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A DELICATE BALANCE:

RECONSTRUCTING REGIONALISM IN

/ SOUTH AFRICA

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As the contest over the shape of a new South African constitution gathers pace, the role and status of regional political institutions in a restructured political order has become a source of heated debate. At issue are the ways in which the existing, largely racially-based, regional entities are to be abolished or recast into new institutions. The debate concerns, therefore, the way in which regionalism is to be reconstructed.

Regionalism raises contentious political questions. Although agreement was reached in principle at CODESA that regional institutions should exist in a post-apartheid order, it was partly over the future of the regions that the major parties at the convention deadlocked. The broad agreement between them also offered little clarity on the regions' powers and functions, their boundaries and their relationship to central and local governments. Even before the CODESA deadlock, there was a gulf between the National Party and ANC positions on issues such as regional powers and functions.

Support for strong regional government is not restricted to the current establishment: many liberal opponents of apartheid see it as an essential check on central government, as a way of ensuring diversity and a place in the political system for interests and parties who do not gain majority support at the centre. But among establishment actors it is a priority, for. it is seen not only as a form of "minority protection", but as a way of preserving, perhaps in sharply modified form, the influence of existing regional structures and their political incumbents. In the greater Western Transvaal and Northern cape, the Bophuthatswana administration and various established interests have convened a regional forum whose participants have agreed on a new set of boundaries for a proposed new regional government in the area. In KwaZulu, Chief Minister Buthelezi has stated his intention to, in effect, resurrect the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba. In other areas, establishment or state institutions are actively pursuing regional development strategies, predicated upon a form of regional government for their respective areas.

The ANC has been traditionally suspicious of strong regional government, seeing it as a brake on majority rule in general and on the centre's ability to redistribute power and wealth in particular. While its position has softened to a partial acceptance of regional institutions of government, prompting regionalist processes within "liberation" circles too, it still harbours deep reservations over a dispensation which offers an extremely strong role to regional governments. The powers of regional government - and the proposed boundaries of regions - are likely to remain a source of debate and contest throughout the search for a new constitution.

The issue is made more pertinent by agreement between the parties that regionalism is indeed to be restructured by the reintroduction of elected regional governments (the white provincial councils were, until 1986, a form of elected

regional government). This means that the issue may no longer be whether regional authorities are to play a role in a new order, but the shape they will take and the powers they will enjoy.

But, despite the attention regionalism has received, many questions on both sides of the debate remain unanswered. And, while the issue of regional powers has dominated the debate, the question of regional boundaries, which also affects the viability or desirability of regional government, has been under-researched and debated. This paper seeks to add to the debate by raising some of the issues which may have been obscured in heated contest over regionalism. While the two issues, the powers of the new regions and their boundaries, are, to a large extent, linked, they will for the sake of clarity, be treated separately in this paper.

REGIONAL POWERS: PARTY POSITIONS

It should be clear by now that agreement that there should be regional government has not eliminated contest over the powers of these authorities. As noted above, this remains a point of fierce controversy; it needs closer examination. :

Limiting the Future: The NP's Position

The NP was a persistent opponent of federalism within white politics, since this idea was usually advanced by its "liberal" opponents as an alternative to apartheid. But, despite the fact that it explicitly endorsed federalism very recently (Beeld 4 June 1992), it has been attracted to the idea since the beginning of the current negotiation process. In the process's early stages, the NP advocated "regionalism", but may well have used this term because federalism has repeatedly been denounced by "liberation" movements as a means of protecting white privilege. Having won general agreement from its negotiating partners for the notion of "regionalism", it probably feels more secure about expressly advocating a federal solution. Regionalism or federalism have become central planks in the NP's negotiating platform.

The NP's current position is the result of extensive debate within the party and various state structures over regional policy (Humphries and Shubane 1991; Humphries 1992). Why has it abandoned its pre-1990 opposition to federalism? The NP's constitutional guidelines (NP 1991) argues that regional governments are an important element of "self-determination", without spelling this claim out. It also argues that regional governments facilitate "nation-building" (Viljoen 1991). They should be vested with "original powers" on a range of important issues - in other words, their powers should be entrenched in the constitution and protected from arbitrary removal by the central government.

Viewed in isolation, the NP's proposal to create regions and to vest them with original powers may be a democratic device which seeks to prevent the concentration of power in any one state institution. All parties in the negotiations process seem to be suggesting that contact between government and the governed should be as close as possible; regional government seems to go some way to meeting this need, since it would be more accessible to voters than a distant, central, authority.

Nor does the desire to promote regional government necessarily

imply an attempt to prevent a majority government from implementing its policy choices. But, when read with other NP policy proposals, its position would indeed appear to be inspired by a desire to restrict the options of a government elected by the majority.

The key element in the NP's proposals is an attempt to entrench power-sharing by stipulating that the national government must be composed of all parties which receive more than a certain share of the votes (15% has been mentioned as a possibility). This aims to ensure that the NP retains a foothold in a government elected by all adults. Although the NP no longer talks of group rights, these proposals are firmly rooted in the group rights framework, and vary little from proposals which the NP advanced during the late 1980s. According to the theory of consociational democracy, to which the NP has been attracted for almost a decade, elites drawn from each of the segments which are held to comprise South African society should share power and each should enjoy a veto over government decisions. This proposal seeks to preserve this approach in a new guise, since it assumes that voting will follow "group lines" and that the majority party in each "group" will win enough votes to win inclusion in government. By implication, this is held to ensure "minority protection" and "self-determination".

It is worth noting that this approach has been tested in South Africa - in provincial government. Until 1963, parties were represented on the executive committees of the former provincial councils in proportion to the percentage of seats which they gained. It is noteworthy too that the practice was abolished because, according to a former provincial secretary, it entrenched conflict (between the United and National parties) and did not, therefore, promote good government (Verschuur 1977 5-6).

The provincial system did, however, differ from the NP's proposal in one important respect: the majority on the executive could outvote the minority.. The NP's proposals would force the parties to reach consensus.

This thinking is relevant to the NP's vision of regional government in two ways. Firstly, the term "power-sharing" seems to refer not only to arrangements within national government, but to the division or dispersal of power between tiers of government. The link between regional government and "self-determination" implies that particular groups are concentrated in specific regions and that strong regional government would therefore confer powers on these groups. This view is presented by Potgieter (1992), albeit without substantial clarification.

"Regional government is also a form of self-determination...In the Western Transvaal, for example, the population will consist (of) at least 80% of Tswanas and Afrikaners. The *modus vivendi* which is found here will give expression to the needs and desires of these two population groups. True, it does not give full self-determination to everyone, but this is clearly the highest level of self-determination which is possible under the circumstances".

This seems to confirm the suggestion, made above, that the P's regional proposals assume that voting will follow ethnics and that regionalism or federalism will give ethnic

minorities an electoral majority in their regions which they

could not win nationally. Potgieter appears to imply, therefore, that a convergence of interests is possible between

Tswana and Afrikaans speakers in the region which could be

cemented through an alliance between the NP and, say, the

present rulers of Bophuthatswana (200\235). "Self-determination" could, therefore, be seen as a means to ensure a power-base for regional alliances between the NP and various black political groupings - by extension, it could envisage an NP-

Zulu majority in Natal, and a white = "coloured" majority in

the Western Cape. The greater the power of these regions, the

greater the block on a majority government.

Viewed in the NP's terms, there is a potential flaw in the argument. If, say, Tswana, Zulu and "coloured" people are, as a bloc, generally likely to support an alliance with the NP this, with overwhelming white support, might give the party a national electoral majority. But, if a rival party could win enough support from these groups to win a national majority, it might well win a majority in the regions (with the probable exception of the Western Cape, if surveys indicating majority "coloured" support for the NP prove accurate) If the assumptions on which this view of regionalism is based are accurate, there may be no need for regionalism at all.

Be that as it may, this analysis does seem to confirm the proposition that the NP's proposals seek to use and possibly entrench the power base of ethnic minorities, rather than to "limit central government power in principle. This implies both that the NP expects to be a minority party and that its proposals, like those of other parties to the negotiations, are designed to maximise its interests.

