

Spoils Politics: The case of Nelson Mandela Bay

Case study report

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Spoils Politics: The case of Nelson Mandela Bay

1. Background and Introduction

Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (NMBMM) is located on the southern coast of South Africa along the Indian Ocean. The municipality includes Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Despatch with their surrounding areas. The total area of the municipality is 1959.02 km². The estimated population size is 1 263 051 people (Community Survey, 2016), with a population growth rate of 2.09% per annum. In 2016, the NMBMM's population consisted of 63.23% African (799 000), 12.81% White (162 000), 22.97% Coloured (290 000) and 0.98% Asian (12 400) people. The largest share of population is within the young working age category (25-44 years) with a total number of 432 000 or 34.2% of the total population (Community Survey, 2016).¹

Available 2016 data on the municipality indicate that there are 368 520 households with an average household size of 3.4 people. Females head about 41.6% of the households and 92.5% are formal dwellings. According to available statistics, 90.5% of the households has a flush toilet connected to waterborne sewerage; 84.8% receive weekly refuse removal; 77.3% have access to piped water inside the dwelling and 95.4% have an electricity connection. A large proportion of the population is under the age of 15 (30.6%), while 63.6% are age 15 to 64 years old. The 2011 data revealed that NMBMM has an (official) unemployment rate of 36.6%, while youth unemployment stood at 47.3%.²

Nelson Mandela Bay is a major seaport and automotive manufacturing centre and it is the economic powerhouse of the Eastern Cape Province. The city is also a popular holiday destination for both national and international tourists. The main economic sectors are manufacturing, community services, finance, trade, and transport. According to the Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC) (2017), NMBMM had a GDP of R120 billion in 2016 (up from R 52.3 billion in 2006) and contributed 35.51% to the Eastern Cape Province GDP of R338 billion. NMBMM also contributed 2.76% to the GDP of South Africa, which had a total GDP of R4.34 trillion in 2016 (as measured in nominal or current prices).

The 2017/18 – 2021/22 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) clearly emphasises that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa requires local government to be developmental in nature. Consequently, the NMBMM therefore has a responsibility to structure and manage its administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of local communities and to promote residents' social and economic development. It is against this background that this Case Study on NMBMM examines how political instability influences the social and economic development of the municipality and, in particular, the well-being of all its residents, regardless of citizenship.

¹ https://www.ecsecc.org/documentrepository/informationcentre/nelson-mandela-bay-metro-municipality_31887.pdf

² Most of the data presented here is derived from official website of NMBMM:
<https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/1/nelson-mandela-bay-metropolitan-municipality>

2. “Spoils Politics: Examining the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality”

The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality has been characterised by administrative and political instability since 2007 following the renowned Polokwane Conference of the African National Congress (ANC) where Jacob Zuma emerged as leader of the political party. This elective leadership conference was seen as a *battle for the soul of the ANC* (Gumede, 2005) that pitted Thabo Mbeki, seen as a technocrat and elitist who limited internal debate and dissent, against Jacob Zuma, seen then as a champion of change and transformation in favour of the poor (Steyn Kotze, 2009: 227). Jacob Zuma emerged as the new ANC leader at the conclusion of this conference, in spite of a cloud of allegations on more than 700 counts of corruption hanging over him. This conference also set in motion one of the fiercest political factional battles that played out in Nelson Mandela Bay. This factional battle created such political instability that its ripples were still felt in 2015, when the ANC National Executive intervened with the deployment of Danny Jordaan as both the Executive Mayor and ANC Mayoral candidate for the 2016 Local Government Elections. By 2017, we saw the Democratic Alliance (DA)-led coalition fall and a United Democratic Movement (UDM) coalition with support of the ANC emerge as the executive leadership of Nelson Mandela Bay. The result was continued political and administrative instability that has severely impacted on service delivery. More telling, however, was the number of leadership positions within the administrative structures that remain vacant.

Following Mbeki's defeat at the Polokwane conference in 2007, a political purge ensued within Nelson Mandela Bay. Local officials who were seen as being an *Mbeki* loyalist were promptly removed from their position and “redeployed”. This included former mayor Nondimiso Maphazi, an Mbeki supporter, who was removed from her position on the unfounded basis of underperformance that impacted negatively on the political administrative functioning of the municipality (Steyn Kotze and Ralo 2014: 94). She was replaced by Zanoxolo Wayile, who had a strong history in the union movement. And, as with the appointment of two South African Communist Party (SACP) members to two important economic portfolios in the Zuma national executive (Southall: 2014: 11), the deployment of Zanoxolo Wayile as executive mayor in Nelson Mandela Bay could also be seen as a move to placate the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) as a member of the tripartite alliance. Another casualty of this political purge was the Eastern Cape premier at the time, Nonsimo Balindela, who joined the Congress of the People (COPE) and later on the DA. The most infamous purge, of course, was that of Thabo Mbeki himself who “resigned” from the Presidency in 2008 following a controversial court ruling that the Executive under the custodianship of Mbeki had undermined investigations and interfered in the infamous *Arms Deal* scandal in which Jacob Zuma stood accused of more than 700 charges of corruption (Brummer and Sole, 2008). Through this political purge, pro-Zuma supporters had worked to consolidate their faction within the realm of state prior to Zuma officially taking the reins of government power with the 2009 General Elections. The legitimising narrative for the redeployments was found in the construction of a *two centres of power* dichotomy (Steyn Kotze and Ralo, 2014: 103). Here, the argument was that one cannot have a divided ANC leadership where power is split between the Presidency (Mbeki) and Luthuli House (Zuma). While the two-centres of power factional battle played out in the theatre of the national ANC, there were ripples that saw a similar drama unfold within the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBMM). Steyn-Kotze and Ralo (2014: 104–105) describe the emergence of the Stalini-Stepping Stone (named after the venue where meetings were held) split in the regional ANC. The actors in this local level political drama were either aligned with Thabo Mbeki (Stepping Stones) or with Jacob Zuma (Stalini) and, within the branches of the ANC, each factional group canvassed to secure a victory for their candidate at the 2007 Polokwane conference. In this context of factionalism, political loyalties shifted, depending on who seemed most likely to secure the position as leader of the ANC (Steyn Kotze and Ralo, 2014: 104). This battle, however, did not remain within the realm of ANC party structures. It

