Chapter 20
South Africa

Chapter Outline
- A Journey toward Reconciliation
- Thinking about South Africa
- The Apartheid State
- The New South Africa
- The Media
- In Peril or a Role Model?
Never, never, and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world.

Nelson Mandela

The Basics
South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>1,219,912 sq. km (almost twice the size of Texas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>49.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population under 15</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS infection</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Currency</td>
<td>7.36 Rand = $1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic groups</td>
<td>Black 79%; white 9.6%; coloured 8.9%; Indian/Asian 2.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>11 official, including English, Afrikaans, and 9 African languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>80% Christian, 1.5% Muslim, 15.1% None or indigenous religions, 3.7% Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative), Bloemfontein (Judicial)</td>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Jacob Zuma (2009–)</td>
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A JOURNEY TOWARD RECONCILIATION

It has been more than twenty years since Nelson Mandela (1918-) was released from prison in 1990. In the next four years, apartheid ended, the transition to a multi-racial and democratic government began, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created.

Despite the passage of time, those events, which happened in such rapid succession, have to be at the heart of any introductory chapter on South African politics. As in other chapters, we will have take our analysis back historically from the early 1990s and carry it forward to the present.

But the critical point to see about South Africa even in the third paragraph of this chapter is how far it has come in a very short time. Under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC), the country has made remarkable progress toward creating democracy, forging reconciliation among previously antagonistic racial groups, and building an advanced economy. It still has a long way to go. It may deserve high praise for laying the groundwork for a multiracial government, but it will take decades before it can even dream of having a multiracial society at peace with itself, and then, only if it is lucky.
We will not ignore either its troubled history or today’s problems at any point in this chapter. But even at this early stage, it is important to realize that South Africa has to be seen as one of the few “success stories” in comparative politics, whatever your own political viewpoint happens to be.

This chapter will not be a whitewash. South Africa faces its share of political, social, and economic problems. However, it is hard not to be impressed by how far and how fast the country has come in twenty years, which is not something we can claim for many of the other countries in Comparative Politics.

Almost everyone in South Africa -- other than die-hard Afrikaners -- pays at least lip service to racial equality. Those who do not have lost almost all of their political clout. That has not brought any of South Africa’s long-standing difficulties to a conclusion. We will emphasize the political transition in this chapter. For the longer term, however, it may be even more important that South Africa has just become the “s” of the BRICS group of rapidly emerging economies.

Perhaps most of all, it is important to stress that the transition was a political accomplishment achieved by men and women who disagreed with each and often did not like each other personally. In short, they were able to summon up the political will for change in most segments of the South African population, something we were rarely able to discuss in other chapters.

To be sure, South Africa has been hurt by the recession that began in 2008. It has a massive AIDS epidemic, which stretches its medical and financial resources far beyond their capacities. Its violent crime rate is almost certainly the highest in the world.

Those problems cannot take away from what South Africa’s people and politicians have achieved, none of which was in our wildest dreams when we decided to include it in the first edition of the book, while the transition had just begun and its outcome far from certain.

Things have progressed so far that it is safe to claim that the first phase of the transition is over. Nelson Mandela was one of a handful of charismatic leaders discussed in Comparative Politics. However, the heroic accomplishments of his years in power are a thing of the past. Mandela himself is 93 as we write. His health is failing, he has not played an active role in political life since he retired at the end of his first and only term as president in 1999, and he was too frail to appear at ceremonies honoring the one hundredth anniversary of the ANC’s founding in 2012.

The two men who succeeded him have been anything but charismatic. Thabo Mbeki (1942-) resigned the presidency after a court determined that he had, among other things, improperly sought to prosecute Jacob Zuma (1942-), who ultimately replaced him. Neither had much in common with Mandela. Unlike Mbeki, who earned graduate degrees while living in exile in the United Kingdom, Zuma grew up illiterate. Both confronted the challenges of this second phase of South African reconstruction lacking anything approaching Mandela’s extraordinary skills. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 5 and elsewhere, charismatic leaders have to “routinize” their “gift” into a set of institutions and practices that the likes of Mbeki or Zuma can use effectively. It may prove to be the case that this is one of the few areas in which Mandela and his generation fell short.
Profile

Jacob Zuma

Jacob Zuma is the third president of post-apartheid South Africa. And while very different from his predecessors Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, his arrival in power by no means involved a shift in power from one party to its opposition, which many political scientists regard as a necessary part of any successful democratization process.

