yet been fully understood and conceptualised. For this reason, this study understands state weakness as a deviation from the ideal-type state and is thus referred to as a dysfunctional state. Moreover, the study also found a lack of scholarly contributions on the state dysfunction discourse in South Africa. This is surprising as there are clear signs of decay in the country's political and socio-economic landscapes. Therefore, this study attempted to open this important discussion for further research, as state dysfunction holds significant challenges for democratic consolidation.

Politically, tensions are increasing among members of the dominant party (ANC) as the government struggles to meet the people's demands. In addition, corruption defines the political scene, coupled with poor service delivery and leadership. A country's economic climate provides an important benchmark of citizens' well-being and satisfaction with democracy and the government. The economic progress in South Africa since its transition to democracy has been noticeable yet insufficient to create a "better life for all", as promised in 1994. Poor economic performance is most felt in the lives of ordinary citizens. Unemployment has increased, more people are falling into poverty, and inequality remains extremely high. The political and economic scenes have a major impact on the social sector, which are responsible for promoting national unity and fostering a democratic culture. The worsening economic conditions seem to have turned South Africans against each other as racial and ethnic tensions are made worse by anti-establishment rhetoric. Hence South Africa is becoming further fragmented into distant and isolated communities. Thus, despite the country's democratic transition and the relative improvements that came along, it is evident that new multifaceted and complex challenges also emerged. As such, the future of democracy in South Africa comes down to whether the government would be able to meet the needs of the people.

Consequently, non-state actors such as civil society, the media and communities have become very influential in the political and economic scenes. South Africa's robust civil society is central to fostering a democratic culture and serving as a middleman between the state and communities. In addition, civil society holds public officials accountable, fights against corruption and poor leadership, provides public services when the state fails, and educates citizens on their

democratic rights and responsibilities. As such, civil society plays a critical role in strengthening democracy and putting South Africa on a path of consolidation.

Due to the subjective nature of the research problem, this dissertation utilised a qualitative research approach whereby data was collected through a literature review. The sources used were primary and secondary material, including internet sources, peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, documents and publications, research reports, public speeches, and online newspaper articles. Moreover, deductive reasoning allowed the researcher to use conclusions from a previous chapter as an analytical guide to determine the direction of the following chapter.

## **6.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND CHAPTER OUTLINE**

In order to determine whether this dissertation was delivered successfully, it is critical to revisit the operationalisation of the research objectives presented in chapter one.

Chapter one introduced the reader to the context, objectives, and main research questions this dissertation investigated. This chapter commenced with a brief discussion of the historical developments and current conditions of democracy in South Africa, bringing to light the focus of this study to analyse the features that demonstrate dysfunction in the country's political, economic, and social sectors. Moreover, the significance of this study was discussed, followed by the study's limitations, methodology and chapter layout.

### ***Objective 1: To understand the features of the ideal-type state.***

**Chapter two** provided an in-depth discussion of the state concept. As this study aims to analyse the features that demonstrate dysfunction, a logical point of departure was understanding the functional state's roles, functions and characteristics. It is important to understand state strengths in order to determine state weaknesses. This was achieved by briefly discussing the concept's historical developments, presenting the state's roles and functions from different theoretical perspectives, and clarifying conceptual confusion between the state, nation, and nation-state. For this study, the Weberian conceptualisation of the state is regarded as the ideal-type state to which states ought to strive. The Weberian state is also considered a strong state that exhibits various characteristics favourable to democracy and development. Furthermore, to determine the sustainability or fragility of states, the Fragile State's Index was utilised to assist methodologically in identifying the features of dysfunction to be analysed.

### ***Objective 2: To determine and understand the relevant theoretical perspectives of state dysfunction.***

After an extensive analysis of the roles, features, and functions of a functional state in chapter two, **chapter three** aimed to understand the key features, concepts, and developments of state weakness. In turn, this study argues that state dysfunction occurs when states deviate from the ideal-type state. Moreover, state dysfunction is not understood as a new categorisation of state failure, but all gradients of state failure demonstrate different degrees of dysfunction. This chapter's purpose originated from the lack of scholarly contributions in which the state dysfunction phenomenon is analysed and applied to the South African context. Accordingly, chapter three investigated the problematic nature of the state weakness discourse as a Western construct and its infeasibility for the African context. As such, this study constructed an interpretive theoretical framework applicable to analyse the features of dysfunction in South Africa's context. These contributions include the works of William Zartman, Robert Rotberg, Joel Migdal and Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. Even though these authors' perspectives on the causes and features of state dysfunction differ, they find common ground that state dysfunction occurs when the state fails to perform its basic functions.