Regional government also plays an important part in the NP's

national constitutional proposals. An upper house of Parliament, which would enjoy 200\230 the power to block lower house decisions, would comprise regional representatives; each regional delegation would consist of an equal number of members of each party which received more than a minimum percentage of the votes; parties which win 60% of the regional vote would have no more members than those which won, say, 15%. In addition, the enforced power-sharing envisaged at national level would also apply within regional government. These proposals are not necessarily integral to the NP's

support for regional government, it could retain this position even if, as seemed likely in July, 1992, the NP abandons the provisions for equal representation of minority parties and even if it abandons enforced power-sharing entirely. Indeed,

if the analysis presented here is accepted, abandonment of this formula would increase the importance of regional government for the NP, since it would increase the need for power-sharing between tiers of government.

However, it should be noted that, if this entire policy "package" were adopted, it would render the adoption of policy

at any level of government, including the regions, so complex that it might 'immobilise government. Institutions outside of government might then increasingly play a role in fashioning

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policy. The proposals could, therefore, inadvertently promote a form of government in which strong interest groups would fill the vacuum created by government immobility. It is conceivable that business interests may craft agreements and then approach government to ratify them because their decision-making processes would work faster than those of the government. The poor, who lack the range of resources at the command of stronger interests, might find themselves further marginalised by this system.

Reluctant Regionalism: The ANC's Position

In February, 1992, the ANC released its proposals for regional government (ANC 1992a). The document, which is not a binding statement of ANC policy but which does illuminate its thinking, presented an extended argument in favour of regional government; this clearly facilitated the Codesa agreement on the necessity for these institutions. But important differences remain between the ANC's position and that of the NP, despite the similarity of language used by the two groups.

The ANC document is still rooted in traditional assumptions that a post-apartheid state should be unitary, so that central government can intervene to correct social and economic imbalances between race groups. This vision is informed by the extent to which the National Party itself was able, through its control of central government, to fundamentally shape South African society according to its own ideological vision. The ANC is convinced that hitherto marginalised communities can only be empowered through wide-ranging intervention.

The ANC document reveals that, like the NP, its position on regionalism has shifted in the last few years. This emerges clearly if the recently issued discussion document on regionalism is compared with, say, two earlier expositions on the topic by senior ANC constitutional experts Kader Asmal (1990) and Zola Skweyiya (1991). While even the speeches of these two ANC representatives reveal a tentative shift in ANC policy, the discussion document goes further in acknowledging a guaranteed role for regional government.

The shifts are indicated by attitudes to entrenched powers for regional authorities. Both the earlier speeches, while accepting that regional authorities should be established, firmly rejected this notion. Two statements from Asmal suffice.

"...the constitution should not entrench the different 'levels' of government, because the recognition of the 'autonomy' of regional and local government in constitutional terms would be the introduction of federalism in another form (unless this occurs with full understanding of the implications of such proposals)" (Asmal 1990: 9);

"In the absence of a complex federal arrangement which would require constitutional provisions, the relationship between central government and regional and local authorities is best dealt with by ordinary legislation. The Constitution could, with profit, include a general reference to the effect that a 'democratic organisation of the State shall include regional and local authorities, and their functions, organisation and

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powers shall be regulated by law in accordance with the
"principle of administrative decentralisation" (Asmal 1990 15,

The discussion document, arguing that future regional
authorities must be saved from the same fate of the former
provincial councils, which were abolished by an act of
parliament, argued instead:

"The new South African constitution will be entrenched in the
sense that the whole of it will only be able to be amended by
means of special procedures and majorities. Listing the
powers of the regions and declaring what their role shall be,
will therefore have the effect of giving the regions a
constitutional base. Some people call this entrenching the
powers of the region...Attention will have to be given to the
question of whether the powers of the regions should be
written into the Constitution in general terms, subject to
periodic review, or specifically listed, as was done with the
powers of the provincial councils. In neither case will the
national legislature lose its power to adopt legislation
binding on the whole country, including the regions (ANC 1992a
18-19)".

This latter position would, through the constitution, give a
great deal more security to the status of regional governments
than that envisaged by the earlier position. It is probably
true to say, that outside of explicitly federal systems, one
of the real litmus tests of the standing and powers of
regional authorities is constitutional entrenchment.

It would, however, seem that the June 1992 ANC policy
conference has returned ANC policy to the positions adopted in
1990/91 by Asmal and Skweyiya. The policy guidelines produced
at the conference did not deal with the issue of whether
regional authorities should be protected by entrenched clauses
in the constitution; it argued only that Parliament should
determine the powers of the regions "provided the overriding
authority of the central parliament is recognised" (ANC 1992b
6). This might suggest a great deal of ambiguity or debate
within the ANC on the regionalism issue.

Despite the possible reversal of policy on entrenched clauses,
the ANC remains committed to elected regional authorities.
This begs the obvious question - why is it prepared to
countenance such authorities? A number of interacting
explanations can be offered.

The first is that the ANC's opposition to regional authorities
was, firstly, a response to the establishment of ethnically-
based homelands and, secondly, to the tentative moves by the
NP in the 1980s towards federalism. Thus various ANC policy
documents of the late 1980s and speeches in the year or so
after the unbanning of the ANC reaffirmed the notion of an
undivided united South Africa - almost in reflex opposition to
NP policies. But the NP's refusal to characterise its policy
proposals as openly federalist - which ensured that the debate
did not polarise into one between "federalism" and a "unitary
state" - may have given the ANC some room to reexamine
regional government.

A second factor could have been the ANC's interaction with

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some supportive homeland administrations, who are sympathetic to regionalism, in the build-up to the CODESA process; this may have raised a number of important issues which softened the ANC position by suggesting a role for homeland officials and politicians once their status no longer depended on apartheid. The ANC may have acknowledged, too, that its desire for a powerful, centralised, government tended to undercut its equally strong commitment to popular participation and accountability. A third factor may have been the influence of comparative international constitutional experiences as the ANC searched for concrete policy options. It has been suggested that a 1991 ANC study tour of Germany prompted increased sympathy for regional government

A fourth factor may be the history of anti-apartheid "struggle". Conditions left the ANC no option but to function as a regionally based formation and to devolve as much decision making on the day to day prosecution of the "struggle" as possible. In time, this prompted the growth of a regional "consciousness" within the ANC, which congealed into real differences in styles of work. This process was naturally influenced by the fact that activists encountered a host of unique regional factors which ensured differences in political conditions between regions - differing regional economies, demographic spreads, elites and regional state approaches. ==

In addition, the experiences of the UDF were important to the ANC when it was unbanned. The UDF was the only part of the "liberation" movement whose infrastructure extended across the country; the ANC had no option but to use it to establish itself in the country as a legal organisation. While the UDF itself was a national formation, it was forced, partly by the extent of repression, to function at a regional level. This left its mark on the politics of groups associated with both the UDF and the ANC. Upon its unbanning the ANC did not embrace the regions of the UDF but instead formed its own which were, however, influenced by those of the UDF. In devising its own regions, the ANC presumably tried to overcome what it saw as short comings, of which perceived urban bias may have been an important one: 14 ANC- regions were created.

But, despite a history of regionally driven "struggle", the ANC clearly prefers a unitary state and a strong central government. Its proposals on regional governments must be read in this light, despite a number of tensions within them.

The ANC argues for a strong, entrenched, regional government system, accountable to people on the ground, but it holds out the old provincial system as its basic model. This ignores the extent to which the provinces gradually lost powers (administrative and financial) to central government in the period before their abolition. The centralisation to which they fell victim may be an inevitable trend in a system in which the central government's role is seen as supreme and sovereign. The ANC also advocates a system characterised by "overlapping or concurrent jurisdiction rather than segmented and competitive powers" (ANC 1992a 18) between central and regional authorities. It is unclear how centralisation could be curbed in this system. If the central government and its officials know that they are the most powerful authorities in

the land, what reasons have they to accommodate or respect tr=
ecisions or views of regional authorities?