Like his two colleagues, Zuma was a long-time African National Congress activist. However, he is also not part of the intellectual elite from which Mandela and Mbeki emerged. Zuma had little or no formal education and apparently learned to read and write as an adult and an activist.

Zuma inherited a country in some, but not great, trouble. The economic crisis probably hit South Africa harder than the four original BRIC countries. Whether he is responsible or not, the country has weathered the crisis. With steady growth in 2010 and 2011, the recession is almost certainly over.

Zuma is known for his skills as a bridge builder. However, it is not likely that such a non-charismatic leader can address any of the problems to be discussed in the text, including holding the ANC’s massive coalition together.

He seems all but certain to win a second term in office in 2014, and it is therefore far too early to speculate on what his legacy could be.

His tribe of origin allows a man to have multiple wives. He has been married five times (three currently), has at least twenty children, and was charged with and acquitted of rape in 2005.

THINKING ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA

The Basics

One of the best books about race and politics in the United States is Andrew Hacker’s Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal. His title is even more fitting for South Africa.

Historically, no modern country ever did more to separate the races. Although apartheid was only the country’s official policy from the late 1940s until the early 1990s, Europeans began systematically discriminating against other groups almost as soon as they established permanent settlements in the region during the seventeenth century. The society they created over the next 340 years was one that gave rise to more inequality and bred more hostility than most Americans could dream of.
Table 20.1 presents statistical data on the four major racial groups in South Africa during the final years of apartheid. Only about one in seven South Africans is white. In 1988, however, they accounted for over half of all income earned by South Africans. Their share of the national wealth was much greater.

To be counted as white under apartheid, a person had to have no “blood” from any other ethnic group. This does not mean that the white community is homogeneous. In fact, it has three main subdivisions. A majority of whites are Afrikaners—descendants of the original Dutch colonists plus settlers from Germany and France who were assimilated into Afrikaner culture. About two-fifths of the white population is either of English origin or was assimilated into their culture after moving to South Africa. Finally, there is a small Jewish population, most of which is part of the English culture. The Jews are worth noting, however, because they played a disproportionate role in the antiapartheid struggle, especially as members of the South African Communist Party (SACP).

Blacks make up three-quarters of the population. They, too, are a diverse group, as can be seen from the fact that there are nine official indigenous languages to go along with English and Afrikaans. The black share of the population will continue to grow for the foreseeable future because its birth rate far outpaces that of whites and as much as ten percent of the minority population has emigrated. Thus, current projections suggest that blacks will make up about 87 percent and whites only 6 percent of the population in 2035.

The blacks do not share the affluence of the whites. In urban areas, most live in ramshackle huts or decrepit trailers. In the countryside, few of them have electricity, running water, and any of the other basic amenities of life that whites take for granted. There has been some progress on this front, but not enough to keep the tensions mentioned above from remaining a potentially disruptive problem for the new regime.

It should also be noted that the blacks are themselves divided into tribes, which are easiest to identify along linguistic lines. Tribe is a term most western scholars frown upon and avoid but most blacks take for granted. In many cases, the Afrikaners and the English created the tribes in the first place, but they have nonetheless become a fixture in the lives of most blacks.

The very term “black” shows just how racially charged South African politics has been. In fact, both “black” and “African” are regularly used to label this part of the population. However, many whites have African roots that go back hundreds of years and believe that they,
too, are Africans. To respect their tradition -- and the keep our own prose from being too confusing -- we will use the term “African” in this broader and more inclusive way.

Almost 9 percent of South Africans are coloured which is also a euphemism for people of mixed race. Some are descendants of the Khoikhoi who lived in the area around what is now Cape Town before the British arrived. Others trace their roots to slaves who were brought to South Africa from what is now Malaysia. Most, however, owe their relatively light skins to forced sexual relations between white men and black women.

South Africa also has a small but influential Asian or “Indian” population. “Indian” is in quotes because many of their ancestors came from today’s Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as India. They are still called Indians because the subcontinent was not divided in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when most of their ancestors were brought to South Africa as indentured servants. Both terms are still used, but increasingly South Africans use the most accurate “Asian” to describe this final group.

