



Publisher
Sustainability for Regions



STATE TERRITORY AND POWER RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA: NATIONAL UNITY OR OLIGARCHY GOVERNMENT FIEFDOMS?

Johannes Tsheola

University of South Africa, South Africa

E-mail: johannes.tsheola@gmail.com

Received 12 May 2025; accepted 30 August 2025; published 30 September 2025

Abstract. This article argues that South Africa's 2024 Government of National Unity (GNU) re-institutes elite democracy for political incumbency self-preservation in favour of the African National Congress (ANC) and president Ramaphosa. Historically, the ANC appropriated state territory as personal presidential and party fiefdoms, to leverage state and political power, while eroding democracy, accountability, rule of law and the universality of freedoms. The article theorises elite democracy and conceptualises "state idea" to reveal that the universality of freedoms, necessary for national unity and stability, is not a natural right, and thus disambiguates South Africa's hasty GNU. Consistent with Hegel's philosophy of freedom and Nkrumah's consciencism political ideology, the article distils elitist characteristic features of the GNU that exude political incumbency self-preservation. Methodologically, the article conducts desktop literature review, analytical conceptualisations and evaluation of South Africa's contextual politics for the hastily established GNU. The article finds that the GNU re-institutes elite democracy through a fictitious 71.75% majoritarian politics, thereby appropriating state power, "state territory" and GNU member political parties to repurpose them as the ANC's fiefdoms for regeneration of political power in service of party political tenure and presidential incumbency self-preservation, while shirking accountability and the rule of law. Therefore, the article concludes that this GNU undermines national unity and stability. The article recommends that national unity and stability require a "state idea" founded on obedience of the nation-state's laws and the universality of freedoms for all South Africans as equals.

Keywords: power relations; freedom; state idea; state territory; oligarchy government; South Africa

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Tsheola, J. 2025. State territory and power relations in South Africa: national unity or oligarchy government fiefdoms? *Insights into Regional Development*, 7(3), 170-183. <http://doi.org/10.70132/p8477964789>

JEL Classifications: O13, Q40

Additional disciplines: political sciences

1. Introduction

The dawn of South African democracy was heralded through a GNU, based on a predetermined criterion that includes parties with a minimum of 10% of the 1994 national vote, when reconciliation, national unity and stability were primate (Tony, 2025; Tsheola, 2025). Post-1996, though, the ANC exploited its majoritarian politics to institute elitist democracy, misrule and divisiveness, which epitomised democratic South Africa's 30-year history (Heller, 2020; du Toit, 2024). As Booyesen (2011: 359) and Sebola & Tsheola (2024: iii) observe, the ANC historically repurposed "state territory as personal-organisational fiefdoms" for presidential and political leadership incumbency self-preservation, rather than for national consciencism of the universality of freedoms. Effectively, South Africa's 30-year democracy involved oligarchy government where power rested with fascists, consisting of individuals, families or corporations, characterised by wealth, privilege and social status, hereafter described as oligarchs. Ironically, one year of the 2024 GNU, purportedly founded on national unity and stability, attracted heightened threats of coups (Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, Minister in the Presidency, public statement on July 14, 2025, cited in Sicetsha, 2025). The national intelligence revelation that the nation-state is now facing

“rising threats to state stability,” include “illegal migration, espionage, organised crime, cyber threats,” public safety and economic sabotage (Sicetsha, 2025), makes mockery of this GNU. According to Kroeker (2022: 122), African national unity and stability “are made and broken due to disruption, a crisis of tradition, a lack of identity and a confrontation with globally circulating, competing models of modernity.” Africa citizens continue to wait for liberation and freedoms (Obicci, 2025). This article theorises “state idea” of national unity and stability using Hegel’s (1894) philosophy of the universality of freedoms and Nkrumah’s (2008) concept of consciencism to argue that South Africa’s 2024 “GNU Brand” is a bane of the nation-state’s democracy because it re-institutes elite democracy for political self-preservation by regenerating “state territory” as the ANC’s and Ramaphosa’s personal presidential fiefdoms.

Whereas the ANC’s 30-year misrule exploited political majority to entrench elite democracy, the 2024 GNU reproduces a 71.75% fallacious majority to re-install elite democracy in service of the ANC’s re-invention of state power abuses, appropriation of political power from state territory, extension of party tenure and protection of presidential incumbency. The hasty, now rocky, GNU equally undermines the universality of freedoms, accountability and rule of law. According to Hegel (1894), freedoms are collective because individual freedoms are validated by universal freedoms wherein all citizens, including commanders of the nation-state, equally obey the laws. The nation-state does not exist *ex nihilo*; instead, it requires all citizens’ adherence to its statehood and obedience of its laws (Hegel, 1894). Therefore, the nation-state is “the very foundation and framework of collective freedom,” because freedom is “neither the mere consciousness of an absence of necessity nor the physical manifestation of some inner desire” nor a natural right (Hegel, 1894: n.p.). Commanders of the nation-state must be servants of the Constitution, just as the rest of society; and, this “state idea” is crucial in national unity, and universality and particularity of citizens’ collective freedoms. South Africa’s democracy is founded on “state idea” ideals of the universality of freedoms, accountability, rule of law and unity in diversity (RSA, 1996). Philosophically, therefore, GNU elite democracy proscribes “state idea” ideals in reverence for political self-preservation.

Most African democracies are attendant to elite politics, misrule, unfreedoms, presidential incumbency self-preservation and corrupt patronage (Fagbadebo, 2019; Moti, 2019; Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021; Engels, 2022, 2023; Obicci, 2025). South Africa’s 30-year version of state capture and corruption too are extensively codified (Booyesen, 2011; Isike & Onapajo, 2017; Croucamp & Malan, 2018; de Klerk & Solomon, 2019; du Toit, 2024). Answering questions at the State Capture Commission, president Ramaphosa claimed that he remained in Zuma’s Administration “as a principled act of ensuring” that state capture is ultimately defeated and its damage “less devastating” (Zondo, 2022). Since ascending to state presidency in February 2018, though, Ramaphosa presided over state power as “an act of ‘regenerating’ political power for the present (ANC elites) cohort,” to borrow Booyesen’s (2011: 360) framing, repurposing “state territory” for state capture continuities. Also, Ramaphosa admitted in August 2020 that the ANC is accused number one in South Africa’s corruption (Bloomberg, 2020; Cohen, 2020). Recently, Prince Mashele characterised Ramaphosa as the “criminal in chief” heading a criminal enterprise (Ntanzi, 2025). The ANC’s 30-year governance indiscretions are systemic to former liberation movements in African democracies (Isike & Onapajo, 2017; Moti, 2019; Mbandlwa, 2023; Mlambo, Masuku & Mthembu, 2024; Okorie, 2024; Onyango, 2024; Obicci, 2025); and, the GNU’s and/or DA’s “civilising missions” will fail. Indeed, the GNU entangles other political parties, especially the DA, in the ANC’s internal rivalries, succession battles, abuse of state power, regeneration of political power and protection of Ramaphosa’s presidential incumbency. During the 2024 electioneering, Ramaphosa described the DA’s “national flag burning” campaign advertisement as treasonous; and, the DA was steadfast the ANC is a corrupt enterprise and that Ramaphosa should be held accountable for the Phala Phala scandal. Ironically, Ramaphosa’s ANC and Hellen Zille’s DA forged a hasty GNU in June 2024. Paradoxically, voters seem to have responded to the DA’s electioneering messaging, punishing the ANC by an unprecedented haemorrhage of 17.3% of the national vote (Tsheola, 2025). Apparently, the DA lost consciencism of the “state idea” ideals and handed “state territory” back to the ANC, embracing state capture continuities and the ANC’s protection of Ramaphosa’s presidential

incumbency for political patronage, describing the Phala Phala saga as “irrelevant.” The 2024 GNU’s and DA’s complicity in undermining accountability and rule of law is palatable.

