



PART III

TOWARDS A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE





Post-apartheid South African Society

Introduction

This chapter describes the evolution of democratic South Africa, starting with processes that brought about democracy in South Africa through the 27 April 1994 elections. Chapter two has already covered some of the relevant issues in detail. However, this chapter discusses different views and perspectives regarding the transition from apartheid to democracy. It highlights linkages between some aspects of the apartheid dispensation and the democratic period, at least for the first two decades of democracy. It also deals with main socio-economic fissures and discusses power dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa. Overall, although apartheid policies and legislation have been repealed and new policies and legislation put in place, South Africa still remains a deeply divided society; and from the perspective of nation building, it seems South Africa is still very far from being characterised as a nation.

When speaking about a post-apartheid society, it is critical to understand that one is referring to a very broad and sometimes complex analysis of society. In simple terms, the post-apartheid South African society broadly refers to the formal ending of the separate development and oppression by the National Party (NP) and British Imperial rule. We can talk of a post-apartheid South African society as far as the laws such as the 1913 Land Act, 1950 Group Areas Act, 1953 Bantu Education Act and many others no longer obtain, or that formal discrimination and racism have been abolished.

This chapter focuses on how government, business and civil society interact with one another and the rest of society since political independence, and discusses where political power lies. It begins with a brief background and historical context regarding the making of the South African society. This is followed by a discussion of changes and shifts that have taken place since 1994 in the processes of creating a post-apartheid South African nation. The chapter pays particular attention to (a) major shifts in society since the end of apartheid; (b) narratives of unity; and (c)

divergent points of the new South Africa, and attempts to define what the major power dynamics are. Before concluding, the chapter characterises post-apartheid South African society by highlighting salient factors that define South Africa since political independence.

Historical Context

When discussing a post-apartheid South African society and what power relations look like, it is critical to first understand three key periods in the history that have shaped the society to date, namely: 1652-1795; 1795-1870 and 1948-1994. The first period (1652-1795) represents colonial exploits of the Dutch kingdom and its particular type of colonialism, which used commercial entities like the Dutch East Indian Company (DEIC). It was during this time that the Cape of Good Hope (present-day Cape Town) slowly began to be used as a place of trade and stop-over on the way to get to Asian colonies and spice markets.³⁵² Although the periods (i.e. 1652-1795; 1795-1870 and 1948-1994) are said to be the most important in understanding the making of what is now known as South Africa, there are many other important historical moments, dating before 1652, that are worth acknowledging.³⁵³

The period 1795-1870 represents the ascent and eventual colonialism of the British Empire of the Cape, which eventually became what we now know as South Africa. It was during this period that the development of mining, financial institutions and other activities evolved.³⁵⁴ The years 1948-1994 formally represents the period in South Africa's history when the Afrikaner nationalists were in power and formally installed a system of apartheid. It was during this period that the majority of Afrikaner people would, like the English citizens of South Africa, benefit from the use of the state to gain not only political but also economic power.³⁵⁵ The end result of the white minority rule was that, eventually, African peoples' land was confiscated (through the Land Act of 1913), their movement across the country was restricted and they were legally forced to live in Bantu areas, based on their ethnic classification (through the Population Registration Act of 1950, Group Areas Act of 1950, Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, Black Homeland Citizenship Act of 1970 and Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953). The education system of South Africa was configured to favour white (through Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 and Bantu Education Act 1953).³⁵⁶

It is therefore important to understand that when discussing post-apartheid South Africa and South African society, the focus is on 350 years of systematic oppression and dispossession. The era of apartheid, its legislation and institutions through which the ideology was implemented, produced and left a legacy of persistent poverty and extreme inequality that spans 300 years. So, the society is

confronted with massive ‘accumulated disadvantages’, particularly for the majority of South Africans, which can only be addressed collectively.³⁵⁷

Therefore, any change to formerly oppressive laws and ways of thinking was bound to be an exercise in the creation of something not only new but also significantly new to both victims and oppressors. Mamphela Ramphele, a South African politician, characterises transforming South Africa as equivalent to changing an aeroplane engine while the airplane is airborne.³⁵⁸

Changes and Shifts in the South African Society

As discussed in Chapter 2, it is important to bear in mind that early African kingdoms and socio-economic development were interrupted by European colonialism and apartheid rule. However, when outlining what constitutes major shifts in South African post-apartheid society, this chapter mainly discusses (a) unbanning of anti-apartheid political parties; (b) the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa); and (c) the creation of a new Republic of South Africa.