The country is also religiously diverse. Almost 80 percent of the population, including almost all of the whites, is Christian. About 2 percent are Muslims and Hindus. The rest practice a variety of traditional religions.

Apartheid, Its Legacy, and the Stakes of South African Politics Today

When Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as president of South Africa, the country abandoned a regime that denied basic civil and political rights to more than 80 percent of its population and replaced it with one of the most open and democratic governments in the world.

At this point, it is only important that you see two things. First, apartheid was far more ruthless than any of the segregationist or “Jim Crow” laws in the United States. Second, South Africa has made remarkable progress in healing the psychological—if not the economic—wounds the new regime inherited from the architects of apartheid.

Three issues are most important in defining South African politics today. All have their some of their roots in apartheid and the way it was replaced. None seems likely to put the new regime in jeopardy, but each could pose serious problems in the not so distant future:

- Domination by a single party
- Tenuous if rapid economic growth
- Widespread accusations of corruption within the ANC

Key Questions

In other words, we will explore the same basic issues covered in the printed version of Comparative Politics: the evolution of the state, political culture, forms of political participation, the current state, public policy, and feedback. And we will consider the legacy of imperialism, economic development, and other policy issues that are central to political life anywhere in the Global South today.

However, we also have to ask five questions that are unique to South Africa:

- How could such a small minority of the population exert overwhelming control over a huge majority and maintain it for so long?
• What impact did apartheid have on the people of South Africa, majority and minority alike?
• What combination of domestic and international forces brought the regime down in the early 1990s?
• What are the new regime’s prospects either for producing a viable multiracial democracy or for redressing the remaining massive inequities?
• In other words, can South Africa get beyond Hacker’s two nations: black and white, separate, hostile, and unequal?

In addressing those questions, we will deviate a bit from the structure used in most of the other chapters on individual countries. As with Russia and Iraq, which have also recently undergone a regime change, we will have to cycle through the themes of comparative politics twice in this case by exploring the apartheid and multiracial states separately.

The Language of Race in South Africa
Under apartheid, the government codified South African law so that it had explicit definitions for what the Afrikaner elite saw as four racial groups:

- Whites—people of European origin with no trace of “other blood” in their families
- Coloureds—a grab bag category, including people of mixed racial origin but also descendants of Malaysians and others brought to South Africa as slaves, and of the Khoikhoi and other lighter-skinned people who lived in what is today’s Western Cape before the whites arrived
- Asians or Indians—the descendants of people who emigrated from what was colonial India
- Africans or blacks—everyone else whose family roots are on the continent

THE APARTHEID STATE
South Africa was one of the few countries in the Global South in which whites from the colonial powers dominated political life after independence was achieved. What’s more, the South African experience was complicated by the fact that it had two different imperial powers, Great Britain and the Netherlands.

Imperialism
South Africa’s experience with imperialism was different from that of the rest of Africa in two ways. First, it came under direct European rule two centuries before they began to colonize the continent as a whole in earnest. Second, and more important for our purposes, it had by far the largest white population, one that was well established before the European powers began their “scramble for Africa” in the late nineteenth century (See Table 20.2.).
Table 20.2

Key Events in South African History before Apartheid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1652</td>
<td>Dutch arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>British take over Cape Colony for good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1816–28</td>
<td>African wars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>British settlers arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835–40</td>
<td>Great Trek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Diamond mining begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Gold mining begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899–1903</td>
<td>Boer War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Union of South Africa formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>African National Congress formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>National Party elected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As was the case with most of Europe’s encounters with Africa prior to the eighteenth century, the Dutch were not interested in creating a full-blown colony in what became South Africa. Instead, they only wanted to establish outposts to support their growing trade with Asia that could resupply ships during their trips to and from their main trading outposts in Indonesia. The area around today’s Cape Town was ideal because of its deep harbor and mild climate. It was also sparsely populated, which enabled a small group of Dutch settlers to easily take over the region around the Cape in 1652.