This article, therefore, borrows from Louis D. Brandeis’ (US Supreme Court Justice cited in Albright, 2018: 10) framing, to assert that this GNU government “is the potent, the omnipresent teacher” that “teaches people by example” and “a law breaker” that “breeds contempt for law,” inviting every person to become law unto themselves. The GNU’s unprincipled politics created government that is characteristically rocky, fractuous, incoherent and dispute-riddled (Haffajee, 2025a; Seepe, 2024a), teetering on the brink of normalising the ANC’s misguided “divisibility” of freedoms (Heller, 2020; du Toit, 2024; Balton, 2025). Public trust in this GNU is already decimated (Haffajee, 2025a). The DA’s complicity in GNU state capture continuities and the multiplicity of ANC splinters’ political personality cults, inclusive of Ramaphosa’s fractuous ANC, are a cause of great distress and annoyance for South Africa’s democracy, national unity and stability. This GNU elite democracy entangles the DA in the ANC’s abuse of “state territory” and leveraging of state power and national governance for regeneration of political power, extension of party tenure and presidential incumbency self-preservation, subverting democracy, accountability, rule of law and the universality of freedoms.

2. Theorising Freedoms and Democratic “State Idea” Ideals

Freedom is not a “natural right;” instead, it is intricately intertwined with the “state idea” and its politics structure the substance and functions of democracy. Ontologically, the distinctness of human self-consciousness from the natural world suggests that freedom is the sense of being autonomous, rational and self-determining (Hegel, 1894; Bowman, Malherbe & Suffla, 2024). Hence, the creation of a modern state as the political and legal embodiment of people’s spirit is one of the three stages of the evolution of freedoms (Hegel, 1894). As the primate foundation and framework of collective freedoms, the nation-state requires obedience of its laws by commanders of the state and citizens alike, as servants of the Constitution (Hegel, 1894). That is, the morality of freedoms’ “universality and particularity” only finds realistic expression within national ambiances of equal obedience of the nation-state’s laws, wherein collective public, rather than individual, good takes precedence within strict confinement of civic freedoms. Individual freedoms are, therefore, validated through universal freedoms wherein all citizens equally obey the nation-state’s laws. This “state idea” of the nation-state being the “foundation and framework” of the universality of freedoms is both a necessary and sufficient condition for national unity. Therefore, the authentic citizen actively promotes public interest to realise own nature as an agent of universal freedoms and to source happiness, which is the best possible exercise of individual freedoms (Hegel, 1894). As Hegel (1894: n.p.) puts it, “the state is actual, and its actuality consists in this, that the interest of the whole is realised in and through particular ends.” Crucially, the “state idea” ideals are “won through an infinite (treacherous historical) process of the discipline of knowledge and will power,” wherein “each period is involved in such peculiar circumstances, exhibiting a condition of things so strictly idiosyncratic, that its conduct must be regulated by considerations connected with itself, and itself alone” (Hegel, 1894: n.p.). States fail their original mission and lose *raison d’être* when citizens’ general public political aims and oligarchs’ personal individual aspirations are incompatible. South Africa’s formal transition from apartheid to democracy signified triumph of “hope over despair” (Bowman et al., 2024), with hyperbolic liberation dividends expectations. Thirty years later, South Africa’s “liberatory praxis,” “global well-being,” equity, justice, inclusivity and freedoms are convoluted (Bowman et al., 2024; Ragolane, Thusi & Khoza, 2024).

2.1. The Concept of Consciencism

Nkrumah’s (2008) consciencism political ideology calls for philosophical framing that addresses African societies’ social and political-economy injustices, attendant to disharmony among three distinct African consciousness perspectives, viz.: *Abstract Liberalism; Social Structure (Standing or Status) as a Basis for Rights;* and, *Ordinary Africans’ Lived Experiences*. Consciencism seeks to unify these perspectives in order to foster collectivism, inclusivity, shared ownership of futures, universality of freedoms and unity. Therefore, the empirical

test of desirability of democracies' moral foundations rests on national consciencism "state idea" ideals of unity, inclusivity, collectivism, universality of freedoms and shared ownership of futures. Overall, African democracies consist of divisive politics, misrule, political incumbency self-preservation and "democratic" authoritarianism (Fagbadebo, 2019; Moti, 2019; Heller, 2020; Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021; Engels, 2022, 2023; du Toit, 2024; Onyango, 2024; Obicci, 2025), rather than "true democratic thinking" and visions (Kroeker, 2022). Consciencism "state idea" entails universality of freedoms, transparency, accountability and rule of law that create "national unity futurity." However, African oligarchs assert decisive voice and power on nation-states' "planetary futures" (Ede, 2016; Sarr, 2019; Kroeker, 2022; Obicci, 2025) devoid of consciencism "state idea" ideals. These oligarchs uniformly fail to constitute sets of democratic dispositions, aspirations, intentions and practices, consistent with the universality of freedoms. Instead, they hold skewed ideas of collectivism and freedoms, portraying themselves as guardian angels and vanguards, rather than experimental avant-gardes (Moti, 2019; Mbandlwa, 2023; Obicci, 2025). Generally, African oligarchs appropriate state power and national governance for sectional interests and privileges, corrupt patronage and incumbency self-preservation (Ede, 2016; Isike & Onapajo, 2017; Moti, 2019; Mbandlwa, 2023; Mlambo, Masuku & Mthembu, 2024; Okorie, 2024; Onyango, 2024; Obicci, 2025). Inevitably, African democracies are generally characterised by selective obedience of nation-states' laws, rendering freedoms divisible and coups as popular resets for democracies.