Unbanning of Anti-apartheid Political Activisms

F.W. De Klerk, the last apartheid president, announced the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and other liberation movements like the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1990, and also the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela from 27 years in jail.³⁵⁹ The unbanning of political activism dramatically changed what and how South African whites and blacks would interact and relate, firstly at a political level and secondly at a social level. Another important historical moment was the 17 March 1992 Referendum for white South Africans on – the majority of whites voted in favour of democratic elections, but almost 32 per cent were not in favour of political reforms towards a democratic South Africa.

The unbanning of political parties ushered in a new era from legal and political perspectives. While numerous events would transpire that would slow down the pace at which apartheid as a system was dismantled, the unbanning of liberation parties/movements began a new era for post-apartheid South African society.

Convention for a Democratic South Africa

Some of the key defining features of a post-apartheid South Africa emanate from the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa). The first and second Codesa pivotal points: (a) South Africa’s future political stability rests on an understanding that no one party won the battle, but rather negotiations set South Africa’s post-apartheid narrative and system;³⁶⁰ and (b) the transition from

dictatorial and oppressive apartheid NP rule would be done in a manner that sought to maintain certain institutions and rights of the minorities, while also recognising the historical injustices of apartheid colonialism. The Codesa negotiations were therefore an attempt to systemically create a decision making environment where a new South Africa could be agreed upon.

However, although Codesa meetings seemed like a series of smooth interactions, it is important to highlight the fact that two years before the negotiations and interactions began on 20 December 1991, many tragic and challenging events had occurred.³⁶¹ For example, the South African Communist Party's General Secretary, Chris Hani, was assassinated by right-wing elements (i.e. Janusz Waluce and Clive Derby-Lewis). Also, not all liberation movements participated in the negotiations.

New Constitution

One of the lasting legacies of the Codesa meetings was that an interim South African Constitution was drafted which later in 1996 became the Republic of South Africa's Constitution. The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is one of the hallmarks of the post-apartheid South African society: it is a document that has numerous nuances such as Chapter 2 which contains the Bill of Rights, and caveats such as Chapters 4 and 10 which explain how the President and National Executive, Public Administration function as well how South African citizens should interact with one another and government.³⁶²

The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa has been important in the making of the post-apartheid society as it constitutes the 'foundations' on which citizens interact with the state and other democratic institutions of government and also find recourse for other non-political matters. It is the Constitution that best captures the aims and objectives of a post-apartheid society, as it states:

We, the people of South Africa, recognise the injustices of our past; honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to: Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the

.....³⁶³

Hence, any discussions about a post-apartheid South African society should begin or include the Codesa negotiations and the eventual end product of that era and time – the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. These two landmarks exhibited the drive of numerous ordinary people and leaders, as well as political and non-political desire to become citizens of the first republic of South Africa, despite the numerous problems that would need to be dealt with, going forward.

Narratives of Unity

A part of the early post-1994 narrative of trying to unify South Africans, for them to see one another as joint owners of the Republic of South Africa, was the investment in soft-power politics by government and other non-government entities. Key defining moments in this regard were: (a) sporting events like the 1995 Rugby World Cup, 1996 African Nations Cup and subsequent sporting events; and (b) active creation of new symbols of unity like the national anthem and flag.

Sporting Events

Sporting events like the 1995 Rugby World Cup (RWC) helped create a new narrative of what it means to be South African. While in the past rugby was viewed and used as a sport to advance the interest of the white minority, by the end of the RWC, images of the new President of the Republic of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, and Springbok (South African rugby team) captain, Francois Pienaar, standing together wearing the same Number 6 green jerseys came to symbolise the soft-power effect of sport in South Africa.³⁶⁴

Subsequent sporting events like the 1996 African Cup of Nations' victory by Bafana-Bafana (South African national football team) in South Africa, led by a white South African captain, Neil Tovey, again with Nelson Mandela present, are testaments of the soft-power techniques used. Events such as this would further show how South African post-apartheid political leaders, especially Nelson Mandela, would leverage sports to gain soft-power for future government works and policies.³⁶⁵ This approach of using soft-power to 'unite South Africans' would continue even into the late 2000s as exemplified by South Africa's hosting of the FIFA Football World CupTM in 2010.