For the next 150 years, there were not many Dutch colonists. A 1793 census, for instance, listed only 13,830 burghers, or free Dutch citizens, in the entire Cape Colony. Nonetheless, they spread out over most of what is the Western Cape province today. In establishing their forms and building their trading networks, they destroyed the *khoikhoi’s* pastoral civilization. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Boers (from the Dutch word for farmer) had been there for generations and had come to believe that they were in fact Africans just like the descendants of British and French migrants to North America who identified themselves as Americans or Canadians.

The Boers (now more commonly called Afrikaners) might have remained a relatively small group controlling only a part of the current South Africa had the region not become a minor battleground in the Napoleonic wars. In fact, without the events of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, there probably would not be a South Africa at all!

In 1795 the British seized the Cape Colony from the Dutch for reasons that had nothing to do with Africa and everything to do with political rivalries in Europe itself. Although it would be another eleven years before they took definitive control of the area around the cape, the
arrival of the British ignited a century of on-again, off-again armed struggles between English and Dutch forces that intensified after the British started sending settlers in 1820.

Finally in 1835, most of the Boers in the Cape Colony decided they could not stay if they were going to become second-class citizens in “their” territory and set off on the Great Trek in search of land they could call their own and farm in peace. The voortrekkers loaded their families, household goods, and slaves into wagons and headed northeastward toward what became the two Transvaal provinces under apartheid.

The regions they trekked into were far more densely populated than the Cape. Moreover, the blacks they encountered did not want to see their lands taken over and attacked the would-be settlers wagon trains in ways similar to Indian resistance against American pioneers when they headed west a few decades later. The most important skirmish occurred in 1838 at Blood River (Bloemfontein), where a vastly outnumbered group of voortrekkers circled their wagons, prayed to their God, and somehow managed to defeat their Zulu foe. The Battle of Blood River remains the most important symbol of Afrikaner resistance and solidarity.

Who Is African?

Whites in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have no trouble identifying themselves as Americans, Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders respectively, even though they are all immigrants and, in some cases, the descendants of colonizers. But they have a much harder time understanding why whites in South Africa should be allowed to think of themselves as Africans.

However, many Afrikaner and English families have been in South African longer than all but a handful of Americans or Canadians have been in North America. Australia and New Zealand were colonized much later.

On a more practical level, it is all but impossible for those millions of white South Africans—especially the Afrikaners—to move “back to where they came from” even if they wanted to.

This point is well understood by all but a handful of militant pan-Africanists in South Africa today.

By 1840 the voortrekkers were well established in their new homeland. Later in the decade, another community was established by Boers who left Natal on the east coast after it became a British colony as well.

Tensions between the British and Dutch did not disappear, however. In 1867 and 1886, vast deposits of diamonds and gold were discovered in the area around Johannesburg and Pretoria respectively. Thousands of English and black workers were transported to these boomtowns. Finally, in 1895, the British governor of the Cape Colony, Cecil Rhodes—the founder of the De Beers Company whose estate funds Rhodes scholarships—called on the English workers to rise up against the Dutch.

After four tense years, Paul Kruger, the president of the Boer Republic, declared war on the British in October 1899. Although their forces were outnumbered by more than five to one,
the Afrikaners fought tenaciously. The British responded with brutality of their own, creating the world’s first concentration camps where at least twenty thousand civilians died.

Finally, the two sides agreed to a treaty in 1902. The Boer Republic ceased to exist when the Transvaal and the Orange Free State became British colonies in 1906 and 1907. In 1910, all of the previously separate territories were united as the Union of South Africa, which was a dominion of the British Empire whose combined administration was dominated by whites.

Apologists for the South African regime argued it was democratic. They claimed, too, that blacks benefited from the new dominion status because they lived better than Africans elsewhere on the continent (see Table 20.3).

Such claims should not obscure a far more important point. If South Africa was a democracy at any time before 1994, it was a democracy for the few. Whites never made up more than twenty percent of the population, yet they controlled the state. They also were far better off than the rest of South Africa’s population. The data most favorable to the regime showed that whites were at least five times wealthier than blacks, and most statistical measures show that the gap between them was much, much wider.

Racial discrimination was a fact of life. The whites retained existing policies toward blacks, coloureds, and Asians. Only in the region around Cape Town could a small number of coloureds and an even smaller number of blacks vote. One of the Union’s first acts was a 1913 law that barred blacks from buying land outside of “reserves” or land set aside for them that were not terribly different from American Indian reservations. Apartheid, per se, did not become official policy until after World War II, but black life was already harsh at best.