played out also in the structures of local government where one saw the disruption of Council meetings through a boycott where ANC councillors would not attend meetings, thus creating a situation where decisions could not be taken, resulting in governance paralysis and an inability to move developmental projects forward (Steyn Kotze and Ralo, 2014: 105). The ANC Regional Executive Committee was eventually disbanded on the basis that it lacked legitimacy and

Stalini supporters were thus able to engage in activities seeking the removal of key personnel like the former Mayor Nondimiso Maphazi, premised on the suspicion that they might frustrate the implementation of the Polokwane resolutions that would guide the future policy agenda of restoring the historic mission of the ANC (Steyn Kotze and Ralo, 2014: 105).

While the Stepping Stone/Stalini divide was settled with the formation of COPE, the repercussions of this battle continued to influence the new political administration of Zanoxolo Wayile with a new divide named Standard House (ANC headquarters) and City Hall (local administration offices) as the new ANC Regional Executive sought to build hegemonic dominance within the Nelson Mandela Bay local government structures. Steyn Kotze and Ralo (2014: 107–110) detail the political ramifications of this new divide. Central to this particular factional battle was not personalities, but rather creating hegemonic dominance through the capture of local government structures. The reason for this may be related to the findings of the Kabuso report “...detailing state predation and corruption within the NMB[M]M” (Steyn Kotze and Ralo 2014: 107).

Much like the centralisation of power around the Office of the Presidency under the leadership of Mbeki, so too, the ANC Regional Executive under Nceba Faku sought to locate power in Eastern Cape regional office of the ruling party. Thus, while City Hall may hold administrative power, in a bid to build hegemonic dominance, the ANC Regional Executive sought to ensure that key administrative decisions were made at Standard House (Steyn Kotze and Ralo, 2014: 107). This much is evident in the following statement:

When we go to government, we go to pursue the implementation of policies of the ANC, not your own creativity...It's the ANC vision that must be carried out in government. Conference resolutions give a framework how the policies of government should be, so that when we go to government we pursue the implementation...We must adhere to ANC policies because...of continuity in governance, so that whoever is deployed should not seek to implement his or her policies (Faku cited in Mkentane, 2014).

This approach set the stage for political leaders to meddle in the realm of the state, even though they may not hold lawful executive authority to do so. Indeed, Wayile (cited in George 2015) highlights that political interference led to paralysis in governance, most notably around “...getting rid...” of the Kabuso and Pikoli reports. Both the Kabuso and Pikoli reports implicated Nceba Faku in alleged corrupt activities (Steyn Kotze and Ralo, 2014: 107 and *The Herald* 2011a). The 2011/2012 Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA or Auditor-General) reports noted that Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality regressed from an unqualified to a qualified audit in this period. This was primarily due to

...a lack of monitoring and oversight by leadership. Record-keeping requirements were also deliberately ignored, resulting in documentation on procurement processes not be available for audit purposes. This was made worse by the detrimental effect that conditions of [political] infighting within the council had on the effectiveness of its oversight function (Auditor-General, 2012).

The municipality also accounted for the more than 65% of supply chain management-related irregular expenditure; there were 17 instances of municipal contracts awarded to close family members totalling R7 019 000. It overspent its budget by R310 million and incurred R93 million in non-compliant fruitless and wasteful expenditure, which "...could have been avoided had the responsible officials exercised due care when executing their duties" (Auditor-General, 2012).