**Objective 3: *To understand the role of civil society in a democratic dispensation and its relationship with the state.***

**Chapter four** provided a theoretical analysis of democracy, the state and civil society. The primary objective was to understand the relationship between civil society and the state and determine the important roles of civil society in a democracy. This chapter commenced with a clarification of the different stages in democratic consolidation, followed by the essential elements of a democratic regime. In this study, it was also important to explain the importance of measuring the quality of democracy as it provides a strong indication of whether a country is on the path to democratic consolidation or democratic decay. Moreover, chapter five analysed the different roles of civil society as means to strengthen democracy for consolidation. Influenced by the works of Linz and Stepan (1996), this study identified three interconnected sectors in which mutually reinforcing conditions must exist for the existence of a consolidated democracy. These are the political, economic, and social sectors.

**Objective 4: *To analyse the features that demonstrate state dysfunction in South Africa and to identify the roles of civil society in strengthening democracy.***

**Chapter five** served as the main analysis chapter in which chapters two, three, and four were integrated to identify the features demonstrating dysfunction in South Africa and civil society's role in strengthening democracy. Chapter five commenced with a brief overview of South Africa's democratic transition and the challenges that came along with its path to consolidation. Even

though South Africa exhibits democratic institutions, these institutions are threatened by critical challenges in the country's political, economic, and social sectors. With the assistance of the FSI, chapter five analysed the features that demonstrate dysfunction in South Africa. This was followed by a discussion on the role of civil society in strengthening democracy that could put South Africa on the path of becoming a consolidated democracy. This is an extensive chapter, but there was a "method in the madness". The researcher believed that the best way to ensure the continuation and strengthening of democracy in the face of state dysfunction is for civil society to foster a special partnership relationship with the state and communities to meet the needs of the people. As such, the challenges in South Africa should be dealt with simultaneously with the help of civil society and ordinary citizens. This is because political, economic, and social challenges are intertwined and mutually reinforcing (dysfunction in one sector will cause dysfunction in the other) and should not be viewed as isolated matters of concern.

**Chapter six** provides an integrated conclusion based on the various arguments and components presented in this study and recommendations towards strengthening democracy in South Africa. This was achieved methodologically by structuring the chapter into five primary discussion points; 1) background, research objectives, and research methodology; 2) chapter overview; 3) main research findings; 4) recommendations; and 5) areas for future research.

## **6.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The main findings of this study can be framed as follows:

- ***The ideal-type state is a utopia; but states should rather strive to become 'strong'.***

Chapter two has analysed the features and characteristics of the ideal state. Section 2.2 explained that the Weberian conceptualisation is often regarded as the model to which states should strive toward. The primary elements of statehood must be present if an entity is to be considered a state. These elements include territory, government, sovereignty, a monopoly of force, and legitimacy (section 2.2). Accordingly, a sovereign state can hold an administration managed by different segments of government, it claims authority over everything that happens and exists within its demarcated territory through a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Even though some states are closer to achieving this ideal than others, no state enjoys complete sovereignty, full control over its territory, absolute legitimacy, an utterly compelling bureaucracy, or a monopoly on the use of force. Thus, the ideal-type state is merely a utopia and states should rather strive to exhibit the features of a strong state. The literature in section 2.2.1 has provided an extensive list of the characteristics of a strong state, such as complete sovereignty, high quality of

democracy, low levels of corruption and crime, a stable and functioning economy, complete legitimacy, effective institutions etc. Simply put, strongly stated demonstrates political stability, economic growth, and social development. Even though no state can be regarded as perfectly strong, the features of a strong state provide a roadmap toward strengthening democracy.