2.2. Democratic State, Governance Power Relations and Freedoms

Whereas state power was traditionally created by states, modern democratic architectures reproduce state power through governance and command by non-state actors (Keping, 2018; Kadri, 2023; World Future Fund, 2023). As political systems, democracies do not automatically safeguard power relations equities and the universality of freedoms, because governance is not neutral nor organically interconnected with democracies (Tsheola, Sebola & Mamabolo, 2023). Post-World War II democratic governance power relations were globally mediated by transnational capitalism and corporatism ideology in favour of non-state actors (Pinto, 2017; Christiansen, 2020; Pasetti, 2023). Christiansen (2020) frames corporatism as the third greatest political ideology of modern societal organisation meant to incorporate society's diverse economic interests by creating representative political positions for pluralist democracies. Even Rexford Tugwell, an economist in former USA president Franklin Roosevelt's Administration, was envious of the corporatist state order, famously stating that it was the cleanest and most effective state (cited in Pasetti, 2023). However, transnational hybridisation of corporatist institutions and celebration of the corporatist state as milestones for democratic governance in the world (Kadri, 2023; Pasetti, 2023) failed to produce pluralist democracies nor foster universal freedoms. Instead, modern corporatism legitimised "Fascism even in democratic circles," creating corporatist states with non-state commanders asserting decisive power and dominion over society (Pasetti, 2023: 747). Therefore, democratic governance nation-state power, the primate legal source of the state's unique right to control its juristic territory, subordinated nations to command of oligarchy governments (Kadri, 2023). Consequently, the modern nation-state as the institution of society's formal politics achieved weak nominal juristic victory over territorial space without consolidating independence and sovereignty, thereby becoming "inadequate" and "available to be manoeuvred" (Kadri, 2023). Paradoxically, democratic governance's minimalist state asserted vibrant activism, ceding control of the nation-state power to the command of secretive oligarchs (Pinto, 2017; Christiansen, 2020; Kadri, 2023; Pasetti, 2023; Tsheola et al., 2023), thereby shirking the universality of freedoms.

Modern democratic governance, therefore, does not equate to universal human rights nor freedoms nor fairness nor justice across the world, especially in Africa (Onyango, 2024; Obicci, 2025). The post-1990s global pre-eminence of state democratic governance and ascendancy of fascist corporatism created democratic states with venality to fascist capture (Pinto, 2017; Christiansen, 2020; Kadri, 2023; Pasetti, 2023; Obicci, 2025). Consequently, modern democratic states are generally weak, without real power for command of national politics, becoming totalistic law and order institutions reliant on coercion for enforcement of undemocratic decisions and exertion of unconstitutional dominion over society. Paradoxically, modern democratic states have caused the greatest destruction of life, surpassing the Permian Extinction, reported to have occurred over 252 million years

ago, killing about 90% of “all life on earth,” consisting of 95% and 70% of marine species and terrestrial life, respectively, in a period of 20 000 to 15 million years (Kadri, 2023; World Future Fund, 2023; Britannica, 2025). Indeed, the modern world is attendant to uncertainties, widespread “toils and snares,” confrontations and extensive “protests and conflicts,” because commanders of nation-states’ powers are goated by “lunatics” (Pinto, 2017; Albright, 2018; Engels, 2022; Kadri, 2023; Pasetti, 2023; World Future Fund, 2023). Africa’s modern democracies too are associated with greed and fascist tendencies (Obicci, 2025), exposing citizens to divisiveness and injustices. Therefore, Africa’s democratic state governance remains inordinately imprudent, ineffective and bad (Tsheola et al., 2023).

To enforce universality of freedoms, state governance has to be embedded with six democratic principles, *viz.*: legitimacy, transparency, accountability, rule of law, responsiveness and effectiveness (Keping, 2018; Tsheola & Sebola, 2018). Accountability and the rule of law, in particular, have to apply equally to citizens and oligarchs alike. Prudent democratic state governance, therefore, maximises national consensus, shared values, public consent and citizen approval of civic affairs. Therein, accountability and the rule of law are supreme and their primary goal is to “regulate” citizens’ and nation-state commanders’ conduct alike, manage public affairs and maintain order, while protecting basic political rights, freedoms and equality (Tsheola & Sebola, 2018). Democratic governance majoritarian rule and winner takes all principle should, therefore, ensure that government excercises, in Keping’s (2018: 3) words, “authority to maintain order” and “to guide, steer and regulate citizens’ activities through the power of different systems and relations,” maximising public interests and the universality of freedoms. Thus, the political-economy of democratic state governance entails nation-state activism and lawful enforcement of obedience of laws by all citizens and oligarchs as equals (Tsheola & Sebola, 2018), in order to guarantee the universality of freedoms. Democratic governance means that the nation-state has to exercise authority and power, in trust on behalf of the people, by coordinating compliance with “state idea” ideals among multiple centres of power to foster the universality of freedoms.

2.3. Elite Democracy and Regeneration of Political Power

The long history of theorisations of democracy (Cunningham, 2002; Shapiro, 2003; Held, 2006; Christiano, 2008; Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009; Keane, 2009; Pinto, 2017) has not exhausted the full spectrum of democratic thought and scope of democratic theory (Laurence, 2018). Beyond conceptions of the meaning of democracy, democratic theories discuss moral foundations, obligations, obedience of rules, challenges and desirability of alternative democracies. Broadly, there are three categories of democratic theories, *viz.*: normative, empirical and conceptual (semantic) theories. Normative theories examine democracy’s moral foundations and desirability, empirical theories test pragmatism, substance and functions of democracies, while semantic theories formulate and interrogate meanings of the concept of democracy (Keane, 2009; Laurence, 2018; Pasetti, 2023). This subsection evaluates desirability of elite democracy’s moral foundations using consciencism “state idea” ideals of universality of freedoms and national unity to reveal that it serves oligarchs’ political self-preservation.

Etymologically, democracy is a “process of collective self-rule,” consistent with its Greek origins from *demos* and *kratos*, meaning “the people, the many” and “to rule,” respectively (Cunningham, 2002; Shapiro, 2003; Held, 2006; Christiano, 2008; Keane, 2009). Broadly, democracies are classified into three categories, *viz.*: participatory; pluralist; and, elitist (Laurence, 2018; Pasetti, 2023). Participatory democracy involves citizens directly in decision-making and governance, pluralist recognises organised associations’ representation of diverse interests and opinions in society, while elitist refers to a competitive electoral system among elites who are in return supposed to be accountable to the people (Laurence, 2018; Pasetti, 2023). Elite democracies manifest through liberal majoritarian or coalition politics, and are venal to state and political power abuses and shirking of accountability and rule of law. Liberal elitist democracies’ “expression and fundamental principles” of political parties’ electoral contestations, majority rule and winner takes all, vest governmental power in one party (Held, 2006; Laurence, 2018; Pasetti, 2023). With these principles, ruling parties systematically and substantively abuse power to violate democratic norms and invalidate people’s participation and/or representation in decision-making

and governance (Ajei, 2016). These principles accord unconstitutional governmental power to a single political party that mutes public discourse and perverts public affairs pluralism. Hence, there are authoritarian politics enclaves within liberal elitist democratic polity (Ajei, 2016) that hollow socio-political and economic pluralism. According to Ajei (2016: 445), Africa's elitist democracies lack "representation and participation of citizens in democratic processes and institutions" because they vest state and political power, and the exercise thereof, in the majority parties to the exclusion of the people. Unsurprisingly, regular "elections in Africa have become recurring sources of violence and deception" rather than reservoirs of "genuine political pluralism" (Ajei, 2016: 453). South Africa too has endured liberal elitist democratic politics under the ANC's 30-year misrule.