Creation of Unitary National Anthem and Flag

The adoption of new symbols of unity such as the South African flag and national anthem did not just arise from the higher echelons of power (i.e. political parties) but included ordinary civil servants like Frederick Brownell (State Herald), who

designed the new South African flag. And in the case of the South African national anthem, it was a compromise between the original 'NkosiSikelel' iAfrika' written by Enoch Sontonga in 1897 and 'Die Stem van Suid-Afrika' composed by C.J. Langenhoven in 1918.³⁶⁶

Divergent Points and Defining Major Power Dynamics

The first half of this chapter began by outlining key historical events and defining certain key soft-power events like the creation of a national flag and anthem, the following segment will outline how such events were necessary in order to foster positive power dynamics. The power dynamic in question first relates to 'moral capital'. While the apartheid government and rule came to be reviled and rendered obsolete by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and other forces in the late 1980s, one of the greatest weapons or powers gained by post-Apartheid government of the ANC was moral capital which Kane describes as 'moral prestige – whether of an individual, organisation or a cause – in useful service.'³⁶⁷

This capital was best exemplified by the Nelson Mandela Presidency, which received much international and local support premised on the late president's moral capital. This aspect of power hinges on the fact that society, first voters and then non-political actors, trust government or non-governmental institutions. This form of power has been cited as being needed for building trust among society or institutions.³⁶⁸ It hinges on citizens' ability to trust that government, civil service or business entities will do things for their best interest, and would not simply take them for granted.

As part of moral capital, the wisdom of the late president, Nelson Mandela, to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, should be acknowledged. The TRC, established through the 1995 Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, was aimed at a process whereby victims and perpetrators discussed the harm that perpetrators of apartheid crimes caused, towards obtaining the victims' forgiveness.

Divergent Points due to Non-moral Capital

The post-apartheid South African society was initially characterised by the national government and political leaders being the primary custodians of both moral and non-moral capital. However, as South Africa entered its second decade of democracy, numerous signs of the bonds between citizens and political institutions (government and political parties) were breaking down. Some cite the declining number of eligible citizens who are not voting, service delivery protests, and growing number of concern about the enrichment of politicians at the expense of citizens, failure of government institutions to deliver quality education and health services, and other problems that create distrust in government authority.³⁶⁹

Second Power Dynamic

The second power dynamic that exists within the post-apartheid society is a two-fold one: namely, that of capital/financial resources and governmental power in the form of public policy.

- Capital/financial resources: While political power might have become more democratised, post-1994 elections and period, many commentators point out that financial or capital power still resides with white minority business and middle class. While this understanding of power has greatly been challenged by the ascent of a black middle class, the nature and ability of this middle class to effect wider socio-economic development has cast much doubt on whether white financial capital was affected in any manner, post-1994.³⁷⁰
- Public (government) policy: Government power, post-1994, has largely resided in its ability to do one of two things: Firstly, create/formulate socio-economic policies to advantage; or (b) attempt to improve the material condition of black (Africans in particular), key among which has been Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), which later became Broad-Based BEE or Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), and other national laws/policies. Secondly, utilise national resources gained from individual and businesses' tax to affect socio-economic change, that is, build state-provided houses, invest in educational facilities and resources.

Divergent Points due Capital/Financial Resources and Public Policy

The inability to create a democratised form of shared capital/financial resources has meant that relations between white and black South Africans are not relations of equals. With financial resources still being the preserve of white South Africans, unequal power relations still characterise the working, living and even social environment.³⁷¹ The inability to ensure that blacks (Africans in particular) are able to share in the riches of the country means that they still depend largely on the ability of the government to provide quality education at primary and secondary level.

Furthermore, poor relations between a largely white private sector and largely black government have fostered a situation where neither party trusts each other enough to work together and invest in the wellbeing of South Africa. It is for this reason that the prime characterisation of financial/capital resource exploits for many citizens now stands as the 16 August 2012 Marikana Massacre, which was a result of the inability of private capital to pay fair wages for dangerous undertakings, yet pay executive management exorbitant salaries/bonuses.

South Africa's government continued failure to deliver much needed social and economic services (e.g. housing, poor electricity services, healthcare), crime problems and non-conviction of corrupt individuals, and the inability of the post-1994 to deliver much needed services, have created a growing situation where citizens no longer believe that government agencies and departments have their best interest at heart.