Further evidence that the ANC is unenthusiastic about entrenched regional government powers is the discussion document's apparent opposition to any detailed definition of regional powers and functions. It advocated only a constitutional guarantee of the right of second tier authorities to exist (which, of course, was not extended to the white provincial councils), but did not support their specific powers being listed in the constitution. Secondly, and in a logical progression from this, it is also opposed to giving such authorities the right to contradict national policy. Doubts about the ANC's commitment to strong regional government are increased by statements such as these in the discussion document:

"Regions will not be able to contradict national policy as expressed in national laws, but they will help to shape such policy and have considerable scope in relation to how best to implement it" (p19).

"Regional governments, accountable to the electors of the region, liaising with the central government, operating through regional administrations and applying the law of the land as tailored to meet the region's needs, shall be responsible: for the implementation of government policy at the regional level"

(p21).

The centre of gravity in policy making will, therefore, be located in the central government; regional governments will either simply implement policies or will enjoy only those powers which central government wishes to devolve; these may presumably be withdrawn at any time. An ANC spokesman's critique of Nigeria's federalism is instructive in this regard. Saki Macozoma argues that , in locating too much power in the federal units, it "resulted in powerful political interests concentrating at the periphery and leaving the centre to disintegrate" (Star 26 May 1992). The result is an authority vacuum in Nigerian society and the lack of cohesion of the nation" - this the ANC wants to avoid.

This evidence suggests that, despite partial shifts in the ANC's position, its reservations about regional government have not softened significantly. It should be noted here that the ANC's endorsement, both at CODESA and in the discussion document, of the principle that there ought to be regional governments hardly amounts to a decisive move towards federalism. Basic considerations of efficiency would make it impossible for any state the size of South Africa to concentrate all administrative functions at the centre; some functions will clearly have to be performed at the regional level. The ANC's present position seems to indicate that, unlike the NP during the 1980s, it accepts that its commitment to democracy implies that these functions should be exercised by elected, rather than appointed, authorities. But the step from this principle to support for autonomous regional government is a long one indeed. .

The ANC's position is, of course, motivated by a suspicion that the NP and its allies seek to so disperse power that the

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government will be impotent to intervene in social and economic processes. Like the NP's position, the ANC's is influenced by its broader interests and goals at the national level.

But it does not follow that strong regional government will necessarily have that effect. As noted above, the NP's brand of regionalism may well do this, but only because it is premised on a group-based theory of consociational democracy. Strong regional government operating within a system based on some other premise - such as the majoritarian democracy which the ANC favours - may have very different effects. If we have analysed the ANC's concerns correctly, it may well be that objections which should be directed to consociationalism are being aimed at regionalism.

The Wild Card? Homeland Proposals

Perhaps predictably, key homeland leaders are among regionalism's most ardent proponents.

While the shared base from which they operate, namely apartheid-created structures, might suggest a common "homeland" approach to this issue, an examination of their views shows clearly that their proposals on future regional government are not informed by a shared perspective. "Homeland" leaders have not, as they were expected to do, all lent their support to the National Party in the negotiating process. Some have endorsed the NP's support for regionalism or federalism; others have gone further, insisting that, regardless of the NP's position, they will reject any settlement which does not entrench strong regional powers. But others (Transkei, KaNgwane, Lebowa, Venda) have supported the ANC's position. In this group, those who are "independent" have advocated reincorporation while the self-governing territories have been largely silent on the regionalism issue.

Nevertheless, at least some "homelands" in the ANC camp seem to take regionalism far more seriously than we might expect, given their apparent sympathies. The prime example is Transkei which has invested a great deal of energy in an attempt to press for redrawn boundaries; this suggests that it does expect regionalism to play an important part in the new dispensation.

On the question of regional powers, there is little difference between the NP position and that of many of the homelands. However, if there is a difference it centres around the question of boundaries. It is to that issue that we now turn.

REGIONAL BOUNDARIES: PARTY POSITIONS Retaining the Present? : Homeland Demands

A common thread runs through the proposals of three "homelands" opposed to the ANC - Bophuthatswana, Ciskei and KwaZulu - and one sympathetic to it, Transkei. This is that regional boundaries should either reflect or extend current ethnically-drawn boundaries. It is worth noting that these

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positions are advanced by administrations claiming to speak for the three largest black "ethnic groups", the Xhosa, Tswana and Zulus.

With the exception of KwaZulu, all these administrations have proposed or implied support for regional borders which purport to reinstate pre-colonial boundaries; this "historical ethnic position" seeks to reclaim land or reassert dominance and influence over areas controlled by the "tribe" in the previous century.

In the larger Eastern Cape/Transkei area both Transkei and Ciskei have presented claims to much larger pieces of territory than that over which they now govern: they also compete for territory presently governed by each other and for the Border corridor between the two territories.

The Transkei military government argues that its experience of the government's regional development programme - which divides the state into two - "negates any advantages to be derived from such a division of Transkei" (Holomisa 1992 3). Its leader, General Holomisa, argues for a "consolidated Transkei within a larger region" stretching from the Umzimkulu River in the East to the Great Fish River "or beyond" in the west. This larger expanse of territory would subsume the

Ciskei and the Border corridor. Holomisa claims these areas on the grounds that- "our common historical cultural and linguistic experience militate against the dismemberment of Transkei as we know it" (Holomisa 1992 4). In other words, the present Transkei - whose boundaries effectively date from the late 19th century - should be extended to include areas under Xhosa rule prior to colonial conquest.

Holomisa also argues that the white-owned farm lands around the north eastern Cape towns of Elliot, Maclear, Ugie and Indwe and those in East Griqualand, presently part of Natal,

should be incorporated "into the region of which Transkei will be a part". Holomisa appears rather ambiguous on the motive for incorporating these areas into a redefined region; his justification is that it would "go a long way towards the resolution of black landlessness and- addressing of historical wrongs". This implies that Transkei is: motivated not by ethnic concerns but by an interest in the land redistribution favoured by the ANC. But there is no necessary connection between the two: simply incorporating these areas into a larger region would not redress black landlessness unless it was accompanied by the expropriation of white owned farms for redistribution to peasants or black commercial farmers. Similarly, expropriation and redistribution could be implemented by a new government even if Transkei's borders are not extended - or, indeed, if they cease to exist. This suggests that the claim could have been motivated in this way to make it more palatable to the Transkei administration's alliance partners.

It is also significant that Holomisa's claims are long-standing ones, advanced by previous Transkei leaders: as early as 1972, the former Transkei Chief Minister, Kaiser Matanzima, presented the SA government with almost identical claims for land which he said had formed part of the Transkei in 1884. (SAIRR 1972 33-34). These claims were, of course,

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seen as an attempt to assert ethnic claims within the logic of the "homeland" system. Regardless of their stated rationale, the present proposals could be seen as an attempt to stake similar claims in a different context.

Ciskei's proposals are designed to retain the distinction between the Transkei and Ciskei, albeit on a redefined basis. Its submission to Codesa's Working Group on the future of the TBVC states, argues that "we belong to the broader Border/Eastern Cape". It appears to accept the present western boundary of Region G (west of Humansdorp) and the northern boundary (along the Orange River). But the Ciskei authorities propose, without presenting any motivation, that the eastern boundary of the proposed new region should be extended to include the Transkeian town of Butterworth.

At a conference in Venda in late 1990 on the future of the TBVC states, Ciskei's Brigadier Ggozo rejected any amalgamation of the two Xhosa-speaking territories "just because the same language is spoken in the two countries" (Venda 1990 188). "I believe it would be a coalition between a cat and a mouse, which would be a recipe for disaster. They have their own identity and we vary in our ideas. -- Therefore, I would not opt for that idea, unless Transkei be incorporated in Ciskei".

Since the creation of the Ciskei in the 1960 and 1970s, relations between it and the Transkei have never been warm and

have often been very strained. The Transkei under the leadership of the Matanzimas often asserted an implicit hegemony over the Ciskei. In 1972, for example, Chief

Matanzima argued for a "Greater Xhosa-land" to consist of Transkei (defined in its 1884 sense), Ciskei and the Border corridor (SAIRR 1972 35-36). Immediately after Transkei's independence, he held out the prospect of Transkei unilaterally incorporating Ciskei; in the ensuing controversy he backtracked, suggesting instead that the two territories should form one Xhosa nation (Stultz 1980 114).