For the 2012/2013 financial year, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality incurred R271 million in unauthorised spending and R1,84 billion in irregular expenditure (Auditor General, 2013). In this period the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality had set six strategic objectives: (1) ensure access to basic services for all resident communities in Nelson Mandela Bay; (2) develop and sustain the spatial, natural and built environments; (3) provide integrated and sustainable human settlements; (4) address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and social inequality; (5) ensure sound financial management; (6) entrench a culture of public participation in municipal planning, budgeting and decision-making processes (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2013). The administration noted the assumption of office by Ben Fihla as the new Executive Mayor for the metropolitan municipality as a key milestone. Challenges noted by the municipal leadership included (1) no full-time city manager; (2) a high senior management vacancy rate; (3) the qualified audit status for the 2011/2012 period after four years of unqualified audits; (4) the eradication of the bucket system; and, (5) challenges in housing provision (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2013). In this regard, the municipality noted that

the NMBM has identified the upgrading of informal settlements as the most sustainable way of eradicating buckets, thereby providing each household with permanent services, including water [and] sanitation. However, because of the insufficient funding for housing subsidies provided to the NMBM, the bucket eradication system has not been completely successful, affecting the achievement of the target of upgrading all informal settlements.

The Auditor-General highlighted a concern with governance and found that leadership and financial performance and management had regressed in this period (Auditor-General, 2013). The municipality received another qualified audit opinion due to "...political and administrative instability, which filtered through to key functional areas of the municipality" (Auditor-General, 2013). The Auditor-General (2013) also flagged weak accountability and not filling senior management positions. This was highlighted primarily due to the inability of the municipality to appoint a permanent City Manager for the period 2010–2013. Further to this, the Auditor-General also noted that key interventions were needed in terms of leadership, oversight responsibility, human resource management, policies and procedures, action plans, IT governance, proper record keeping, processing and reconciliation controls, reporting, compliance, and IT system controls (Auditor General, 2013a). Specifically, the Auditor General (2013a) flagged the following root causes for the qualified audit in this period: (1) critical top management vacancies and a lack of permanent and committed leadership, which led to a lack of monitoring and oversight by the administrative and political leadership as a result of not setting the correct tone; (2) lack of consequences for poor performance and transgressions; and (3) action plans to address the root causes of prior years' findings were inadequate and their implementation was not monitored by the leadership. To facilitate clean governance as well as service delivery, then-Executive Mayor Ben Fihla committed to (1) fill critical vacancies with an emphasis on those of the city manager and executive directors; (2) ensure actions are implemented in terms of the action plan developed to address audit findings; (3) achieve a clean audit, improved service delivery and internal control, sound financial management and addressing all matters of emphasis raised by the AGSA through quarterly implementation and monitoring of financial and internal controls (Auditor General, 2013a).

By March 2013, the ANC National Executive intervened to restore some semblance of political stability to the administration in Nelson Mandela Bay. Zanololo Wayile and Nceba Faku vacated their positions as Executive Mayor and Regional Chairperson respectively. Ben Fihla, colloquially known as Oom Ben, was inaugurated as Mayor to bring political stability and focus on service delivery. Dr. Lindiwe Msengana-Ndlela was appointed as City Manager. It seemed that administrative stability would finally ensue, and that the business of governing and delivery could now continue following a long period of instability and governance paralysis. However, political interference did not dissipate and a mere five months after her appointment as City Manager, Dr. Msengana-Ndlela resigned citing political interference:

the primary reason for her resignation was a concern for her personal security and political interference, especially with regard to financial accountability in the supply-chain management process...In an open letter to the MEC for Local Government in the Eastern Cape...[she] highlighted the following key issues: (1) the city mayor and his political advisor had thwarted efforts to address financial accountability and that political considerations seemed to outweigh sound financial management practices in the awarding of tenders and contracts; (2) the city manager and his political advisor had forced her to appoint a political advisor in the capacity of an acting executive director of corporate services as well as other '...senior managers irrespective of their competencies, qualifications and experience'; (3) salient threats were made against her for failing to follow the 'majority rule' principle which essentially would have forced her to '...perform administrative acts that were contrary to government policies and procedures'; and (4) the mayor had instructed...[her] to appoint 16 members of Mkhonto weSizwe Military Veteran's Association as bodyguards for the mayor and deputy-mayor at a cost of around R4.3 million, in spite of the fact that these appointments had not been budgeted for (Steyn Kotze and Ralo, 2014: 108).

The 2014/2015 Auditor General's Report isolated Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality as one of the highest contributors to irregular spending in local government, contributing R1 348 million to a total of R3 390 million (Auditor General, 2014). In addition, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality was the highest contributor to fruitless and wasteful, and irregular, expenditure with a total of R424 million (Auditor General, 2014). A key reason flagged by the Auditor-General was that

leadership did not set the appropriate tone at the top throughout the year to lead by example and this is evident from the numerous allegations against senior management officials and subsequent resignations and suspicion of top officials. The tone set by management tends to filter through the whole organisation resulting in actual and alleged irregularities occurring at all levels... There was inadequate oversight by leadership over the commitment made to address the prior year[s] qualification... The lack of adequate consequence management also contributes to a culture of non-compliance (Auditor-General, 2015).

Further to this, the Auditor-General (2015) flagged numerous instances where internal control personnel and accounting officers did not fulfil their duties to report, investigate and operate within in the confines of legislation in terms of determining if a specific person was liable for irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure. Internal control personnel and accounting officers also did not recover unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure from a liable person, and did not report alleged irregular expenditure and financial misconduct that would constitute a criminal offence to the South African Police Service (Auditor-General, 2015).