With majority rule winner takes all principle, political parties' electoral contestations "fracture rather than unite political action towards a common (national) goal," thereby fostering societal conflicts and rigid contrasting exclusivities as integral aspects of nation-states' democratic practices (Ajei, 2016: 449). Thus, "the exclusive appropriation of power by a successful party at elections" degenerates into "life and death struggles among contending parties," repurposing parties into "machines for the conquest of power" (Ajei, 2016: 450). Hence, elitist democracies are riddled with hostilities, unhealthy rivalries and insatiable thirst for private money, the primate lubricant for political insensibilities, incivilities and instabilities (Tsheola, 2025). Elite democracies concentrate state and political power in presidencies and oligarchs, perverting democratic norms and government legitimacy (Ajei, 2016). Devoid of ethical morality and universality of freedoms, elitist democracies foster divisiveness, disunity, public distrust and subversion of voters' suffrage power (Ajei, 2016; Pasetti, 2023; Tsheola, 2025). Similarly, where elections do not produce majoritarianism, political parties often adopt coalition politics to create artificial majoritarianisms and institute elitist democracies for political self-preservation, disguised as national unity.

Elitist democracy, majoritarian or coalition-based, derails evolution of the consciousness of the universality of freedoms. It readily repurposes state territory into personal presidential and party fiefdoms for appropriation of state and political power. Even self-professed democrats and anti-fascists ultimately entrench widespread suppression of the universality of freedoms under elitist democracies (Pinto, 2017; Albright, 2018; Christiansen, 2020; Pasetti, 2023; Obicci, 2025). Essentially, elite democracy has venality to incompetence, corruption and power abuses that violate precepts of "conventional political wisdom" (Albright, 2018; Pasetti, 2023; Onyango, 2024; Obicci, 2025), thereby perverting accountability, rule of law and universality of freedoms. Thus, public violence and civil strife, military coups and forceful seizure of state power have become enduring popular resets for elitist democracies (Fagbadebo, 2019; Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021; Engels, 2022, 2023; Okorie, 2024). Concomitantly, coalition-based elitist democracies hollow state power, enfeeble democracy as well as shirk accountability, rule of law, inclusivity, universality of freedoms and national unity. In pursued of their compulsive greed, oligarchs rush to coalition governments in order to assure themselves of continued assertion of decisive unconstitutional powers by weaponising law against democracy, silencing dissent, subverting the universality of freedoms and regenerating political power (Simakoloyi, 2025).

3. South Africa's 2024 GNU Oligarchy Government

The ANC's historical profoundness as Africa's oldest liberation movement is paramount, but it is the youngest as a ruling party (Booyesen, 2011; Isike & Onapajo, 2017). The party's 30-year national governance involved conflation and fusion of party and state, incompetence, corruption, misrule, murder of the nation-state and omnipotent intra-party rivalries and factionalisms (Booyesen, 2011; Du Toit, 2024). As ruling party, the ANC had the opportunity to leverage state and political power for consolidation of multi-party democracy; instead, it appropriated state power to institute elite democracy in service of executive political leadership and presidential incumbency self-preservation, corruption and patronage (Booyesen, 2011; Croucamp & Malan, 2018; De Klerk & Solomon, 2019; du Toit, 2024). Consequently, "the liberation dividend" was "diluted" and National Democratic Revolution (NDR) ideals deferred (Booyesen, 2011; Isike & Onapajo, 2017; Du Toit, 2024). ANC's electoral

politics and winning degenerated into existential struggles for abuse of state power, institutional capture, hollowing of democratic institutions and hobbling of state performance (Booyesen, 2011; Croucamp & Malan, 2018; De Klerk & Solomon, 2019; Du Toit, 2024). Also, intra-ANC rivalries, factionalism and succession battles were transposed into contestations for the exercise of direct political power over the state and repurposing of “state territory” into “personal fiefdoms” for party and presidential incumbency self-preservation (Booyesen, 2011; Du Toit, 2024). Effectively, the ANC appropriated state power to reward oligarchs and prolong tenure of presidential incumbency and party command of the state, while simultaneously subverting democracy. Under the 2024 GNU, ANC intra-party rivalries, personality cults factionalisms and divisiveness remain prevalent, with state territory as the primary contestation site, including the judiciary and democracy-supporting institutions.

Disambiguation of the GNU as greedy immoral elitist democracy disguised as national unity is “the truth of necessity,” because the ANC is using the GNU to leverage state power and national governance to “regenerate political power” for self-preservation, intra-party rivalries and succession battles. Hence, the ANC’s parliamentary chief whip, Mdumiseni Ntuli, intimated that it would be “the end of the movement” if the DA Cabinet power bloc “defy the President’s direction” amidst an upcoming ANC conference, because of the ANC’s deep-seated “irritation” with the DA (cited in Haffajee, 2025b). This GNU is, therefore, patently democratically incompetent and corrupt, because it subverts accountability and rule of law in service of political self-preservation, while suppressing dissent as anti-constitutionalism and weaponising law against democracy (Simakoloyi, 2025). Complicitly, the GNU bandwagon shirks accountability in favour of the nation-state’s commanders, rendering government a potent omnipresent law breaker that “breeds contempt for law,” teaching citizens to become law unto themselves. Effectively, this GNU extends the ANC’s tenure of corruption, lies and cover-ups, deceit and subterfuge, misrule and state capture (Boesak, 2023). Unsurprisingly, this GNU’s politics are impeachable modern geopolitical neologism disguising elitist democracy as national unity, riddled with divisiveness that undermines the universality of freedoms, accountability and the rule of law.

3.1. The 2024 GNU Founding Narratives: National Unity and Stability

Beyond the deceptive rhetoric of national unity and stability, the GNU insulates the ANC and Ramaphosa from the pain of voters’ assertion of suffrage power. Elite democracy is incongruent with universal freedoms and national unity. Also, the rocky GNU was determined exclusively by ANC, DA and business elites, defying constitutional democratic principles. Proponents of the GNU suggest strangely that voters determined that there should be a unity government, while castigating dissent as anti-constitutionalism. South Africans did not vote for this impeachable GNU elitist democracy which rejects parties with between 9.5% and 14.5% vote share, only to accommodate those with 1.5% or less. That is, the GNU recklessly castigates 24.1% of MK Party and EFF, third and fourth largest parties, respectively, voters as anti-constitutionalists. The truism is that Ramaphosa (ANC), Steenhuisen (DA), Zuma (MKP) and Malema (EFF) have incongruous egotist political differences and cultist personalities, and South Africans are subjected to their deceptions. Also, Ramaphosa and Steenhuisen assert decisive state and political power calling for national unity while simultaneously preaching linear ideologies of divisiveness. Hence, GNU elite democracy is devoid of national unity and universality of freedoms consciencism; instead, it serves politicians.