Perspective Box: Democracy

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa is legally free of racially constructed legislation • The South African state has pursued processes to ensure that everyone has a voice • South Africa's democratic institutions and culture is relatively well entrenched and developing • The country has visible and known symbols that make it a multi-cultural nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plight of South Africa's African and coloured population seems not to be getting better • There is no visible black middle class being developed, beyond a small clique of well-connected peoples • Politics has come to be seen as a means of attaining better socio-economic standings • There is a proliferation of political parties and no driving national ethos

Post-apartheid South African Society

There are many questions worth fleshing out when considering the post-apartheid South African society: Is it possible, as the democratic government continues, to grapple with numerous socio-economic challenges as more citizens are prone to move their trust from government institutions to non-governmental entities? Where do South African business, especially large private sector entities, rank in the eyes of South Africans? It is questions such as these that currently define the post-apartheid South African society. These and other questions highlight three important characteristics about the post-apartheid South African society:

Race still Matters

Despite major strides made since 1994 by both government and other role players, the unfortunate issue of race still permeates the South African society. Chapter 10 goes into a lot of detail on this issue. The recent report by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation explains that:

The relationship between race and class in South Africa paints a picture of class segregation with racial inflections. Majority of the poor continue to be black and segregated from the multiracial, urban middle class. This pattern is witnessed on the geographical landscape of South Africa, where our cities may demonstrate increasing racial integration, but townships and rural settlements continue to be poor, black and segregated as was intended by apartheid planners. This finding is important for racial reconciliation in South Africa and points to the need to address the relationship between material and social exclusion that results in the segregation of many poor black South Africans from inter-racial middle-class city spaces.³⁷²

What is important to glean from recent report of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, along such literature as that of Gumede,³⁷³ is that the post-apartheid society has yet to properly deal with the phenomenon of race at both social and economic levels. While it cannot be denied that the legal, and in some sense tangible, racism aspects began by British Imperialism and accentuated by Afrikaner nationalism have been addressed to some extent, the real effects of racial inequality and systematic racism have yet to be properly attended – Afrikaner nationalism has to do with pride in the identity of being an Afrikaner and looking down on other population groups while imperialism refers to subordination and domination by countries considered imperial powers over the countries considered to be in the so-called periphery.

Economic Democratisation/Reconciliation: A Non-event

It is also clear that the South African government has not yet properly developed economic and social policies that address youth unemployment, poor entrepreneurial support and financial assistance, non-usage of rural areas for rural development, poor spatial planning to develop township economic development, and other variables of much needed development.

More pressingly, the economic opportunities that have arisen due to South Africa's reintegration into global economy have not gone round all South Africans. Despite interventions like GEAR and the RDP, the economic development needed by the vast majority of South Africans is still a work-in-progress. If the government and the private sector are able to combine their monetary and human capital, perhaps the problem of economic development will be better addressed.

Yet, for the last twenty-one years, the defining characteristic of the post-apartheid society with regards to economic development is a society that has been unable to compete with other developing nations, create good jobs for its youth and use its natural resources to conclusively deal with poverty and inequality. This development experience, twenty years since political independence, appears similar to the development experiences of many other post-independent African countries.

Government Losing Moral or Societal Trust

One of the fast developing characteristics of a post-apartheid South Africa, especially after the 1994 elections is the phenomenon of citizens rapidly losing trust (moral and social) in majority governing party of the ANC and various government institutions, as evidenced by:

- decreasing numbers of voters voting for the ANC
- frequency of violent protests against local and national authorities/institutions, due to poor service delivery record
- ever-increasing spectre of the ANC spawning or experiencing new breakaways, for example, the United Democratic Movement (started by ex-ANC members in 1997), Congress of the People (started by ex-ANC government ministers in 2008) and, more recently, the Economic Freedom Fighters (started by former ANCYouth League leaders in 2013).

These and other examples of how citizens, whether in civil society or ordinary citizens' protests, paint a picture of a society that is deeply at odds with the majority party in power. Furthermore, it shows a picture of a society that is quickly beginning to believe that government is not the protector and agent of their socio-economic aspirations. There are also increasing signs that South Africa might be drifting further away from becoming a society that was envisaged by the liberation movement.³⁷⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted main characteristics of the post-apartheid South African society, starting with critical moments that brought about democracy in 1994. It also dealt with main socio-economic fissures and discussed power dynamics in post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter sees the post-apartheid South African society as one that is fundamentally different from the one crafted using draconian laws and policies described in Chapter 2. Yet, while the draconian laws and policies of the British Empire and National Party have been done away with in the post-1994 period, the South African post-apartheid society is one that is still grappling with the socio-economic effects of over three hundred and fifty years of systemic racism and abuse of blacks (and Africans in particular), and is yet to fundamentally change in order to be considered a just and equitable society.