By mid-2015 the ANC, realising it needed an urgent intervention to save the Bay, redeployed Ben Fihla to the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature as an advisor to the Eastern Cape premier. And, reminiscent of the political purge of Maphazi in 2008, he was relieved of his duties as Mayor of Nelson Mandela

Bay due to weak performance in service delivery (Hunter, 2015). Seemingly having learnt the difficult lessons of the 2011 Local Government Election outcome that saw the ANC barely hanging on to a majority in the biggest metropolitan municipality in their heartland, they deployed Danny Jordaan to restore stability and execute the electoral mandate. However, this was a case of too little too late. By the time the Auditor-General Report for 2014/2015 was released, state predation and corruption had resulted in approximately R1.77 billion being unaccounted for. Fruitless and wasteful expenditure totalled R146 million, and much of this was related to the controversial integrated public transport system, and irregular spending totalled R1.3 billion (De Kock, 2016). Most worrying was the inability of the Auditor-General to make any findings on amounts totalling R2.6 billion because of missing tender files and related documentation (Sesante, 2015). Indeed, the Auditor-General flagged similar issues in its 2016 audit report for the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality as it had in 2015. Leadership and oversight remained weak, oversight was severely lacking, and a culture of non-compliance and lack of accountability continued (Auditor-General, 2016). This was further exacerbated by a high vacancy rate at senior management level (Auditor-General, 2016).

The 2016 Local Government Elections saw a coalition government led by the Democratic Alliance come to power in Nelson Mandela Bay. Instead of bringing political and administrative stability through cooperation and governing in the interest of citizens, coalition politics effectively turned council and the administration into a political theatre where smaller political parties attempted to gain as much benefit as possible for themselves. A key example is the Patriotic Alliance, a key partner of the Democratic Alliance, which withdrew support from the DA coalition a mere two years after the 2016 Local Government elections. In September of 2017, after a little over a year of coalition government in Nelson Mandela Bay, the Patriotic Alliance engaged in a political game to secure a vacant deputy-mayorship position in the metropolitan municipality. Labelling then-Executive Mayor Athol Trollip as a "...dictator" (Steyn Kotze, 2019), the Patriotic Alliance threatened to withdraw from the coalition if they did not get the deputy mayor-ship in Nelson Mandela Bay. In March of 2018 the ANC offered the Patriotic Alliance the coveted position of deputy mayor in return for supporting a motion of no confidence against then-Executive Mayor Athol Trollip. Similar dynamics also played out with the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), most notably around passing a budget in Nelson Mandela Bay (Spies, 2018). The consequences of this political battle, as smaller parties, proverbial kingmakers in coalition governments, flexed their political muscle for their own benefit, undermined service delivery, and facilitated continued political and administrative instability. Indeed, irregular, unauthorised and fruitless and wasteful expenditure increased again for the 2016/2017 financial year. Unauthorised expenditure increased due to non-cash provision of employee benefits which exceeded the approved budget, while fruitless and wasteful expenditure had not been recovered or written off (Auditor-General, 2017). Indeed, as with previous years, the Auditor-General flagged non-compliance, a lack of accountability and a lack of effective expenditure management where monies due to the municipality were not recovered within the stipulated time period (Auditor-General, 2017).

On 27 August 2018, Athol Trollip was ousted as Executive Mayor in Nelson Mandela Bay and the United Democratic Movement's Councillor Mongameli Bobani took the helm as executive leader. This was an interesting dynamic, given that the UDM held only approximately 2% of the vote in Nelson Mandela Bay. With the support of the ANC and the EFF, the UDM thus took the highest executive office in Nelson Mandela Bay. Bobani's tenure as executive mayor in Nelson Mandela Bay has been clouded by much controversy, most notably around allegations of corruption and an abuse of power. Indeed, one noted high levels of unauthorised expenditure, the lack of suitably qualified senior management, where a cursory glance at people in key posts indicated that most are acting in that capacity (see annexure 1), as well as politically motivated killings associated with tender processes in local government (Grootes, 2019; The Citizen, 2019). Irregular expenditure increased by almost R1 billion by the end of the 2018 financial year due to a lack of proper systems and irregularities in the supply chain management processes (Auditor General, 2018). In this regard, the Auditor-General

(2018) highlighted that “...reasonable steps...” were not taken to control financial mismanagement and corruption in Nelson Mandela Bay.