Far from national unity and stability, Ramaphosa publicly told ANC followers at the January 08th Anniversary and Lekgotla, respectively, that “the ANC is still in charge” and the GNU exists to implement the ANC’s NDR (*SABC, Current Affairs*, January 11 & 25, 2025). Conversely, Steenhuisen (2025) recounts that the DA was in the GNU “to share power” rather than “make up numbers” for the ANC to roll out its policies. Also, Steenhuisen (2025) believes that the ANC has publicly disrespected its GNU partners, undermining mutual coalition government trust. The leader of Patriotic Alliance (PA) and GNU minister, McKenzie, too “questioned where the unity was” when GNU partners learn about the signing of bills from media (cited in Payne, 2025). Ironically, it is through the DA’s complicity that the GNU controls 287 (71.75%) seats in the National Assembly (NA), while opposition holds 113 (28.25%) seats (Tsheola, 2025), allowing the ANC to conduct governance with disdain, as if

it held outright electoral majority. The true motive for this GNU remains a secret of oligarchs, while citizens endure confusing governance politics with non-unitary and incoherent GNU diplomacy and ever present threats of collapse. This GNU's disunity and diplomatic incoherence permeate South Africans' daily experiences, thereby eroding public trust and reproducing the nation-state's epistemic and omnipresent fractures, rendering national unity and stability narratives impeachable. Ironically, when Ramaphosa assumed state presidency in February 2018, the nation-state was ravaged by state capture (Croucamp & Malan, 2018; de Klerk & Solomon, 2019; Zondo, 2022; du Toit, 2024), whistleblowers assassinated and society starkly divided (Heller, 2020; Gcabashe, 2023; Tsheola et al., 2023). However, Ramaphosa did not envision national unity government then. The 2019 ambience of divisiveness too could not prompt Ramaphosa to envision national unity government because the ANC secured 57.5% majority in the NA (Tsheola, 2025). Under Mandela's leadership, the ANC won 62.7% majority and conceived the 1994 GNU. For Ramaphosa, national unity and stability only became necessary when the ANC haemorrhaged 17.3% of national votes in 2024. Ramaphosa only repurposed himself as the nation-state's guardian angel and saviour in response to electoral pain. Thus, this article highlights hidden motives for this GNU, beyond the national unity and stability deception, to expose abuse of state power and state territory as personal fiefdoms for political self-preservation.

Historically, abuse of state territory as personal presidential incumbency fiefdoms defeats accountability and rule of law, facilitating democratic resets and onset of vicious circle of coups, sham elections and civil strife. This selective GNU squanders prospects of national unity on four grounds, viz.: The majority of South African voters are poor and traditional constituents of the ANC, whose splintering is causing disunity among Blacks; The ANC's historic decline in electoral fortunes was caused by its splintering, leaving 105 (28.25%) of the 2024 NA seats shared among six (6 of the 18) political parties, largely supported by Blacks, outside the GNU; The second (MK Party) and third (EFF) largest parties in the 2024 NA, consisting of 92.38% (97) of the 105 seats held by ANC splinters, are ANC's personality cult-based breakaways, with palpable dislike of the ANC's Ramaphosa faction; and, Only two parties outside the GNU, Build One South Africa and ActionSA, with a total of 8 seats in the NA are by their origin associated with the DA. Therefore, the fissures that the GNU needs to paper-over for national unity and stability involve ANC's fragmentation of black constituencies, consisting of 81.4% of South Africa's 2025 population (RSA, 2025). The DA is adamant that it does not want the EFF and MK Party (a total of 97 NA seats) in the GNU; similarly, the two parties dislike the DA and FF Plus. Any concept of national unity would be fallacious if it excludes 24.1% (EFF and MK Party) of the 2024 voters from the GNU just because the DA does not want them or worse, due to their rejection of Ramaphosa's presidential incumbency. Equally, a GNU that excludes 93 (23.25%) NA seats (DA, 87 and FF Plus, 6) just because the EFF and MK Party dislike them, is impeachable on national unity and universality of freedoms consciencism.

South Africa is in the grip of divisiveness as constitutional freedoms are incrementally meaningless for many, amidst GNU government being the omnipotent law breaker shielding oligarchs from accountability. SABC reporter revealed that unnamed business leaders wrote a letter to the ANC and the DA warning them that the DA must not be removed from the GNU, following the DA's voting against the GNU's fiscal framework on April 02, 2025 (*SABC, Current Affairs, The Agenda*, April 06, 2025). According to Ramaphosa, government and the ANC make "own decisions" based on considerations for the advancement of people's interests (Nozulela, 2025). Ramaphosa argued, deceptively, that the ANC is influenced by people, rather than business pressure (Nozulela, 2025). If Ramaphosa's assertions were true, there would have been no deceptive GNU after the 2024 elections because there was no referendum on the GNU. Also, the ANC itself, seeing its poor electoral performance of only 40.2%, did not consult with its own constituencies nor tripartite alliance partners. Instead, ANC political elites adopted the GNU in haste. Whereas Ramaphosa said that business does not dictate government nor his ANC decisions (Nozulela, 2025: n.p.), his own ascend to the party and state presidency was supported by secretive private money sealed by court of law. Having gained state presidency through party presidential campaign shrouded in controversy, Ramaphosa would not have weaponised law to deny the public access to his private funders. Effectively, the secretive business elites' call for the ANC not to remove the DA from the GNU is self-

preservationism intended to prevent potential ANC splinters' reconciliation. Equating national unity and stability with ANC/DA unity is deceptive. Ntuli too expressed "some discomfort" because of business elites' "partisan considerations" undertone that "the state cannot be trusted and that it would have no capacity without the DA" (cited in Haffajee, 2025b: n.p.). The DA too believes that "a government without the DA would have dire consequences for the country's economy" (Nozulela, 2025: n.p.). The notion of national unity being equated with the ANC/DA unity is incongruent with South Africa's "state idea" of democratic constitutionalism, inclusivity and universality of freedoms. Also, patriotism is not equivalent to the unity of Ramaphosa's ANC faction and the DA. Hence, this ANC-led and DA-controlled GNU is rocky with deleterious divisiveness and government incoherence.

3.2. Accountability, Rule of Law and Universality of Freedoms

South Africa's Constitution envisions a nation-state based on rule of law, accountability and freedoms for all citizens as equals (RSA, 1996); however, the ANC's 30-year misrule decimated this vision. As Balton (2025: n.p.) puts it, "One of the biggest tramplets of freedom is the immense misinformation and disinformation that goes on daily," denying citizens "the ability to make informed decisions and, more dangerously," normalising falsification of facts. The ANC governments, and now the GNU, do "not respect the dignity" of citizens nor the universality of freedoms (Balton, 2025). Hence, Seepe (2025c) characterises Ramaphosa's February 2025 GNU State of the Nation Address (SONA) as "more 'promises and lies'" that fuel public anger over "failing leadership." Besides Ramaphosa's Phala Phala saga, serious corruption allegations are made against six ANC GNU Cabinet ministers, including deputy president, suggesting that state capture is the ANC's enduring modus operandi, rather than "an anomaly" associated with the Zuma Administrations (SAT-International, 2025). Notwithstanding the DA's rhetoric, the GNU is complicit in state capture continuities and Ramaphosa's shielding of oligarchs from accountability and obedience of the nation-state's laws. In return, the DA's and GNU's entanglement in the ANC's abuse of state territory and power serves Ramaphosa's presidential incumbency self-preservation and shirks accountability and the rule of law. On May 16, 2025, Ramaphosa conceded that "true freedom is still distant" for South Africans (*SABC, Current Affairs*, May 17, 2025). Historically, the ANC systematically betrayed "the promise of a free, equal and prosperous nation" by eroding the universality of freedoms (Balton, 2025), thereby betraying the foundations, substance and functions of democracy (Isike & Onapajo, 2017; SAT-International, 2025). Painfully, SAT-International (2025: n.p.) concludes that the ANC betrayed "the 1994 compromise by entrenching corruption, weakening democracy and failing South Africans," as well as undermining the rule of law and judicial independence, and weaponising state institutions, leaving "citizens at the mercy of criminals."