Ciskei's position, therefore - while it relies on ethnically "neutral" boundaries - appears to be strongly influenced by this history and seems to be motivated by an attempt to maintain a separate identity from Transkei. In one sense, it is the "odd man out", since it does not base its claims on ethnicity (there are no ethnic differences between inhabitants of Ciskei and Transkei). But, like the others, it is motivated by an attempt to retain, in a new form, the current "homeland" regional structures.

Bophuthatswana's present leaders base their land claims on explicitly ethnic considerations; in particular, they appeal to pre-colonial and colonial political dynamics and imply that these are a basis upon which to structure a regional state. In President Mangope's view, the existence of Bophuthatswana is "based on history (and) on the fact that there has always been and always will be a Tswana nation". The homeland thus only partially represents the restoration of British Bechuanaland, annexed to the Cape in 1895 (Mangope 1991 3). The territory's submission to Codesa's TBVC working group argues that while the South African government's motive in pursuing independent homelands was to off-load responsibility

or black people "clearly the Batswana accepted the offer as -

olden opportunity to regain the independence given away by the British Government in 1895" (Bophuthatswana 1992 Annexure A).

Mangope's attempts to increase the size of the territory have taken various forms. In November, 1973, he held out a possible linkage with Botswana and the creation of a larger Tswana state, in preference to a possible federation of homeland states then mooted in some homeland circles (SAIRR 1974 164). Botswana has refused to discuss this option. A second option, also presented in 1973, involved extensive land claims in the Northern Cape and Western Transvaal (Mangope 1991).

The latter area seems to correspond largely with the area now proposed by various actors for a larger and redefined Western Transvaal and Northern Cape region, which is much larger than the present Region J of the economic development programme. The prospect of a negotiated settlement seems to have prompted a return by Mangope to this proposal: in his address to the territory's parliament last year he argued that a "radically new basis of spatial replanning" was necessary for South Africa and by implication the TBVC "states". "There should be a total disregard for the inconsistencies of historical demarcations, enforced by colonial rulers and apartheid planners. - New, logical, regions or nation states must evolve in the process of negotiation. Bophuthatswana's initiatives in starting discussions with our neighbours in the Western Transvaal, North Western Transvaal, Northern Cape and other territories, could be a beginning in this direction" (Mangope 1991 10-11). Bophuthatswana's participation in the greater Western Transvaal forum seems to imply an attempt to pursue this goal in alliance with key white interests in the region; it seems willing to forego the areas of Bophuthatswana presently situated north of Pretoria and Thabamano in the Free State, perhaps because no similar alliance is in prospect in those areas.

KwaZulu's leadership, the Zulu King and Chief Buthelezi, do not seem to assert claims to expanded territory but they do couch their claims in distinctly ethnic terms. Their starting point is the historical continuity of KwaZulu and the Zulu nation despite the ravages of conquest and apartheid. The King's address to the South African government's 1991 summit on violence contains the clearest statement of this position:

"For many years I have been deeply offended by accusations that KwaZulu was a product of apartheid ...KwaZulu has its own right to exist. It was a sovereign State before South Africa ever came into being. We lost our sovereignty by conquest but we never lost our identity. ...We have been conquered but not crushed. We had the right to exist as a sovereign State before the Act of Union. We have remained intact and united since the Act of Union and we will remain intact and united, whatever takes place in negotiations about the new constitution in South Africa". (Zwelethini 1991 2).

Buthelezi strikes a similar chord, arguing that the KwaZulu legislative assembly is the "political persona of the Zulu

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nation" (Buthelezi 1991 2):

â\200\230.Had it not been for the extent to which apartheid sullied the name of KwaZulu by attempting to use KwaZulu as a structure in previous National Party Government's homeland policy, the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly would have proudly housed members of this Assembly drawn from various political parties. The KwazZulu Legislative Assembly stands apart from Party politics...Inkatha Freedom Party's political enemies, and my own political enemies, have attempted to thrash KwaZulu simply because they realise the extent to which the KwaZulu legislative assembly and the KwaZulu Government give content and clout to what Inkatha Freedom Party lis and does" (Buthelezi 1991 2).

While Buthelezi argues that the historical boundaries of the 19th century - Zulu kingdoms extended into the Transvaal and Transkei, and has indicated that these could be used as the basis for land claims, he does appear willing to accept the present, more limited, boundaries of KwaZulu and its associated political and administrative structures, as distinct regional ynltis in a reconstituted South Africa (Buthelezi 1991 3).

Buthelezi seems ambiguous on the relationship between KwaZulu and the rest of Natal. He seems at. times to imply that KwaZulu is a distinct entity in its own right, while at other times he holds out a linkage with "the province of Natal". 1In

a recent statement he argued strongly that a precondition for the acceptance of any new constitutional proposals was that "they include the future status of KwaZulu or of a regional government which has been negotiated into existence with us having a veto power in this respect" (Citizen 25 March 1992). Buthelezi has indicated that he is willing to resurrect the activities of the Buthelezi Commission and the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba (Buthelezi 1992 12), both of which advocated the regional dispensation dependent on KwaZulu's consent which Buthelezi seeks.

There is a common thread running through all these positions. All of them assert or imply that regionalism will be reconstructed - formally at any rate - on a non-racial basis. But they suggest too that this should be done in ways which reconstitute their present power-base in new ways: whether the mechanism is a veto for existing homeland authorities or an alliance with other interests, the goal is to ensure that current homeland elites remain influential or dominant forces in new reglons which will recognise current "homeland" divisions in practice, if not in theory. In all the cases, the homelands' current status as authorities with powers granted to them by statute is assumed to give them a veto or near-veto over future regional arrangements.

A surface interpretation of these positions mlght suggest that they express an ethnic consciousness which is staking a claim to recognition in a post-apartheid regional dispensation. But it must be noted that, while all the proposals may have similar effects, neither Transkei's or Ciskei's are couched in distinctly ethnic terms - if ethnicity was the sole factor in drawing regional boundaries, there would be no rationale for Ciskei's position. It would, therefore, be more accurate to

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ee them as attempts to retain a power-base for currenâ\200\235â\204ç homeland" elites in a new order; like the other positions, they are based on interest calculations rather than irreducible values or identities.

Buthelezi's agenda may be different from those of the other actors: here the goal may not be simply to preserve a regional power-base regardless of who holds power at the centre, but to maintain that base as a means of challenging the power of a national majority government.

"I will lay foundations now to gather support for the rejection of a government which is not a government of national unity and which was not brought into being by a truly representative constitution-making body. Every day in the future will abound with difficulties as the government finds that it cannot generate the wealth that the country needs to satisfy the aspirations of: the people. A decade -hence- there will still be millions of people living in vast squatter camps. A decade hence there will still be a vast housing crisis...a vast unemployment problem...people will be blaming whoever governs for all these things". (Buthelezi 1992 11-12).

This goal may explain the ambiguity in Buthelezi's statement, quoted above, on the link between the KwaZulu legislature and the IFP. On the one hand, he suggests that, but for apartheid, the KLA would have been a vehicle for representation of the entire Zulu people and so would have housed parties representing the different policies and perspectives within the "nation". On the other, he presents it as a power base for the IFP. This suggests that, regardless of the rhetoric used to justify it, the demand's chief purpose is to retain a stronghold for the IFP which it believes it will need in a new political order. Again, therefore, the demand has more to do with political calculations than with pre-existing ethnic loyalties.

The key issue is whether this agenda is achievable. Some commentators insist that the homelands will exert a major influence on the regional debate; they are seen as part of a powerful "federalist" bloc ranged against the ANC and its allies. But the basis on which their power is alleged to rest is not always clear. Their support base is, after all, at best uncertain: some have been elected in very low polls, others, such as Holomisa and Ggozo, have not been elected at all. And all are financially dependent on the present government and could, presumably, collapse if it withdrew financial support.

A counter-argument might assert that these interests do represent or articulate a strong ethnic consciousness among the groups for which they speak: while the evidence is inconclusive, low polls in homeland elections and survey results indicating very limited support for the leaders who advance this position, would seem to contradict this claim.