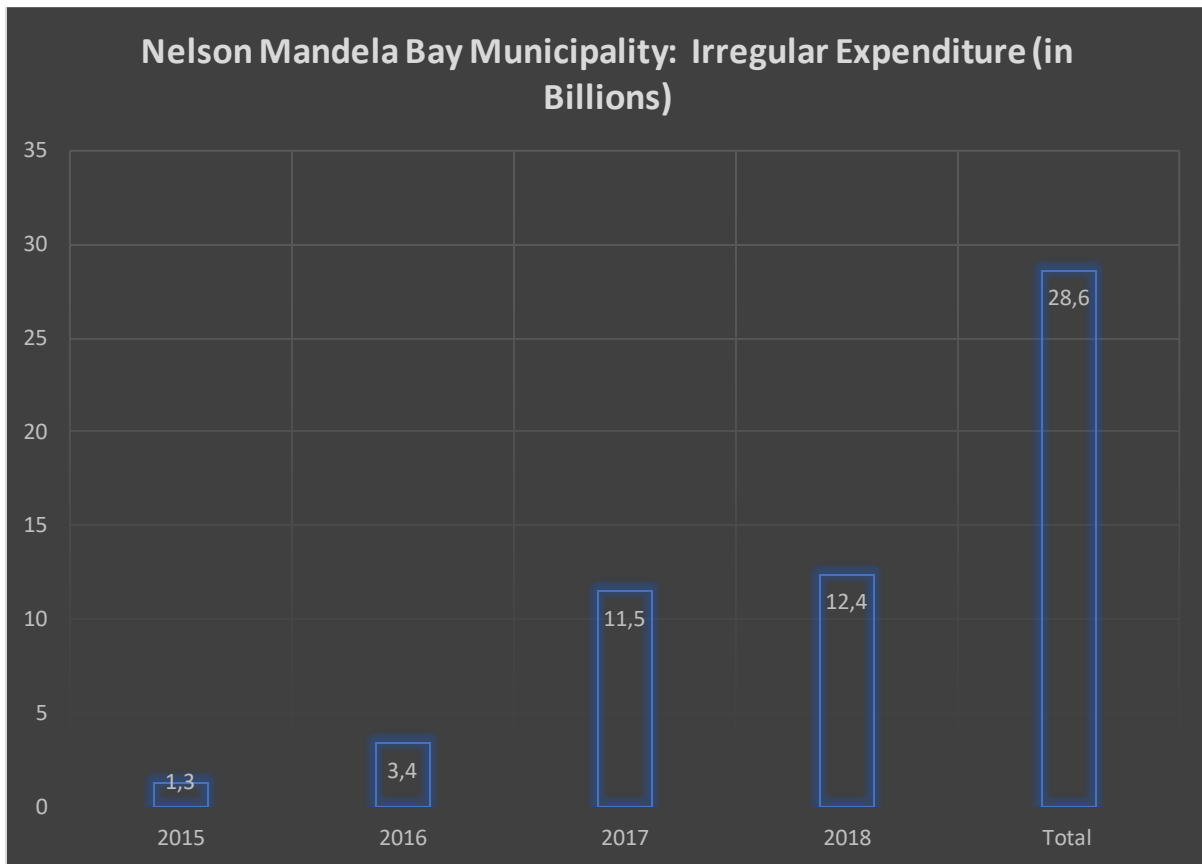


Figure 1: Irregular expenditure in Nelson Mandela Bay: 2015 – 2018.

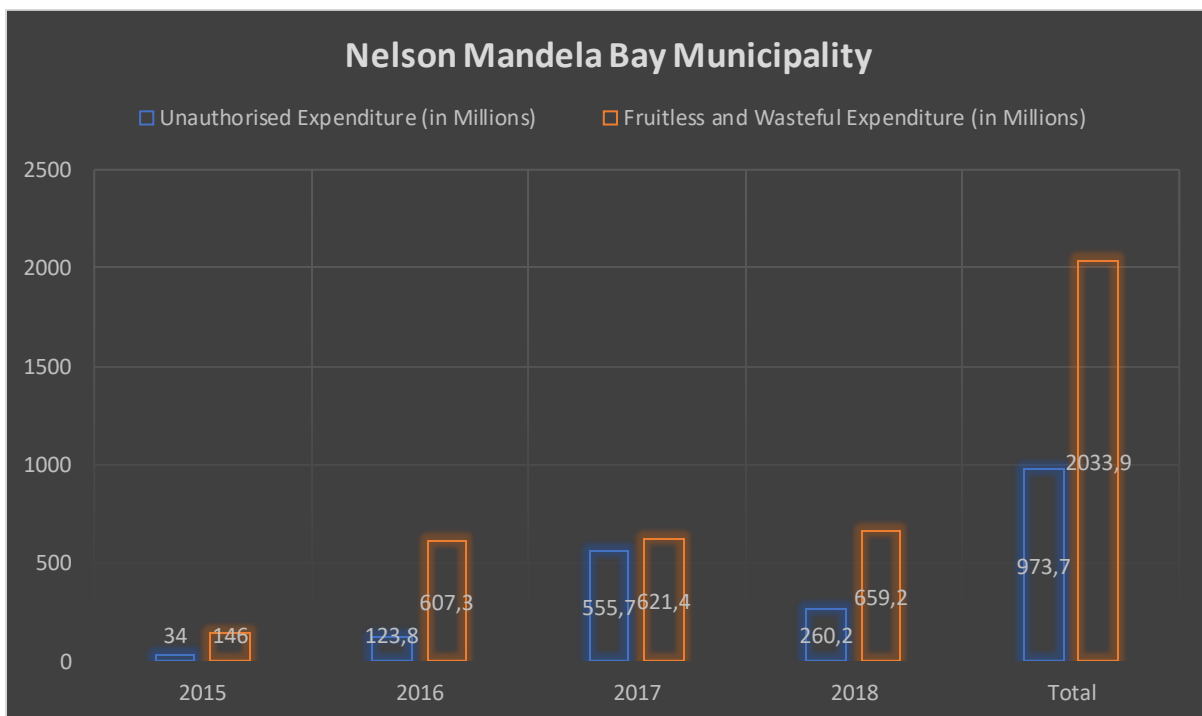


Figure 2: Fruitless and Wasteful, and Unauthorised Expenditure in Nelson Mandela Bay: 2015 – 2018