Manifestly, the GNU elitism complicitly perverts the universality of freedoms and rights. Consequently, the erosion of freedoms in South Africa "has become worse in recent times" (Balton, 2025) owing to intensified political deception, including through state and democratic institutions. The GNU itself was decided exclusively by elites in secrecy, without consulting constituencies (Tony, 2025). Zille, knowing the origins of the GNU conception, took along Ramaphosa's rudderless ANC elitists (Seepe, 2024a, 2025d). However, Tony (2025) reveals Zille's fixation with her "hobby horses" that lack considerations for South Africa's future trajectory. Rather than enhancing the DA brand of GNU, Zille remains fixated on her 2019 forecast of collapsing the ANC. The ANC is not indispensable for South Africa; however, disguising strategies for collapsing the ANC as GNU national unity amounts to mendacious political deception. Consistent with Zille's 2019 forecast, Seepe (2025d: n.p.) notes that Ramaphosa's "smoke and mirrors leadership is leading the ANC into oblivion." Unsurprisingly, Ramaphosa's ANC has crossed the DA's multiple GNU membership red lines, yet the DA remains entangled in Ramaphosa's presidential incumbency self-preservation as a catalyst to ANC collapse, at the expense of accountability, rule of law and the universality of freedoms. However, the ANC/DA GNU coalition emboldens governance recalcitrancies among Ramaphosa's ANC factional elites in intra-party rivalries and succession battles, while Ramaphosa continues to avoid accountability, pervert the rule of law and subvert the universality of freedoms.

According to Seepe (2025d: n.p.), “Ramaphosa’s last gasp of power is the GNU;” and when he steps down, “there will be nothing left of the ANC.” Despite Ramaphosa repurposing himself as guardian angel for South Africa, state capture persists (Sebola & Tsheola, 2024). Evidently, Ramaphosa constituted the GNU in service of his presidential incumbency self-preservation and perversion of accountability. During the 6th Parliament, the DA sought to hold Ramaphosa accountable for the Phala Phala scandal. Being the second largest GNU party with 6 Cabinet seats, the DA now characterises Phala Phala scandal, in Zille’s words, as “irrelevant.” That the Phala Phala saga involves unlawful conduct is conclusively attested to by Mohammed Ameen’s April 2025 conviction involving October 11, 2017 arrest for possession of undeclared \$544 200 (Daniels, 2025). Court convicted Ameen on charges of money laundering and contravention of Exchange Control Regulations (Daniels, 2025) similar to those that the NPA refuses to pursue against Ramaphosa over Phala Phala saga (Seepe, 2025b), amidst retired Chief Justice Section 89 Panel concluding that Ramaphosa had a case to answer. Responding to Ameen’s conviction, ATM leader, Vuyo Zungula (cited in Daniels, 2025: n.p.), painfully observes: “... other people are arrested ... held accountable for having undeclared foreign currency in their possession but in this case, because it involves the president, there are double standards the rich, the powerful, politically-connected individuals will always be exempt from being held accountable.” Complicity in exempting Ramaphosa from accountability and obedience of the nation-state’s law, for which Ameen was convicted, undermines the universality of freedoms.

With DA’s GNU complicity, fusion of Ramaphosa’s impunity with state territory as personal presidential fiefdoms is sustained. The EFF’s and MK Party’s condition for GNU membership is the removal of Ramaphosa from presidency, whereas the DA would not accept precedencies of Gwede Mantashe (ANC chairperson) nor Paul Mashatile (ANC and state deputy president) (Tony, 2025). The DA suggests that it voted Ramaphosa into the presidency on June 14, 2024 and joined the GNU to, in Steenhuisen’s (2025: n.p.) words, “keep the destructive forces of MKP and EFF out, and contribute to building South Africa.” No single South African voter had through their May 2024 vote determined that national unity and stability entailed “keeping-out” MK Party and EFF. Ramaphosa’s suggestion that voters had determined that leaders should set aside their political differences is incongruent with the act of “keeping-out” other parties and reckless divisiveness. Instead, GNU proponents have irresponsibly embraced spurious scaremongering. The DA’s complicity in protecting Ramaphosa’s presidency and shielding him from accountability means that the DA has lost its claim to moral leadership about the rule of law and accountability. Therefore, this GNU does not restore South Africa’s “state idea” of dignity, equality before the law, unity and universality of freedoms. Disambiguation of its foundations shows that this GNU is deceptive, hoping to reincarnate the ANC’s majoritarianism through the DA’s agency in GNU politics, effectively repurposing GNU government as an omnipotent law breaker that breeds contempt for law. Unlike Mohammed Ameen, Ramaphosa is immunised from prosecution for undeclared possession of \$580 000 around February 2020. This article concludes, therefore, that this GNU elitist democracy serves politicians, protection of presidential incumbency and corrupt patronage politics, rather than national unity and stability.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Theoretically, this article has argued that freedoms are indivisible and that the “state idea” is imperative to their universality because they are not “a natural right.” To hold, universality of freedoms require democratic “state idea” consciencism about unity, inclusivity, accountability and obedience of the nation-state’s laws by all citizens and commanders as equals. Manifestly, the article showed that the ANC has historically abused democratic majoritarian politics to institute elite democracy and undermine the universality of freedoms by shirking the rule of law and accountability. Disconcertingly, the DA’s post-2024 elections recasting of the Phala Phala saga as “irrelevant” is tantamount to repurposing the GNU government as a law-breaker that teaches society by example that freedoms are divisible, rather than universal, thereby sustaining disharmony among abstract liberalism, social status as basis for rights and ordinary South Africans’ lived experiences. Effectively, the DA’s GNU membership reinstates elitist democracy and tacitly hands-back state territory and power to Ramaphosa’s ANC as personal fiefdoms for regeneration of political power, exemption from obedience of the nation-state’s laws and presidential

incumbency self-preservation. Therefore, the article concludes that the GNU subverts democracy in service of politicians and continuities of Ramaphosa's and ANC's governance recalcitrancies, rather than fostering the universality of freedoms and national unity. The article recommends that national unity and stability require consciencism "state idea" founded on obedience of the nation-state's laws by citizens and commanders alike, as the basis for the universality of freedoms.

Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges the invaluable research assistance and proofreading support provided by Marumo Tsheola.