It might also be argued that their claims express the interests of the homeland bureaucracies and those who work in them. Apartheid has so fragmented the public service that it may be misleading to talk of a "South African civil service"; there are various bureaucracies and those in the homelands are significant, in size at least. But the desire of current

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homeland officials to remain in employment does not necessarily depend on the sort of political dispensation advocated by the homeland parties: they could easily be met by some other sort of regional arrangement. The demands of homeland parties will not decide whether the current officials remain in their posts; they will simply determine who their political masters are and it is by no means certain that the officials would be averse to retaining their posts under new masters in an entirely different regional system. Homelands do also command armies and police forces whose senior officers may be most likely to retain their authority in the sort of dispensation favoured by these homeland politicians: but again it is feasible that the authority of the current senior officers may be retained in a different system.

Homelands may, therefore, owe any influence they exert on the regional debate to the sympathy of the National Party, which has played a vital role in ensuring that they remain important parties in the debate. Their future may depend largely on the contest between the NP and ANC.

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In its constitutional proposals released last year, the NP suggested that the nine development regions be used as a point of departure for constructing new regional governments (NP 1991).

The NP's argument against using existing provincial boundaries is based on two grounds - their historical origins and their limited number. A senior Transvaal NP MEC, Olaus van Zyl, has argued that the provincial boundaries are "colonial" in origin "and thus might be unacceptable to other participants in the negotiating process: the development region boundaries are "more neutral" (Van Zyl 1991). He has also argued that the four provinces, as presently constituted, "probably offer too few regions" while the almost 45 RSC regions "offer too many regions" (Van Zyl 1990 ps8). This view is supported by a recent OFS Administrator who argues that new boundaries should reflect "a smaller number of larger regions rather than a large number of smaller regions" (Hansard 1991 cols 4226-4227).

In the NP's view, the development regions should not automatically be accepted as a basis for creating new regional governments. The suggestion that they be used as "a starting point" implies that the NP might want to keep open the option of changing the present regional boundaries. There is a strain of opinion within the NP and government which favours a reduction in the number of regions from the nine of the development programme. This is justified on the grounds that nine regions will still entail too much financial duplication, alternatively that a greater degree of regional economic viability will be achieved by redrawing the regions.

At a recent regionalism conference in Potchefstroom which discussed a larger single Western Transvaal/Northern Cape region than the present Region J, two proposals were floated for a reduction in the number of regions. One of the conference organisers, Professor PJJS Potgieter, argued that the nine regions could "quite comfortably" be further reduced to six or seven, with a maximum of eight (Potgieter 1991 8;

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Beeld 15 April 1992). More importantly perhaps, the national
â\200\230.puty chairman of the Rapportryers, Mr Louis Swanepoel, al

argued for six regions. They were: the larger Western
Transvaal/Northern Cape region; the rest of the Transvaal;
Natal; the OFS; the ANC's proposed region of Transkei, Ciskei,
Border and East Griqualand and, finally, the rest of the Cape
(Beeld 15 April 1992). One interpretation is that the NP may
see a redrawn Western Transvaal/Northern Cape region almost as
a political quid pro quo for accepting the ANC's Border/Kei
region (see below).

The most detailed thinking on redrawing boundaries to ensure
greater regional economic viability seems to be taking place
within the newly established Department of Regional Matters
and Land Affairs. Officials within the Department recently
floated a drastic redivision of South Africa into six regions
(Finansies en Tegnies 8 May 1992). Their proposals are
designed to produce regions which would have almost equal tax
generating capacities, as broadly measured by gross geographic
product (see annexure A). This would, it is hoped, reduce the
need for central government financial transfers to the
regions. These proposals are also predicated upon the
assumption that a reduction of financial disparities between
regions would stimulate inter-regional- economic competition gs
regions were allowed to pursue differing economic policies.

This goal would, however, be achieved at the cost of departing
dramatically from current boundaries and introducing very
asymmetrical geographic regions: the magisterial district of
Johannesburg becomes a region in its own right whereas the
Western Transvaal, Northern Cape and Northern Free State and
Natal would become one region (see annexure). However, if the
same principle were applied to a proposal which sought seven
or eight regions, it could lead to less grossly distorted
spatial areas, showing a greater approximation to more
familiar political boundaries.

It is difficult to estimate how influential these voices are
within the NP. But it seems unlikely that it. will argue. for
dramatic changes, especially in the near future, to the
development regions since they have formed an integral element
in state planning and administration for some 10 years:
various central state departments have ensured that their sub-
national structures coincide with the nine regions; the Cape
and Transvaal provincial administrations have also shaped
their subordinate units on the basis of their boundaries. It
could thus be argued that the NP would be one of the groups to
benefit most from such a regional delimitation because it
alone has experience of working within the developmental
region framework.

Perhaps the most significant point about these views is that
they do not see regions as "natural" entities expressing
existing regional identities. The development regions are
advocated precisely because they are, in a sense, "neutral" -
they are derived from technical planning criteria rather than
a history which its bargaining partners may not wish to
recognise; the object here is to make regionalism more
palatable and more likely to be accepted by all parties. A
similar rationale may lie behind the proposal that the NP
accept the ANC's proposed "greater Transkei". The debate over

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the desirable number of regions and their boundaries assumes that these should seek to achieve particular economic or administrative ends, not to recognise existing identities. Nor is it easy to reconcile the enthusiasm of some NP planners for larger regions with a desire to ensure that government is "closer to the people". This suggests that the NP's concern for regional government stems primarily from a more general desire to limit the power of the majority; if this principle is recognised in a new system, the question of where the boundaries are to be drawn is largely a technical one.

The NP's debate over boundaries is, therefore, influenced by two criteria: calculations on the sorts of boundaries necessary to persuade negotiating partners to accept strong regions; and technical considerations which assume that boundaries can be drawn in ways which will have particular administrative or economic effects. Both approaches assume that there is no "natural" regional identification and that the drawing of boundaries are means to other ends.

The ANC, too, offers proposals on the -appropriate boundaries for regional government. Its document attempts to marry the development region boundaries with the 1910 provincial

boundaries. In so doing, it creates a tenth region, by combining the Transkei, Ciskei and Border regions, while suggesting minor changes to other boundary anomalies. The

idea of creating ten regions seems to have been current within specialist ANC constitutional circles from mid to late 1990; Asmal's paper (1990: 5) argued that the country "for its size and population", could be "usefully" divided into ten regions but he did not go on to suggest specific spatial divisions.

The discussion document argues that amongst other factors "popular acceptance and a sense of rightness" should be taken into account when deciding on boundaries, adding that "quite a high degree of national consensus has already been reached" on these boundaries through the establishment of the development regions (ANC 1992a 12-13). Elsewhere, the document appears to argue that cultural or ethnic factors should be important determinants in drawing regional boundaries.

In arguing for its tenth region, the ANC document seems to rely on historical arguments in terms of which the Transkei/Border/Ciskei region was once viewed as a single entity. But it is silent on the effects of the division of that region thereafter - the Border and Transkei have existed as distinct entities for a long time. In the absence of further motivation, it will be difficult for the ANC to rebuff arguments that it is pleading for a consolidated "Xhosastan". This interpretation is presumably bolstered by the obvious similarities between the ANC's present proposals (as well as that of Gen Holomisa) and the earlier proposals of Chief Matanzima for a Greater Transkei.

While the 1910 boundaries, unlike those of the development regions, allow the northern border of Transkei to include Umzimkulu and East Griqualand, both the development and provincial boundaries allow Bophuthatswana to be divided into three regions (excluding Thabamole in the OFS). If culture

and language are important in deciding regional boundaries

What about a redrawn Western Transvaal/Northern Cape region. . . One possible interpretation is that the ANC's boundaries emerge chiefly out of immediate political dynamics - such as a need to support the position of its ally, the Transkei administration.

A further significant aspect of the ANC proposals is that, despite the appeal to "popular acceptance", it is willing to accept boundaries which were established either by colonial conquest or by government economic planners. This suggests that, to the ANC, like the NP, regional boundaries are not a "life or death" political issue. The reason, of course, may be different: if regional government is not to enjoy any powers beyond those conferred by central government, the question of where its boundaries are drawn becomes relatively unimportant.

Something out of Nothing?

Of the three positions towards regional boundaries, only the homeland positions discussed in this paper seek to build new regional boundaries around (claimed) identities which existed prior to the drafting of the various current boundaries. The other two positions base them largely on technical - perhaps even arbitrary - criteria.