- ***State dysfunction is lucidly defined.***

Chapter three has shown that the state dysfunction phenomenon does not have a concise definition that could be applied in different settings. The definitional shortcoming is manifested in excessive research that instead contributed to the ambiguity and vagueness of the topic. This is because the strengths of states are measured along a set of indicators and then categorised as weak, fragile, failing, quasi, collapsed etc. Consequently, there is no agreement on the definition of state weakness. Therefore, this study did not further want to contribute to the obscurity of the discourse and thus argued that state dysfunction is a deviation from the ideal-type Weberian state. This deviation is caused when states fail to perform their basic functions (section 3.4.1) deliver political goods to the people (section 3.4.2), promote inclusive economic institutions (section 3.4.3), and promote a democratic culture (section 3.4.5). As such, the common characteristics of state dysfunction can be observed in the three primary areas of consolidation, political, economic, and social sectors. Politically, state dysfunction is manifested by the government's lack of legitimacy because of poor leadership, the lack of accountability, corruption, and poor service provision (section 5.4). Economically, state dysfunction is manifested in the state's failure of creating a climate conducive to economic growth, entrepreneurship, foreign investment, job creation, and the implementation and execution of sound economic policies and initiatives that are aimed at poverty and inequality reduction (section 5.5). Socially, state dysfunction is manifested in the state's failure to establish a culture of democracy because of the government's poor post-conflict response to correct past human rights violations and injustices. Thus, the consequences of state dysfunction result in the suffering of the people.

- ***Democratic consolidation is not a one-way path.***

Chapter four argued that democratic consolidation is a complex process that requires continuous efforts to be maintained. Section 4.2 has shown that the process of democratisation is expressed in the following manner: 1) liberation, 2) transition and 3) consolidation. Even though liberation is not always a requirement for transition, consolidation can only occur once the new regime is stabilised, its primary institutions function optimally, and the regime has achieved legitimacy in pursuing the interests and values of public life. The transition phase is the most critical and requires the most effort

as not all transitions lead to successful consolidation. And even if the transition phase is successfully completed, this does not mean that legitimacy is achieved forever or guarantees the persistence of consolidation. On the contrary, a regime can undergo de-consolidation if the conditions for consolidation are not sustained, and the regime is not protected against undemocratic attacks. Therefore, hosting elections every few years is not enough to guarantee the continuation and stability of democracy, but consolidation requires continuous efforts to the extent that the values and principles become internalised in the everyday practices of the state, institutions, and the society at large.

- ***Corruption, poverty, and inequality undermine democratic consolidation***

Chapter five has shown that democracy in South Africa is under attack by several challenges inherited from the apartheid era and the ANC's inability to solve these challenges. These challenges have come to cause dysfunction in the country's social, economic, and political sectors. Politically, the country has been facing a leadership crisis that is paralysing both the ruling party and the functioning of government in all spheres (section 5.4). The economic climate is rather stagnant, and in some instances, declining. The majority of South Africans are living in poverty with low possibilities of employment and opportunities to escape this vicious cycle (section 5.5). Socially, South Africans are becoming an intolerant, angry and loud nation as they demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the government daily. South Africans are also demonstrating a decline of trust in the government to meet their basic needs (section 5.7). As such, chapter five identified three primary drivers hindering consolidation in South Africa.

These challenges directly threaten the core values of democracy; freedom, equality, and autonomous people. Firstly, corruption is considered one of the biggest challenges to development. Not only does corruption affect democratic deepening, but it also destroys public trust, reduces state capacity and resources, poor public services, and results in skewed policymaking. Countries with high levels of corruption also indicate low levels of civic trust in government which directly affects the legitimacy of the state and the government (sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2). Secondly, poverty is a great threat to democratic consolidation. Democracy cannot deepen if most of the population cannot participate fully in public life. Poverty is a result of the lack of decent employment, food, water and sanitation, and access to housing, health, education, and other public services. When people are unable to access their basic economic and social rights, democracy cannot

become fully functioning (sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2). Thirdly, South Africa suffers among the highest levels of socio-economic inequality in the world which manifests itself through unequal income distribution, unequal access to public services, and limited opportunities. The two main drivers of inequality rest not only on failed policies but because of vast income disparities and an increasing unemployment rate. Despite many efforts made by the government, inequality remains stubbornly high which is easily identifiable along racial lines. Accordingly, inequality affects public participation in social, political, and economic activities, it reduces social trust and cohesion and decreases citizens' sense of belonging (sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2).