References

- Ajei, M.O. (2016). Kwasi Wiredu's consensual democracy: Prospects for practice in Africa. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 15(4), 445-466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885116666451>
- Albright, M. (2018). *Fascism: A Warning*. New York: Harper Perennial. <https://www.harpercollins.com/products/fascism-a-warning-madeleine-albright?variant=32128912916514>
- Balton, N. (2025). Beware: The daily erosion of freedoms in South Africa. *The Post*, April 26, 2025. <https://iol.co.za/thepost/opinion/2025-04-26-beware--the-daily-erosion-of-freedoms-in-south-africa/>
- Bloomberg. (2020). Ramaphosa says ANC is accused No.1 in South African corruption. *Polity*, August 25, 2020. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-08-24/ramaphosa-says-anc-is-accused-no-1-in-south-african-corruption>
- Boesak, A. (2023). Allan Boesak declines invitation to August UDF celebration. *Independent Online*, August 09, 2023. <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/opinion/2023-07-30-allan-boesak-declines-invitation-to-august-udf-celebration/>
- Booyesen, S. (2011). *The African National Congress and the Regeneration of Political Power*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. https://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_626380
- Bowman, B., Malherbe, N. & Suffla, S. (2024). Three decades of psychology in South Africa: Legacies of hope and fault lines of the future. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 54(4), 423-436. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00812463241291202>
- Cohen, M. (2020). ANC is accused No 1 in SA corruption. *MoneyWeb*, August 24, 2020. <https://www.moneyweb.co.za/news-fast-news/anc-is-accused-no-1-in-sa-corruption-ramaphosa/>
- Christiano, T. (2008). Democracy. In Zalta, E.N. (ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University.
- Christiansen, P.M. (2020). Corporatism (and neo-corporatism). In *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Interest Groups, Lobbying and Public Affairs*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.1-10. <https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/publications/corporatism-and-neo-corporatism>
- Croucamp, P.A. & Malan, L. (2018). The theory of systemic patronage and state capture: The liberal democratic project and its regime contenders. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 10(4), 86-105. <https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC-134c2feb4f>
- Cunningham, F. (2002). *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203466247>
- Daniels, N. (2025). "Phala Phala double standards exposed: Man convicted for undeclared US dollars yet Ramaphosa walks free. *Online Independent*, April 14, 2025. <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2025-04-14-phala-phala-double-standards-exposed-man-convicted-for-undeclared-us-dollars-yet-ramaphosa-walks-free/>
- De Klerk, R. & Solomon, H. (2019). The institutionalisation of endemic corruption: State capture in South Africa. *New Contree: A Journal of Historical and Human Sciences for Southern Africa*, 82, 64-87. <https://doi.org/10.4102/nc.v82i0.58>
- Dryzek, J. & Dunleavy, P. (2009). *Theories of the Democratic State*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://www.amazon.com/Theories-Democratic-State-John-Dryzek/dp/0230542875>

INSIGHTS INTO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ISSN 2669-0195 (online) <https://jssidoi.org/ird/>

2025 Volume 7 Number 3 (September)

<http://doi.org/10.70132/p8477964789>

Du Toit, P. (2024). *The Super Cadres: ANC Misrule in the Age of Deployment*. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball. <https://www.amazon.com/SUPER-CADRES-ANC-Misrule-Deployment/dp/1776192990>

Ede, A. (2016). The politics of Afropolitanism. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 28(1), 88-100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2015.1132622>

Engels, B. (2022). Popular struggles and the search for alternative democracies. *Review of African Political Economy*, 49(172), 201-208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2022.2085886>

Engels, B. (2023). Coups and neo-colonialism. *Review of African Political Economy*, 50(176), 147-153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2023.2269693>

Fagbadebo, O. (2019). Corruption and the challenge of accountability in the post-colonial African states: A discourse. *Journal of African Union Studies*, 8(1), 9-32. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2050-4306/2019/v8n1a1>

Fagbadebo, O. & Dorasamy, N. (2021). Political leadership, corruption and the crisis of governance in Africa: A discourse. *African Renaissance*, 18(1), 27-52. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2021/18n1a2>

Gcabashe, N. (2023). A cycle of collective violence continues to cast a long shadow over our path toward social cohesion. *Daily Maverick*, September 25, 2023. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2023-09-25-a-cycle-of-collective-violence-continues-to-cast-a-long-shadow-over-our-path-toward-social-cohesion/>

Haffajee, F. (2025a). VAT deal means GNU stays: Just in time as new survey shows South Africans are gatvol of the drama. *Daily Maverick*, 24 Apr 2025. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/author/ferialhaffajee/>

Haffajee, F. (2025b). ANC's fallout with DA escalates as Ramaphosa pushes back on business pressure. *Daily Maverick*, April 06, 2025. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-04-06-ancs-fallout-with-da-escalates-as-ramaphosa-pushes-back-on-business-pressure/>

Hegel, G.W.F. (1894). *Philosophy of Mind – From the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophy of Science*. Translated by Wallace, W. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. https://www.sfu.ca/~poitras/Hegel_s_Philosophy_of_Mind.pdf

Held, D. (2006). *Models of Democracy*, (3rd edn.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. <https://www.sup.org/books/politics/models-democracy-3rd-edition>

Heller, K. (2020). *No White Lies: Black Politics and White Power in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Porcupine Press. <https://www.amazon.com/No-White-Lies-Politics-Africa-ebook/dp/B08R2W6Y1L>

Isike, C. & Onapajo, H. (2017). The decline of dominant political party: The case and future of South Africa's African National Congress (ANC). *Politeia*, 36(2). <https://doi.org/10.25159/0256-8845/2486>

Keane, J. (2009). *The Life and Death of Democracy*. New York: W.W. Norton. <https://www.amazon.com/Life-Death-Democracy-John-Keane/dp/0393058352>

Kroeker, (2022). African Renaissance, Afrotopia, Afropolitanism and Afrofuturism: Comparing conceptual properties of four African futures. *Africa Spectrum*, 57(2), 113-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00020397221101633>

Laurence, M. (2018). *Democratic Theory*. Oxford Bibliographies <https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199756223-0162>

Mbandlwa, Z. (2023). The rise and fall of the liberation movements in Africa. *Migration Letters*, 20(3), 492-504. <https://doi.org/10.47059/ml.v20i3.2933>

Mlambo, V.H., Masuku, M.M. & Mthembu, Z. (2024). The new scramble for Africa in a post-colonial era and the challenges of inclusive development: A semi-systematic literature review. *Development Studies Research*, 11(1), 2306387 <https://doi.org/10.1080/21665095.2024.2306387>

Moti, U.G. (2019). Neopatrimonialism as a functional threat to good governance and development in Africa. *American Research Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(10), 8-28. <https://www.arjhss.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/B2100828.pdf>

Nkrumah, K. (2008). Society and ideology. In Geschiere, P., Meyer, B. & Pels, P. (eds.). *Readings in Modernity in Africa*. London: Indiana University Press, pp.86-87. https://archive.org/details/readingsinmodern000unse_x2j0