Politics in the first half of the twentieth century was for all intents and purposes a struggle between the English and the Afrikaners at the all but total exclusion of blacks, coloureds, and Asians. To make a long and complicated story short, Afrikaner resentment toward English economic and cultural domination grew. English remained the official and dominant language, and English speakers were much better off economically even though there were more Afrikaners. If anything, the Afrikaners’ status worsened—as, for instance, when the largely English mine owners decided to replace their largely Afrikaner workforce with blacks who would work for far lower wages.

Afrikaners channeled their anger through two main organizations. The first was the National Party. During the interwar years, this party normally came in second behind the more moderate South African Party and later, the United Party, which recruited support from both the Afrikaner and English communities. The other was the smaller, secretive, and more militant Broederbond (Band of Brothers). Membership in it was open only to Protestant men and then only by invitation. Ostensibly, it existed to promote the Afrikaans language, Afrikaner culture, and Calvinist doctrine. By 1949, it had become the primary source of leaders for the National Party and the apartheid state.

World War II was a major watershed for Afrikaners. During the 1930s their racism had deepened to the point that many Afrikaner leaders supported Nazi Germany. Some of them were arrested during the war for doing so. Because of that pro-German sentiment, South Africa did not institute a draft, and its volunteer army did not serve outside of Africa. Nonetheless, the war deepened Afrikaners’ resentment toward the English and brought their community closer together.
The National Party won the 1948 election and came to power for the first time with a majority of its own and formed a government led by Prime Minister Daniel Malan. It then started passing the apartheid legislation we will examine shortly. The “Nats” remained in power until the creation of the multiracial democracy in 1994.

It is hard to overstate how brutal and repressive the National Party was. At a time when most other countries were granting their racial and ethnic minorities civil rights and political freedoms, South Africa went in the opposite direction. Conditions for the majority of South Africans worsened in every way imaginable, including restrictions on where they could live, what they could study, and what jobs they could hold. Needless to say, no non-whites were allowed to participate in political life “inside the system.”

Day of the Covenant/Day of Reconciliation

Since 1838, Afrikaners have celebrated December 16 as the Day of the Covenant. Because they were able to kill thousands of Zulus and suffer only a single casualty (a wounded hand) at the Battle of Blood River, they were convinced that their victory was a sign that they were God’s chosen people—superior to the blacks and later justified in establishing apartheid.

In an equally symbolic move, the new government changed the name of the holiday to the Day of Reconciliation in 1994. Four years later, a new monument to honor the Zulus was unveiled next to the one the Afrikaners had erected to celebrate their heroes.

As a government spokesperson put it on December 16, 1994, it was time for South Africans to stop glorifying the ways they had killed each other in the past and realize that they could settle their disputes peacefully.

Political Culture and Participation: Democracy for the Few

Under apartheid, South Africa had two white subcultures. Both shared an unquestioned assumption that whites were superior to blacks and therefore should rule. However, there were important differences between the value systems of most Afrikaners and of most English South Africans.

The majority culture was, first and foremost, Dutch. However, it was not the same as the one we find in the Netherlands today, which is among the most open-minded in the world. Rather, Afrikaners tended to be provincial and, in the minds of some, intolerant, largely because they had been cut off from the liberalizing trends that swept Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Their experience in South Africa itself made generations of Afrikaners even more intolerant and conservative. For two hundred years, rural Afrikaners eeked out a marginal livelihood from a less than hospitable land, which turned them into a version of what in the United States were lauded as rugged individualists who succeeded because they asserted their superiority over the land and the people they encountered.

The most important of the rightward shifts in Afrikaner culture occurred following the Battle of Blood River. The victory convinced them that it was God’s will for them to live in rural and pious communities where they could rule over the inferior “descendants of Ham.”
But Afrikaners also felt threatened by the English. The Great Trek was undertaken in the first place because many Boers felt British rule prevented them from living in accordance with their beliefs. The British then treated them brutally during the Boer War. Finally, the British came to own and run the mines and other industries, even in Afrikaner-dominated areas.