This may have a great deal to do with the broader positions of the parties. The homeland positions stand or fall on the claim that important sections of the population identify with existing regional entities: if they do not, the rationale for the continued existence of these units falls away. The NP and ANC positions, on the other hand, have far more to do with the broader contest between the parties on the shape of a post-apartheid state. The NP sees regionalism as a means to an end,

whose realisation does not depend on how regional boundaries are drawn. To the ANC, limiting regional powers is equally a means to an end and, once it is assumed that regions will be subordinate to the centre, the precise shape of the boundaries is less important. Both parties approach regionalism as a means of dealing with the central issue in national negotiations - majority rule and minority participation - rather than an issue in its own right. This explains the general consensus between the ANC and the NP towards the regional boundary issue.

But, if homeland boundaries are not to reflect existing racial and political divisions, what criteria are to be used? An obvious dilemma facing advocates of regional government is that all existing boundaries reflect a history of racial division; there are no non-racial historical boundaries acceptable to all parties to which the country can revert. But nor is there agreement on the criteria by which new ones should be drawn.

Regional planning and development literature lists an almost endless list of criteria for boundaries: these include economic, political, ethnic, demographic, planning, religious, transport or natural factors, or a combination of any of them. But demarcating regional boundaries is always controversial because there is no universally accepted method of delimiting them. Even when reasons are advanced for any demarcation, it

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remains necessary to explain why a boundary was drawn where it was and not perhaps at a nearby point. Countries such as Algeria which have gone through the exercise of creating regions have experienced tensions around this issue. Nor does unanimity by contending political groups on the criteria for demarcating regional boundaries necessarily lead to agreement on the proposals which are advanced applying those criteria.

In any country any number of regions can be created and exist simultaneously for different purposes (Glasson 1974; Hall 1970). They can coincide spatially or differ. Regions designed to effect a decentralisation of government functions could also be used for administrative, economic or political purposes. In South Africa, for instance, the development planning regions now most commonly associated with the Development Bank (DBSA) have coexisted with the provinces and the homelands.

There is also no intrinsic reason why regions, initially designed for one purpose, cannot be used for another: totally different function, or be used to fulfill two or more functions; this, of course, is the rationale behind the proposal that the nine development regions be used as a starting point for regional boundaries.

Although it is difficult to obtain clarity on the precise reasons for the creation of the development regions, it seems they were designed to effect balanced economic growth and development by eliminating glaring regional inequalities and by redressing the effect of the economic division between homelands and other areas. By creating spatial areas within which economic planning could be undertaken, it was hoped that a core economic centre and activities would take root in each region. In turn, it was thought, this would stimulate other economic activities, particularly manufacturing. In time, it was hoped, various regions would contribute different strengths to the national economy and help diversify it. If the plan succeeded, it would contribute to stronger economic regions which would underpin more balanced economic development. While it is conceivable that these--redefined entities may have been envisaged as tiers of authorities to which power and functions could be devolved, there is no evidence that the development regions were created with a view for later use as administrative or political regions (Van Eeden 1988).

An argument against the use of boundaries designed for another purpose is that, to work well, regions, especially those intended to function as an independent tier of government, have to be carved in ways which ensure that inhabitants identify with their region (ANC 1992; McCarthy 1992): popular acceptance of the demarcation of regions is intrinsic to the establishment of regional

2 governments (ANC

1992). This argument is advanced by the ZANC although, as noted earlier, is neglected in its suggestions. In a separate analysis, Mthembu; et al. (1990) note the fact that existing plans for 'long range regional development' points to a

desire by their planners to ensure that they were seen as "apolitical" and thus beyond political controversy. Implicit is the view that they were created by planners without any reference to their residents. Similarly, he notes that

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Regional Services Councils and Joint Services Boards do have names, but argues that those of the Natal JSB regions particular are without popular appeal. Here, too, he implies that the major shortcoming of those regions is that they emerged from planners rather than from the desires of their inhabitants. McCarthy does not explain why popular identification with a region is so critical.

While popular support for regional boundaries may ensure that they remain durable, there is also little in the academic literature to support the view that there needs to be a link between a region and what people perceive to be "their" region. There is also evidence that the existence of regions over a long enough period can lead to an acceptance of specific boundaries in circumstances in which they have been rejected initially. An obvious example is the ANC's broad acceptance of the regional development boundaries, another is the fact that the Central Witwatersand RSC area seems to have been accepted by civic associations participating in the Central Wits Metropolitan Chamber.

If regions are to be endorsed by their inhabitants first there is a danger that they might never emerge, particularly in South Africa where the debate on regions has become an area of controversy involving a variety of elites, some of whom rely on ethnic constituencies. - The route of attrition - in which boundaries are accepted simply because "they are there" - seems to work, even where they were imposed under the most authoritarian conditions. And some regions - such as Pretoria-Witwatersand-Vaal - are, of course, accepted on the grounds that they have a distinct economic identity, even though they were never subjected to a test of popular acceptability. The rejection of Regional Services Councils by anti-apartheid groups may seem a contrary example. But RSCs were rejected because of the political goals they were seen to pursue - their boundaries were not a source of great contest. The boundaries which were contested were those of the RSCs! primary local authorities; but here again the issue was the principle of demarcating boundaries on racial grounds rather than that the details of the boundaries had not been submitted to a popular test | ; o

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This suggests that the true demarcation of regions is a point of political will which has far more to do with the broader context than with the details of where and how the boundaries were drawn. If, for example, a group perceives itself to be excluded from power by the way regional boundaries have been drawn; it may resist the objections seem to us to be; directed at the heretofore exclusion rather than the merits demarcation itself. Political elites seem to have a role in determining whether or not particular forms of delimitation would be challenged. This latter variable is

difficult to pin down because it may rest on subjective calculations. = T : it may rest on subjective calculations, e, j it may rest on subjective calculations) J

Bok, if "popular acceptance" is a difficult issue, nor is there a set of "objectively" criteria to be used to demarcate regions. In our own case, for example, the existing regions - the elements to which most of the current proposals refer - are based on our history of political contest and conflict, rather than on planning or administrative criteria.

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The provincial boundaries, in some senses, are the most enduring regional division. Their spatial dimensions reflect the various outcomes of 19th century conflict and conquest -

between white and black, imperial power and settler interests, and imperial interests and black interests. The outcome of these conflicts saw white interests clearly paramount in these four regions and in the years after 1910 this became increasingly so. The way in which the provincial councils developed reflected this.

The second set of boundaries - the "native reserves" - also date from the interactions of the previous century; they represent the last vestiges of black territory after military and political defeat by the imperial and settler forces. These reserves constituted a much smaller area than the original areas dominated by the various groupings. Further, these larger pre-conquest boundaries do not appear to have been rigidly defined, being rather shaped by political or military influence. The dimensions of the "native reserves" have in the last century or so been largely subsumed within the provincial boundaries.

Apartheid's creation of the homelands established the third set of boundaries. Although these tended to reflect the post-conquest reserve borders, they were adjusted by geographic consolidation in terms of the Land Acts. The most notable alterations were the eradication of the so-called "black spots" and the expropriation of land from white farmers. Within the broad homeland category, a distinction needs to be drawn between the status of the boundaries of the TBVC states and those of the six self-governing homelands. The logic of apartheid constitutionalism assumes that the status of the TBVC states requires approval by the South African parliament and the various TBVC states, while the status of the self-governing homelands can formally be changed by legislation of the South African parliament alone. It is this distinction which lies behind the assumed ability of some of the TBVC states to hold on to their independent status after the conclusion of the CODESA talks.

Regional services councils boundaries are a further set. While they are perhaps the least controversial - and the least important, since they do not feature in the proposals discussed here - they too are the outcome of political contest; they were drawn, at least in part, in an attempt to resolve problems created by the racial division of local

authority areas.

The regional development boundaries would seem to be an exception, since, as noted above, they were devised for economic planning purposes. They also transcended racial sub-national boundaries by uniting "homeland" and other areas within regions - perhaps one of the reasons why the ANC has no strong objection to them. (They do, however, tend to respect the provincial boundaries of 1910 - one interpretation is that they effectively amount to a subdivision of the larger provinces of the Cape and Transvaal into smaller units).