- ***A strong civil society is a prerequisite for democratic consolidation.***

Chapter five of this study has shown that civil society has an important role to play in strengthening democracy. Globally, CSOs and NGOs have been working tirelessly to contribute to the development of people and society. Primarily, the efforts of civil society have been directed to focus on societal issues such as safety, education, women and youth empowerment, good governance, and economic challenges. As such, civil society became known in their roles as advocates for change, watchdogs against the abuse of power, public service providers, and drivers of mass mobilisation (section 4.8). In addition, to address the gap between ordinary citizens and the government, civil society organisations fill this gap to strengthen democracy that safeguards effective and accountable partnerships and representation. Civil society thus strengthens the efficiency, accessibility, and capacity of the state to such an extent that a robust civil society has become known as a prerequisite for democratic consolidation. In the same way, civil society has been instrumental in South Africa's transition to democracy and still plays a critical role in the post-apartheid era. During the apartheid era, civil society primarily took on an advocacy role aimed at exercising pressure against the oppressive regime. Today, civil society is often at the forefront of social change fighting against corruption and improving the lives of ordinary citizens (section 5.7.2). Furthermore, the literature has proved that there exists a relationship between civil society and democratic consolidation (section 5.7.3). Consolidation requires the institutionalisation and internalisation of democratic values and principles in all areas of society which the state alone cannot guarantee. A pluralistic and robust civil society accompanies the transition to democracy and the sustaining thereof.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Upon completion of this study, the following recommendations can be made as a response to the main findings of this study:

- It is often that states become too focused on maintaining their *means-related* functions, and their ability to exercise power, authority, and force. These are regarded as the essential elements of statehood that make states strong. This study does not reject these claims, as the use of force and power is needed to protect a country from external threats. However, to be considered a strong democratic state, there must be a focus on domestic concerns in order to strengthen democracy and meet the needs of the people. Some areas states could focus on are leadership, political stability, economic growth, and national unity. Therefore, it is recommended that states should continuously seek to improve their domestic conditions, ensuring that people are provided with good public services and infrastructure, reducing corruption and crime, creating employment opportunities, and ensuring a functioning economic society.
- The notion of state dysfunction is not yet fully defined in the African context. Even though there exist multiple tools and indexes that measure state strength and fragility, these tools are grounded in Western perspectives and practices that make us question their feasibility and applicability to the African context. That is, states do not fail in the same way, therefore, it is recommended that scholars develop tools and mechanisms that measure state strength from a non-Western perspective that takes into consideration each country's history, context, and culture. The existing literature can be utilised as a point of departure for conceptualisation. Further, instead of studying the features that make states weak and the conditions that led to it, the discourse should start focusing on providing sound solutions to the 'African' problem of state weakness.
- This study has defined democratic consolidation as a continuous process to strengthen democracy (section 4.2). This means that social transformation should continuously occur in a country's political, economic, and social sectors. All democracies should strive toward this ideal as consolidation not only prevents a reverse to authoritarianism but also safeguards the stability and sustainability of democracy. Thus, it is recommended that governments should adopt a human-centred approach to consolidation that would improve the lives of ordinary citizens through better education, healthcare, employment, greater accessibility to public services and resources, housing etc. Thus, democracies should continuously seek to meet the demands of the people to uphold their legitimacy and strengthen democracy. Achieving consolidation is therefore not a once off achievement but requires consistent and continuous efforts to ensure that the lives of citizens are improved.