3. “Politicians do not care about us”: Service delivery and the politics of representation

Service delivery was also severely impacted by the political turmoil that has characterised politics and governance in Nelson Mandela Bay. Service delivery protests became almost a daily occurrence as communities sought to hold councillors and local government officials accountable for not improving their living conditions. Indeed, Duncan (2014) found that between 2009 and 2012 the number / frequency of service delivery protests had doubled in Nelson Mandela Bay. Most notable were the ANC candidate revolts as Booysen (2011) terms it. Here, communities protested against the choice of ANC ward councillors on the basis that the chosen candidates did not represent the will of the people. The ANC, they argued, were thwarting their own democratic processes for choosing representatives and *forcing* communities to accept candidates they did not endorse, vote for, or want for that matter. The internal processes for nominating ANC candidates had become perverted, and communities were not willing to accept representatives on the basis of political reward, but demanded that their representatives reflect their choice as endorsed by them. This development was particularly significant given that the Eastern Cape is the heartland of the ANC. Indeed, Booysen (2011: 151-152) argued that these intra-ANC protests indicated that communities had conceptually fused government and the party, and by virtue of this understanding, linked service delivery to their candidate.

As with the 2011 Local Government Elections, there was unhappiness and protest over candidates for specific ANC strongholds, most notably in the communities of Kwazakhele (ward 22 and 24), Zwide (ward 27), Izinyoka (ward 33), Kwadesi and part of Joe Slovo (ward 36) and Motherwell NU 29 (ward 54) (Sobuwa, 2016). A similar political drama over candidates also played out in some communities in the Northern Areas (Sobuwa and De Kock, 2016). One community member stated:

He [ANC candidate] is forced into our community and the ANC did not consult us... We are capable of running our own ward. We elected six people for ward councillor [candidates]—we don't understand why they take him... We are Coloureds and you are undermining and oppressing us. The apartheid years have passed and you want to give us a criminal (Sobuwa and De Kock, 2016).

Communities went as far as holding high ranking ANC officials hostage, demanding reasons as to why their preferred candidate was not on the candidate lists (Sobuwa, 2016). The general sentiment was that the community's voice was being ignored, but there was also a strong element of factionalism in these internal processes:

We've kept quiet for 15 years while we were given councillors we did not want. The four people listed for ward councillor candidate are all from [one] group... Residents want [another candidate] as the ward councillor because he is already doing a good job [for the?] youth" (De Kock and Sobuwa, 2016)

Drawing on interviews conducted in 2015 for Steyn Kotze's **Delivering an elusive dream of democracy: Lessons from Nelson Mandela Bay**, a key consequence of governance failure is a sense of democratic de-legitimation, most notably among youth who had grown up exclusively in the post-apartheid era. There was a sense that the “freedom” that the Dream of '94 had supposedly brought is a façade is palpable; a superficial freedom that perpetuates apartheid oppression in a democratic context. For them, the notion of freedom is an illusion, something that remains elusive in South Africa's democracy. As one young, black African participant noted:

I think, in my own opinion for those who lived before 1994, their aim of freedom was to free Mandela, then after it was to have their own black government. But for me, who was born in 1987, the word freedom for me is still an idea, which South Africa has not yet implemented. It is just an idea. The reason why I say that is because for me the word freedom is too big of a word for South Africa. Because yet you find that we have private schools, private hospitals, then in such instances, where is freedom there? They always say that freedom...they always say that education is the key to success. Therefore, without education, there is no freedom. If education was free, then I would say that yes, we do have freedom. The only place where you get free education is in prison. When you get in prison, you'll get education for free. After you've received that education you won't get anywhere because you'll have a criminal record, meaning that that education is useless, so where's freedom in that? (Steyn Kotze, 2018: 47 - 48).

The youth see the promise of the Dream of '94 as having some form of tangible impact on their quality of life and future prospects. Class, as well as racial distinction, also comes into effect as those with higher incomes are able to access private hospitals and schools, which often offer better services than government facilities. One senses that if government facilities were comparable to private facilities, it would generate a sense of equality that the promise of the Dream of '94 held, which in turn, could have shaped a view that South Africa is indeed a free society. This point was made by a black African participant during the Motherwell interviews:

...for example, those guys that are the MPs that are working for government, most of their kids are not attending those local government schools, they are sending their children to private schools, and they are more educated than those children in the township schools. So that clearly shows that we will never be the same up until we build the right foundation... (Steyn Kotze, 2018: 49).