Once established, however, the development regions slowly became seen as boundaries for political purposes. In 1986, when the government announced its intention to create the

ational Statutory Council as a negotiating mechanism, three

the nine regions were to have provided the basis for the :

electoral colleges in which township councillors would choose their representation for the council.

One of the first attempts to view the regional development boundaries as potential political units came out of the Development Bank of Southern Africa in the mid-1980s. A senior analyst, Dr Freek Van Eeden, attempted to reclassify the income and expenditure patterns of the state (that is central state, provincial, TBVC and self-governing homelands) on the basis of the nine regions. The analysis, underpinned by fiscal federalism theory, concluded that subject to grants from the central fiscus, the regions could become economically viable units (Van Eeden 1988).

As implied above, the current proposals of the parties are shaped in part by at least four of these types of boundary. Some political actors present their options in terms of pre-colonial boundaries, others with elements of pre- and post-colonial, while others defer to the economic development regions and the provinces. While the RSC boundaries are not very visible contenders in the debate, the notion that much smaller regional units should be created has had, and continues to have, its proponents. One version of this position is to be found in Botha (1988) while both McCarthy (1992) and Platzky (1992) have also tended to point to the need to perhaps use smaller rather than larger units. Among some analysts and political actors, these smaller regions derive from the model of Swiss cantons while for others they are effective "city regionalists" (Glasson 1974:39). This view is advanced by some who believe regionalism would allow greater citizen control of government. Some RSC participants also express this view; however it should be noted that RSC boundaries, with the exception of Natal, do not extend into homeland or TBVC areas.

Two points flow from this. The first is that, whatever boundaries emerge, they are unlikely to be a total break with the past: they are likely to be built at least in part on existing boundaries, regardless of their history and original purpose. The second is that regional government boundaries emerge from political processes and are not self-evident units, defined either on functional, topographical or ethnic criteria. While many of the actors present their proposals in ways which suggest that boundaries can be selected by applying criteria such as ethnicity, popular appeal or economic efficiency, the outcome is again likely to be the outcome of contest between political actors and may well be a compromise between their positions. Public policy options, it could also be argued, are also not self-evident positions but are rather advanced and argued to further the interests of the group presenting the proposals: the drawing of a boundary is ultimately a political action, even if it emerges from what is claimed to be an objective process.

How fierce the contest over boundaries will be will depend on the powers they are assigned. We would suggest that the complexities of boundary demarcation increase in proportion to the powers to be granted to these authorities. The more regional governments are seen and designed for representative

purposes, the more varied are the forces and factors which impinge on the demarcation process. Since regions would be

important for the outcomes of political competition, sensitivities about boundary inclusions or exclusions among political groups would increase. The result of political competition could also shape the nature of the relationship between the victorious regional political elites and the central government. On the other hand, the more regional authorities are seen as administrative authorities, subject to greater control by the central government, the less important they would tend to be seen by persons living within their areas of jurisdiction. In some cases political competition around them could be reduced entirely.

Similarly, the importance of identification with a particular region seems to depend on the overall context within which they emerge; this issue is especially important if they are seen as means of structuring individual and group or regional identity. If regional demarcation occurs within a federal system then it is arguable that : some- identification with a region by the persons living within it . becomes more important. In a federal dispensation, this will:-in. any case be inevitable because. different. regions . may have: differing laws and regulations which may force people:to-change their relationship with aspects of the. law.in different regions. If, however, regions- emerge within a.framework of a unitary state, identification. with a region.does. not seem to be as important. '

In and of themselves, the creation of regions seems to disadvantage no one. But it must be emphasised that policy proposals are seldom devoid of calculations meant to benefit some groups and exclude others. In the current debate on regions, the question of where regional boundaries are drawn should be 'situated within this broader political context. There is a: widespread suspicion, for instance, among radical opponents of the NP government, : that the regional development boundaries bolster the positions of _some groups and diminish that of others - despite the ANC's â\200\230apparent willingness to accept them. It has been thought, for -example, that the current demarcation could. have: beneficial - electoral - effects for the NP, by weakening the potential electoral strength of the NP's opponents.

While those who hold this view have not explained precisely how this would result, it is worth noting that the existing regional development plans largely preserve the boundaries of what has always been regarded as Natal. It could be argued that Natal was kept largely as it has been to assuage the fears of both the conservative white population in that region and those Zulus who emphasises their ethnic identity. In the Western Cape, a totally different dynamic is at play. For historical reasons, that region does not reflect the demographic realities of the entire country. It has been suggested that its non-African majority could have important implications in a post apartheid future in which regional government has a role to play.

Despite these considerations - and the charge that the development regions do not express the identifications of the citizenry, there does seem to exist a compelling argument for

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accepting the nine regions as a basis for restructuring regional government in the country. They cut across homelands boundaries and recognise the 1910 definition of South Africa. While it could be argued that the inclusion of homelands within development regions did not imply that the government had abandoned the idea of political independence for these territories and that drawing boundaries to include homelands, independent and non-independent, merely formalised an existing arrangement in terms of which homelands depended on funds from Pretoria. These proposals, despite some of the points made above, did recognise that these areas were and are functionally and economically a part of South Africa. They are, therefore, a significant departure from the apartheid past. In addition, if our argument that regional boundaries derive their legitimacy from political processes rather than intrinsic merits is accepted, the very fact that the development region boundaries are endorsed, with some modifications, by both the NP and ANC may ensure that, in a context in which boundaries must be created "out of nothing", they are the proposal least likely to prompt conflict over the shape of the regions.

One of the tough issues which will impact on the regionalism debate is that of ethnic identities, if only because the political views and proposals of various actors are largely framed in these terms. In South Africa, where ethnic identities have been used to entrench discrimination, building new institutions directly or indirectly based around such identities will not serve any useful purpose. If that were to happen, some regions might become sources of political tension and instability instead of enhancing democratic participation.

However, even regions drawn on ostensibly "non-racial" criteria might make it easier for ethnic power bases to exert influence within the system; they would, however, have to do this in alliance with other interests. As the next section will try to show, this could have important implications for the contest between the major parties on the shape of a post-apartheid order.

BUILDING A NATION?

We have argued that the intensity of competition over regional boundaries will depend on the strength or weakness of regional authorities. This question remains, therefore, the central issue in the debate.

The contest over regionalism is a function of the central conflict over majority rule and minority participation: it is likely, therefore, to be resolved by the way in which the parties settle this issue. Nevertheless, the outcome will, of course, have important implications for South Africa. The key issue is the likely impact on attempts to build a united nation.

A key objection to regionalism is that strong identification with a region could engender parochial tendencies which might frustrate efforts at nation building. But this does not have to be so. If political elites at the centre and in the regions approach the question of regional power sensitively, regionalism could become a way of building a new South African

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q:he regional debate tends to present the choices almost as mutually exclusive alternatives - regional powers are seen either as a guarantee of "self-determination" against an oppressive central government or as an attempt to deprive a national government elected by the majority of the power to influence the society's future. But the choice need not be that stark.

In many societies, regionalism is a two-way relationship between the regions and the centre. The centre respects and accommodates the prospect that some regions will be governed by a party in opposition to that which governs at the centre and that these regional elites have the power to implement policies which differ from those of central government on some issues. Policy differences between the centre and the regions do not necessarily have to take the form of total opposition - they can be differences of degree and emphasis. For their part, regional elites accept that, on a range of issues, the national government has the prerogative to decide on policies for the entire country. Such policy decisions in turn need not be ones which impose a deadening uniformity but act to set parameters within which the regions could operate..

A further view of regionalism is that while it could potentially be used to destabilise the country in the future, it could also ensure the representation of minority interests who are certain to be relegated to opposition in a central government. If regional government is weak, these minorities will be denied any influence over decisions unless they are guaranteed a share of power: this is the NP's demand and, as noted above, it could be a recipe for ineffective government. Strong regional powers - albeit falling short of full autonomy - could give those interests a stake in the system which they would otherwise be denied.