- South Africa's democracy is dependent on economic reform for its survival. It is recommended that municipalities develop policies and by-laws that are focused on inclusive growth which would directly address the challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality in South Africa. The focus of local government needs to be on creating environments conducive to job creation, improved service delivery access to resources, and creating opportunities for the poor and marginalised. These policies and programmes must outline the values of democracy, such as freedom, equality, and human dignity.
- Corruption has long been a 'cancer' on the African continent that deprives people of accessing and receiving basic goods and services. The evidence presented in this study has also shown that corruption is likely to have a long-term impact on economic growth as a result of the impact on foreign investment, the efficiency of state institutions, service delivery, human development, and wealth distribution. Further, corruption erodes citizen trust in public institutions and political processes which ultimately undermines state legitimacy and the rule of law. Serious campaigns and initiatives to combat corruption must first start by dealing with political corruption as it creates an environment for other kinds of corruption. As such, civil society and communities must encourage a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability in local and national government. These are critical features to strengthening democracy as they increase trust and confidence in the government and show political integrity. In the same way, civil society and ordinary citizens can hold governments accountable and demand transparency. Further, the responsibility for improved governance relies on the ANC to rid itself of self-serving elites to make itself more democratic, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the people. This would require courageous people within the ANC and civil society not only to support gatekeepers and whistleblowers but to become corruption fighters themselves. Even though civil society organisations have a critical responsibility to educate citizens regarding their democratic rights responsibilities, there rests a larger responsibility on citizens themselves in realising their power as voters at the voting station. This is because the government is elected by the people. Not only is voting required by law, but it is a great responsibility and an important element of democracy that increases public participation in political processes. Through voting, citizens have the power to choose their government, and decide the quality of life they wish for themselves and for those who come after them. Thus, it is critical for citizens to realise this power and vote for the political party/officials that best represent the interests and concerns of the people, and not be blinded by empty promises, election campaigns, and populist elites.

- Civil society possesses many roles that are all critical to ensuring the continuation and deepening of democracy. One of the most important functions of civil society is to encourage citizens to participate in social and political life. This can be achieved by educating citizens on their democratic roles and responsibilities, voting in elections, and keeping governments responsive and accountable. In this way, CSOs can develop a culture that respects and appreciates the values and principles of democracy, such as tolerance, trust, solidarity, mutual respect, and compromise. These are essential skills to secure the stability and continuation of democracy.
- The South African context was analysed, and it is evident that the country demonstrates features of dysfunction through political instability, poor economic growth, and a dissatisfied population. This dissatisfaction primarily rests on the local government's ineffectiveness in service delivery and meeting the needs of the people because of corruption, poor leadership and the lack of resources and political will. As a response to the government's inefficiency, civil society must mobilise communities to adopt a self-help governance approach in the face of government failure instead of responding through violent protests. This “do it yourself” approach requires groups and individuals in society to collaborate and perform basic functions normally done by local government, such as electricity, water, waste removal, fixing potholes, and keeping communities clean and safe. This collaboration would require people to distance themselves from their cultural, racial, political, and economic disparities in order to work toward improving their livelihoods and standard of living.

## **6.5 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study has managed to cover a variety of factors regarding state dysfunction and the role of civil society in strengthening democracy, however, there are some pertinent matters worth considering for future research. These matters fell outside of the scope and focus of this dissertation, and researchers are thus encouraged to explore the following areas for further discussion:

1. Further research could conduct a comparative study on the leadership styles between Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa on the quality of democracy. This could assist in determining which leadership style is conducive or destructive to democracy.
2. Poor governance and the lack of service delivery are some of the most significant challenges new democracies encounter, especially in the African context. As such, future research could consider conducting a comparative study in new democracies to understand the role and successes of civil society in service delivery and development initiatives.

3. Future research can also investigate trends in the role and functions of civil society in advancing democratic change and continuation.
4. Further research can also explore whether dominant party systems are conducive to consolidation or result in dysfunction.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

Since the early 1990s, the world has experienced an increase in democratisation that spilled over into developing countries regardless of their historical, cultural, political and economic backgrounds. The global upsurge in new democracies brought an increased concern regarding their sustainability and the possibility of a reverse wave to authoritarianism or fragile democracies. As such, measuring state fragility or its sustainability has become critical to determine the future of democracy. Today, democracies face significant challenges threatening their continuation, thus, protecting and strengthening democracy is critical for democratic consolidation.

This dissertation investigated the current state of democracy in South Africa and found that the country is at a critical juncture. South Africa is currently facing an overload of challenges that brings the legitimacy of the government and democracy into question. Even though South Africa has democratic institutions, there is clear evidence of democratic decay in the country's political, economic, and social sectors. In addition, poverty, unemployment, and inequality aggravate the challenge of becoming a consolidated democracy. The ANC's inability to provide the people with quality and sufficient public services, promote economic growth and opportunities, widespread corruption, and poor leadership have caused the people to lose trust in the government. Therefore, civil society has a critical role in improving service delivery, monitoring state power, and encouraging a democratic culture to strengthen democracy and put South Africa back on the path of consolidation.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

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