- Nozulela, M. (2025). "Business doesn't dictate ANC decisions," President Cyril Ramaphosa says as GNU future remains uncertain. *Independent Online*, April 06, 2025. <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2025-04-06-business-doesnt-dictate-anc-decisions-president-cyril-ramaphosa-says-as-gnu-future-remains-uncertain/>
- Ntanzu, H. (2025). Ramaphosa will die in jail if he lives to 80," says political analyst Prince Mashele. *Independent Online*, July 17, 2025. <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/2025-07-17-ramaphosa-will-die-in-jail-if-he-lives-to-80-says-political-analyst-prince-mashele/>
- Obicci, A. (2025). Corrupt elites, administrative cadres and public service in Africa: Islands of vanity. *Journal of Management and Science*, 15(1), 42-82. <https://doi.org/10.26524/jms.15.6>
- Okorie, N. (2024). Between violence and nonviolence as tools for liberation in Africa. *Open Journal for Studies in Philosophy*, 8(2), 89-98. <https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojsp.0802.020890>
- Onyango, G. (2024). DHR-PA: Democracy and human rights in public administration in Africa. *Politics and Policy*, 52. 426-449. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12240>
- Pasetti, M. (2023). The cleanest, nearest, most effectively operating piece of social machinery I've ever seen: On the reception of Fascist corporatism in the USA. *Forum Italicum: A Journal of Italian Studies*, 57(3), 747-759. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00145858231161634>
- Payne, S. (2025). PA's Gayton McKenzie says Ramaphosa "stabbed us in the back" by signing Expropriation Act. *Daily Maverick*, January 26, 2025. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-01-26-mckenzie-on-expropriation-act-president-stabbed-us-in-the-back/>
- Pinto, A.C. (ed.). (2017). *Corporatism and Fascism: The Corporatist Wave in Europe*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315388908>
- Ragolane, M., Thusi, X. & Khoza, N.K. (2024). Navigating the promise and perils of post-apartheid service delivery: An analysis of the South African social contract. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, 22(2), 24582-24596. <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.001758>
- Republic of South Africa (RSA), (1996). *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printers. <https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution/constitution-republic-south-africa-1996-04-feb-1997>
- Sarr, F. (2019). *Afrotopia*. Berlin: Matthes and Seitz Berlin. [https://books.google.lt/books?hl=lt&lr=&id=G5bcDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT8&dq=Sarr,+F.+\(2019\).+Afrotopia.+Berlin&ots=V2aZt4Ak-w&sig=iSHGXArUljctoxDkgUGd_z6REFo&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.lt/books?hl=lt&lr=&id=G5bcDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT8&dq=Sarr,+F.+(2019).+Afrotopia.+Berlin&ots=V2aZt4Ak-w&sig=iSHGXArUljctoxDkgUGd_z6REFo&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- SAT-International Co. Ltd. (2025). The ANC is eroding the very freedoms "celebrated" on Freedom Day. *South Africa Today*, April 27, 2025. <https://southafricatoday.net/south-africa-news/the-anc-is-eroding-the-very-freedoms-celebrated-on-freedom-day/>
- Sebola, M.P. & Tsheola, J.P. (2024). South Africa's 2024 GNU conceptual masterstroke or protection of presidential incumbency? An editorial perspective. *Journal of Public Administration and Development Alternatives*, 9(1), i-ix.
- Seepe, S. (2024a). GNU is the code word for a "bloodless coup" by the DA. *Independent Online*, June 23, 2024. <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/cape-argus/20240625/281706914864696>
- Seepe, S. (2024b). NPA's Phala Phala decision: A reflection of unequal accountability, perpetuates the notion that some are more equal than others. *Independent Online*, October 11, 2024. <https://iol.co.za/news/politics/opinion/2024-10-11-npas-phala-phala-decision-a-reflection-of-unequal-accountability-perpetuates-the-notion-that-some-are-more-equal-than-others/>
- Seepe, S. (2025c). SONA 2025: More 'Promises and Lies' Fuels Anger Over Ramaphosa's Failing Leadership. *Independent Online*, February 07, 2025. <https://iol.co.za/opinion/2025-02-07-sona-2025-more-promises-and-lies-fuels-anger-over-ramaphosas-failing-leadership/>
- Seepe, S. (2025d). Cyril Ramaphosa's 'Smoke and Mirrors' Leadership is Leading the ANC into Oblivion. *Independent Online*, March 29, 2025. <https://iol.co.za/opinion/2025-03-30-cyril-ramaphosas-smoke-and-mirrors-leadership-is-leading-the-anc-into-oblivion/>
- Shapiro, I. (2003). *The State of Democratic Theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Simakoloyi, Z. (2025). Weaponising the law against democracy is on the rise in Africa. *Daily Maverick*, June 09, 2025. <https://futures.issafrica.org/blog/2025/Weaponising-the-law-against-democracy-in-Africa>

Sicetsha, A. (2025). South Africa's new national security strategy warns of rising threats to state stability. *Extra Time Media*, July 16, 2025. https://www.msn.com/en-za/news/other/south-africa-s-new-national-security-strategy-warns-of-rising-threats-to-state-stability/ar-AA1IIm86?ocid=NL_ESMX_AI_20200916_1_1

Steenhuisen, J. (2025). DA declares formal GNU dispute over Expropriation Bill and NHI. Press Conference on January 25, 2025. <https://www.da.org.za/2025/01/da-declares-formal-gnu-dispute-over-expropriation-bill-and-nhi> (Accessed: January 27, 2025).

Tony, L. (2025). *Being There: Backstories from the Political Front*. Jonathan Ball Publishers. <https://tonyleon.com/being-there-backstories-from-the-political-front-new-book-available-may-2025/>

Tsheola, J.P. (2024). State transition and fiscal distress: South Africa's "illusionary" democratic capitalist governance. *Journal of Global Business and Technology*, 20(1), 95-108. <https://gbata.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/JGBAT-Volume-20-Number-1.pdf>

Tsheola, J.P. (2025). Elections and suffrage power in South Africa's democratic governance ambience. *African Renaissance*, 22(1), 123-148. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-5305/2025/22n1a6>

Tsheola, J.P. & Sebola, M.P. (2018). Africa in the 21st century: Has the scotched earth imagery relented? *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 10(2), 1-16. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-fa95c68e7>

Tsheola, J.P., Sebola, M.P. & Mamabolo, M.A. (2023). South Africa's "triple crisis of governance" and societal leadership vacuum. *Insight into Regional Development*, 5(4), 23-35. [http://doi.org/10.9770/IRD.2023.5.4\(2\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/IRD.2023.5.4(2))

Zondo, R.M.M. (2022). *Report of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into State Capture*. Pretoria: Commission of Inquiry into State Capture. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202201/judicial-commission-inquiry-state-capture-reportpart-1.pdf

Johannes TSHEOLA (PhD), Professor

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6548-4291>

This is peer-reviewed scientific journal <https://jssidoi.org/ird/page/peer-review-policy>

Copyright © 2025 by author(s). Publishing rights by [UAB Sustainability for Regions](https://www.uab.ac.za/centre-for-sustainability/)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