This view is not surprising given that the unemployment rate is staggeringly high and the chance of finding a good job to lift oneself out of poverty is limited considering the youth unemployment of 38.6 % (Koen, 2017). The interviews with the poor in the township revealed a sense that if you want to succeed in post-apartheid South Africa, then one needs resources to access private schools, health care and other services. Unequal access to services and resources, and unequal outcomes in the form of employment opportunities, place the poor in township communities at a continued disadvantage, as they do not have the financial means to afford fees at private schools, for example. If they do, it also comes at a huge sacrifice for the family, meaning that many have to give up on their dreams and their future aspirations of achieving their life purpose, in order to lay a foundation to build a better life for future generations.

One also notices a sense of disempowerment among black youth. This seems to be premised on the view that their voice is limited due to the lack of opportunities they have to recreate a better life for their families. After two decades of democracy, there may be a sense that oppression continues as the vote does not necessarily translate into a tangible opportunity to pursue their life choices. For example, one participant highlighted that she dreams of becoming a doctor, but due to the high cost of tertiary education and the absence of medical schools in Port Elizabeth, she will have to give up on that dream (Motherwell Interviewee 5). Here, she blames government, who should have provided free education as was promised in 1994. While their parents value political freedom, having lived with the dehumanising legislation of the apartheid regime, for younger participants the notion of freedom and the dream of 1994 is more instrumentalist. The optimism of 1994, it seems, had disappeared as the first post-apartheid generation came of age politically. The hand of apartheid reached in and touched the future, as one participant noted. Here the feeling is that

I think we may have those that we call the Born Frees, but they too are affected by the...apartheid regime because I'm a father who is not that well educated. If I had been well educated I would be in a position now to provide for myself and my family. But now my children are suffering because of that...because of the suffering that I endured, and it's now a chain of suffering. So the past still affects the present generation to such an extent that even in terms of education, people are still yearning for quality education (Steyn-Kotze, 2018: 57–58).

The lived reality of the black youth is one of continued expressions of where the Dream of '94 remains an elusive ideal:

I think when you compare my mother and I...my mother is more satisfied with the freedom we have now, whereas I don't see it as a freedom. She was forced to carry a "dom pas", there were whites-only places, no black places. She didn't have a house at that time, whereas now she's living in a RDP house. She's willing to vote, [of] which [it] is said that your vote is your voice, maybe she has a voice whereas I don't have it and that is why I'm saying that she's more satisfied than I am. I can say that now yes we can vote, and that our vote is our voice, and you vote for your own political party, and that political party will backstab you. That same political party will oppress you, and it's that same political party that we'll put our hopes on. So I don't see freedom yet, maybe freedom is still coming (Steyn-Kotze 2018: 58).

This sense of continued oppression was a salient factor when considering issues surrounding education and service delivery. For example, one mother stated that

My little boy is 9 years old and they will keep on going with these strikes and burning schools and there's poor quality of education that our children get. At the end of the day our children complete grade 12 but they don't have the right qualifications. They just pass the students to the next grade[.] [I]f there were inspectors like in the olden days[,] then I think that the teachers would work harder and the person who's above the teacher would hire more teachers as the inspectors would see that the classrooms are overcrowded and that the teachers can't manage so many children... (Steyn-Kotze, 2018: 58).

There is a sense of disillusionment with electoral democracy, not on the basis of the act of voting, but rather the expectations political parties create when campaigning for the vote. This disillusionment is premised on the view that after then-22 years of democracy, all the ruling ANC offers is empty promises

...the ruling party [ANC] has been promising South Africans the same thing for twenty years now. The first democratic leader of South Africa said free education for all and that has not yet happened. We as South Africans experienced load shedding for almost three years now, and the ruling party said that they would take care of that. All the other parties are promising to do what the ruling party is not doing, they are not bringing anything new of their own, and they are just saying that they will do that which the ruling party fails to do. So for me, voting is useless because of that reason.

I'm not voting ... [b]ecause they don't give us what they promised, they don't deliver. We vote for them and they don't deliver - look at the schools now!

How many times have we voted in order to make sure that our voices are heard? But still there's no change... [E]ven when they build us houses, they don't care who builds those houses or whether those houses fall on top of our children and on top of us because they don't even employ qualified builders for those houses. So that's why I say that they try but they don't try

hard enough, or the people running the ward, they're not working together. So that's why I won't vote. Because I have voted several times before but my voice haven't been heard (Steyn-Kotze, 2018: 58).