This may be particularly important in a country with a legacy of racial polarisation. A post-apartheid order might resolve race-based divisions, particularly if resources and opportunities are apportioned equitably: if positions of influence and prestige in all social activities and wealth accrue to all on a non-racial basis, racial intolerance may abate. But, given South Africa's history, a fault line based on ethnicity might develop and prove very difficult to resolve: all that is required is for a perception to be nurtured amongst some people that their position of disadvantage is a result of their ethnicity. Already there are indications that ethnic mobilisation could be increasingly relied upon by some elites based largely, but not exclusively, in the homelands. Race and ethnic mobilisation are familiar to most South Africans: even those who advocate non-racialism have grown up in a racially divided society and may be inclined to view political mobilisation in racial terms. Regionalism could thus be a means to ensure a share in the use of public resources by interests which, if excluded from positions of power, could fall back on irreducible identities to mobilise support for their programmes.

The Inkatha position, discussed above, suggests that regional governments could be used as a base to mobilise against the centre: but a system in which minority interests enjoy a

regional political base could ensure that this mobilisation

will be channelled through the political system, rather than through less orderly channels. And minorities who sought a regional base would still have to win regional elections: they would not be able to demand a share of power by right, or on the basis of their capacity to coerce their opponents. In addition, minority parties who seek control of a non-racial region would have to cement alliances with other parties to achieve it; this could reduce the incentive to mobilise on purely ethnic grounds.

It could be argued that, while this might go a long way towards defusing race- or ethnic-based conflicts even before they arise in the post apartheid future, it is a rather undemocratic way of resolving disputes since it gives minorities undue power. It must, however, be pointed out that scholars of democracy in deeply divided societies would argue that group accommodation is essential if conflicts are to be resolved. A negative attribute of this form of democracy is that it creates space for elites who may not otherwise win an election if they defined their constituency as the whole country. The number of such elites may be almost-endless; how many of them would have to be accommodated 'if the problem is to be resolved in this way?

But, if the problem is addressed by sharing powers between the centre and the regions, rather than at the centre, it may well be far easier to accommodate minorities without doing great violence to democratic principles.

A NEW POLITICS?

If representative regional authorities are established, they could have implications for the major actors - and for South African politics - which current debate and analysis have not addressed. Both the NP and ANC have retained their organisational and ideological coherence in ways which might face severe stresses under regionalism: both might fragment, unless they found ways of dealing with the new dynamic.

The National Party would enter the new system as the representative of a minority. To overcome this, it will have to either broaden its support base in its own right, or seek alliances with anti-ANC forces. If it is to seek them at a regional level, differing demographic and ethnic compositions in the regions will force various regional NP structures and interests to accommodate differing alliance partners in different regions. Some popular expectations of this suggest that in Natal this will take the form of an NP-Inkatha alliance; in the Western Transvaal with the existing regime in Bophuthatswana; in the Western Cape with parties representing "coloured" people. This might force regional NP formations into differing political roles and even policies if they are to capture regional political power through alliances. These regional alliances could then undercut the coherence of NP policies at a national level.

The ANC's equivalent problems may start with its probable majority status: this should translate into control of most - regional assemblies or parliaments. - But once these regional

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elites are in place, and perhaps subject to pressures from their regional constituencies, will the national ANC formation

be able to control these regional elites? We argued earlier that a possible reason for the ANC's reversal of policy on regional government was the importance of distinct regional interests within the ANC. There is no reason why these would simply disappear in the future; regional institutions would, in fact, solidify them.

The NP was able to control its regional elites in the provinces after 1948 by a variety of means. These included the possibility that it might lose power through the 1950s (when it still attracted only a minority of the white vote); in addition, the Broederbond and other cultural/political bodies cemented unity within the party by encouraging it to see itself as part of a broader national movement whose common goals outweighed local and regional differences. The ANC may seek to retain coherence in similar ways... since its opponents are not defeated and will therefore remain important political players, it could continue to submerge differences within the movement by urging unity in the (still uncompleted) "struggle" for "full liberation".. But, unlike the NP at that time, the ANC is still dealing with the problems of institutionalising itself after exile and of having to accommodate formerly weakly connected internal and external forces. It has no forces equivalent to the Broederbond to cement unity. It, too, might find that the coherence which was maintained under previous conditions would be impossible in a system which afforded strong powers to the regions.

These developments might not be a threat to the major actors; they may be able to find ways of establishing a new form of coherence in different conditions; within the ANC, for example, there already appears to be an attempt to recognise regional differences within the movement - by giving regions greater scope to define their strategic priorities. Inevitably, however, this would lead to a new style of politics within the major actors - and, therefore, within the political system as a whole.

NOTE: AN UNDEVELOPED DEBATE

This paper has dealt with some of the issues which are influencing, or will - inevitably influence, the regionalism debate. We would argue that it demonstrates the vagueness with which policy proposals and important concepts are used by all parties. Concepts such as strong or weak central and regional

governments; entrenched powers; even federalism and a unitary state are used in ways which tend not to be specific.

For example, it is commonly held that the NP wants a weak central government and strong regional and local governments while the ANC wants a strong central government and weak regional structures. Yet such concepts can mean very different things. A strong central government need not only be one which is able to decide on a uniform policy across the country on an extensive range of issues; it could mean one which, on a limited range of issues, has extensive powers. By extension, strong regional authorities can be ones which on a limited range of issues have extensive powers. In other words, there is no necessary connection between the extent or

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ange of functions given to such authorities and conclusion~
to their strength or weakness. Nor, as argued above, is .
strong central government necessarily incompatible with a
strong regional authority. Entrenchment of second tier
authorities is also no indicator, in its own right, as to the
strength of such authorities. Policy preferences for either a
unitary or federal structure are also presented as though they
were cast-iron opposites of each other. Within both there are
gradations which have important policy and practical
implications. -

It is, therefore, not enough merely to debate whether powers
to be given to regions will be original or entrenched - there
must also be an indication of the issues those powers will
cover. If, for instance, regional governments are be given
fiscal powers, this will, depending on the scope of the powers
and the boundaries of the regions, have wide ranging
implications for the power. of central government to control
and redistribute resources. Regional elites will also have an
impact on a range of policy issues if the control of fiscal
resources is to be determined by. them. The relationship
between regional government and other .levels of government
must also be spelled out to give an idea of what the role and
scope of their powers will be. In the absence of these
details, the debate remains vague and the prospects of
achieving a workable system are diminished.

ANNEXURE

EXISTING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES

Botswana

Mosambiek

Swaziland
NamibiÃ© i

GROSS GEOGRAPHIC PRODUCT PER
DEVELOPMENT REGION

(1984 Figures)
R 1000m

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REGION

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A PROPOSAL FOR NEW REGIONS

Botswana

Mosambiek

GROSS GEOGRAPHIC PRODUCT PER
- REVISED BOUNDARIES

(1984 FIGURES)

R 1000m

REGION

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Endnotes

230. See Venter (1991) for a government statement on the changing function of the provinces after 1986 when they came to resemble prefectural systems of administration.

24 See, for example, the interesting analysis by Andre du Toit (1974) which partially deals with NP objections to federalism.

3. See President Mangope's speech (1992) to the Potchefstroom conference where he listed shared "values, faith and norms" between Afrikaners and Batswana. Why would these shared values be listed and stressed if they do not presage a political alliance, it could well be cynically asked.

4, Similarly the ANC, along with other South African political groups, was recently lectured to by American politicians and academics on the workings of American federalism.

5. For more detailed expositions on this argument see various articles in the official Bophuthatswana publication Bophuthatswana Pioneer, February/March 1992, -especially the articles entitled No Product of Apartheid, The Keate Award...and colonial betrayal, and The TBVC states - Bop is unique.

6. See Schutte (1992) for this proposed new region and the planning criteria used to justify it.

7 For an earlier Buthelezi position on federalism and the future of the homelands see Buthelezi (1974). For another contemporary Inkatha position on regional and local government see Ngubane (1992).

8. For insights into thinking within the Department of Regional Matters and Land Affairs on this see Van Rensburg (1992) and Venter (1991)

9. See the various writings of Arend Lijphart, for example.

10. See Van Zyl Slabbert's stimulating analysis (Slabbert 1975) on the ways in which Afrikaner Nationalist unity was

cemented by interlocking political, cultural and economic organisations.

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