4. A government based on “spoils politics”

Political events in Nelson Mandela Bay have created a political system based on spoils consumption and nepotistic distribution of employment (Beresford, 2015: 233). Political appointments are not made on the basis of competence, but rather patronage to reward, and, more importantly, ensure continued loyalty, not to a political project, but to individual leaders. And, looking towards the future, this trend seems to have been cemented into the organisational culture within the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. The basis for this was established with the centralisation of power, first under Thabo Mbeki, and then again under Jacob Zuma. Political purges, redeployments, and blurring the line between governing party and the state in the distribution of patronage narrows the political debate and policy innovation. Rather, we find, as the story of Nelson Mandela Bay has shown, it leads to political decay as hegemonic dominance limits accountability and advancing public interest and well-being. Rather, as Beresford (2015: 234) highlights, it reproduces political power structures and authority as those who hold power are able to determine who will receive what benefit, whether it is a job or a community being earmarked for a particular developmental project. It thus creates a partisan state based on political loyalty as opposed to a non-partisan state that caters for all citizens. While there is political affinity for the ANC as a liberation movement, its record as a governing party has alienated their core constituency, the poor and marginalised who still dream of a better life for all. Indeed, as one interviewee noted in relation to Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality:

There is poor leadership at local government level. There is a lack of capacity and accountability, and performance management does not filter through the system. The system is characterised by political and administrative instability. This instability undermines performance management which in turn undermines the organisation. There is no accountability which undermines performance. The application of performance management in the system is poor and we find poor political leadership (Personal Interview, 26 August 2020).

Due to a series of overwhelming electoral majorities, the ANC was able to capture state power and rule with a degree of impunity. The institutional architecture in terms of accountability creates a situation where the electorate cannot really hold their representatives accountable as these representatives are accountable to the party, which deploys, redeploys, or fires representatives. This also creates a situation for a highly factionalised political environment where factions are not necessarily driven by ideological or policy issues, but rather by personal interest. Following the infamous ANC Polokwane Leadership Elective Conference of 2007, Nelson Mandela Bay was plunged into political instability, a paralysis of governance, and a general sense that the *rules don't matter* – that the rule of law doesn't apply. Once a dominant party rules without the people, it loses a very important connection with a protected core of voters which a dominant party needs to ensure they maintain their electoral dominance. This is especially the case if we consider protests (at times violent) and the extreme measures communities had taken because their preferred candidate was not up for election.

Using state coffers for personal enrichment, with limited accountability and, without the necessary corrective action or punishment for wrongdoing, has contributed to the de-legitimation of the ANC. Indeed, if one steals from the state, there is less funding for development and the provision of basic services, even the most basic amenities like a flush toilet. The lack of accountability undermines

human dignity and condemns yet another generation to live in the dehumanising conditions the apartheid government imposed on them. It lays the foundation for people losing hope in the ability of the ANC to deliver on its historic mission, contributing to either disengagement from the political process or looking to other parties who may deliver on the promise of the Dream of '94. Even more importantly, it robs people of the very dignity that they expected with the dawn of democracy in South Africa.

Cadre deployment can also be abused as a means of rewarding political loyalty, thus creating a form of factional politics driven by personal interests. Some dominant parties can maintain their position by relying on clientelistic ties, using forms of patronage to maintain dominance through alignment with an incumbent who will bring employment, a salary, access to resources and wider opportunities, and potential promotion to electoral office or a higher administrative position (Green, 2010: 158). Cadre deployment can also act as a reward when specific political goals are achieved. Thus, the clientelistic network facilitates cadre deployment of party loyalists, or individuals loyal to a specific party leader, into key positions within the state. Given the electoral dominance the ANC enjoys, it has been able to cement hegemonic dominance as well as centralisation of power around individual leaders and not necessarily power structures. Indeed, Mattes (2002: 25) highlights that centralisation of power was a worrying development given that national ANC structures had extended their powers at the provincial and local levels where premierships and mayors are not decided at the local or provincial level, but nominated and deployed by a national central committee. Under the banner of alleged or actual ill-discipline, provincial and local party structures were dissolved, but "...critics have viewed these actions as attempts to head off grassroots movements critical of ... president [Mbeki]" (Southall, 2002: 25). This strategy included removal of provincial premiers who might have risen to become challengers for national leadership. This phenomenon, seen most notably under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, laid a foundation for gatekeeper politics and patronage politics that undermined non-partisanship within the realm of the state (Beresford, 2015: 228). As one interviewee noted:

In assessing governance in the municipality, it is not only about the coalition dynamics. There are delays in administrative functions, which impacts on social development. Political insecurity has been coming a long time. There are a lot of performance issues, so we just see a [continuation] of that. Senior officials and people are appointed to meet [narrow] political agendas. There is no common agenda or programme, and this is a fundamental concern and pervasive in the country. Political leaders govern in their [own] interests, not in the ward or community interests. It is very rare that people act with the municipality. We find a lot of othering, especially in the Northern Areas [traditional Coloured community] over more privileged areas. These areas were neglected under the Group Areas Act and continue to feel neglect now. There is a lack of maintenance, there is racism in the community (Personal Interview, 26 August 2019).

Nelson Mandela Bay remains one of the most racially segregated cities³ with high levels of unemployment. The official unemployment rate is around 37 % and youth unemployment a staggering 47 % (Census 2011). The city is also known as the *bucket system capital* of South Africa as no other municipality has more people still without proper sanitation than Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. Many residents' human dignity is undermined on a daily basis, as around 35% of citizens have to use buckets as an ablution system. Municipalities characterised by defects in governance and a lack of accountability, underperformance in budgetary spending, maladministration, patronage and anorexic service delivery, culminate in the de-legitimisation of democracy in the political imagination of citizens.

³ StatsSA (2016), *Mapping diversity: An exploration of our social tapestry*. Available online at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=7678>.

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