The Afrikaners’ rather diffuse values crystallized into support for apartheid between the two world wars when a group of Afrikaner intellectuals combined political and theological values into an ideology that had a lot in common with Nazism. According to James Barry Munnik Hertzog, who founded the National Party in 1914 and became its first prime minister a decade later, Afrikaners had to purify themselves to defeat the English. The early National Party politicians did not pay much attention to the blacks for the simple reason that they had no political party and therefore posed next to no political or economic threat.

It is hard to underestimate the impact of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is still sometimes referred to as “the National Party in prayer.” Between the wars, Dutch Reformed clergymen argued over and over again that the Afrikaner volk needed first their own church and then their own society to escape British tyranny in all its forms. This led them to join the more extreme politicians and the Broederbond (membership in these groups, of course, overlapped significantly) in demanding power for Afrikaners.

As the years wore on, the object of their scorn began to shift from the English to the blacks. The likes of Malan argued the Afrikaners could be free to develop their own society and culture only if they enforced a strict and total separation of the races. They rode that belief to power in 1948 with a narrow majority of eight seats.

We do not know just how widely or deeply the commitment to separate development and black inferiority was held. But all the signs are that the new policies they introduced were popular indeed, especially among the poorest and least-educated segments of the Afrikaner population.

The minority English were somewhat more tolerant. English settlers had arrived in South Africa later, when liberal and democratic values had put down deeper roots in their country of origin.

But make no mistake. With the exception of a handful of Marxists and some unusually progressive liberals, English speakers supported at least the basic principles of apartheid for two reasons. First, most felt that the Africans were not “ready” to govern themselves, an attitude shared with many British colonists around the world. Second, and in the long run more important, they stood to lose their economic power should the country ever adopt majority rule.

The journalist Allister Sparks summed up the situation and the ties between the two white subcultures succinctly and powerfully just as apartheid was beginning to unravel:

White South Africans are not evil, as much of the world believes. But they are blinded by the illusion they have created for themselves that they live in a white country in Africa, that it belongs to them by right and to no others. It is this which makes South Africa’s race problem so much more intractable. Prejudice is there, to be sure. But that is only part of it. The other part is a power struggle for control of a country, between a racial minority long imbued with the belief that its divinely ordained national existence depends
 Participation and Elections

In the mid-1960s, Leonard Thompson described the South African party system as having a right and a center but not a left. From 1909 on, electoral life had pitted an ethnocentric Afrikaner party against one or more competitors who tried to find a middle ground by appealing to English voters as well.

The election of 1948 brought the National Party to power. It then won every election until 1994, when all blacks, Asians, and coloureds could vote for the first time.

The party held on to power often without winning a majority at the polls. Thus, in 1961, it won 105 of 156 seats despite getting only 46 percent of the vote. It could win so many more seats than votes because South Africa used the same first-past-the-post electoral system as Britain, which routinely turns a small plurality of the vote into an overwhelming parliamentary majority. The effects of the system were magnified by the unusual demographics of the South African electorate. First, it was small. Fewer than 800,000 people voted in those 156 constituencies or an average of just over 5,000 each (by contrast, a typical U.S. House of Representatives district has more than 500,000 voters). Second, because the English population was concentrated in a few areas, there were few truly competitive districts. Overall, seventy candidates for the 156 seats “won” after running unopposed.

There were opposition parties. The United Party got almost 300,000 votes and won forty-nine seats that same year. It appealed primarily to moderate Afrikaners and to the bulk of the English-speaking electorate. It was also in a difficult position. Although it opposed the harshness of apartheid, it did not favor getting rid of it altogether. Indeed, like all South African centrists over the years, it did not offer a credible alternative to the right on either apartheid or the other policies that mattered to voters.

Table 20.3
Key Events during the Apartheid Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Election of National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Adoption of Freedom Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Sharpeville Massacre</td>
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Loud but powerless opposition came from the Liberal and Progressive parties, which together won almost 15 percent of the vote. However, because of the electoral system, they elected only two members of Parliament (MP) in 1961. And most of the time they could count on getting only one—the Progressives’ Helen Suzman, who was a lonely voice arguing against apartheid from “within the system” for many years.

We can all but ignore the public opinion and political participation of the vast majority of the South African population. They were legally denied almost all civil rights, which meant that their opinions and actions did not matter.

Most blacks understood their plight and did not even try to take part in political life. There was, however, a small, mostly middle-class opposition that tried to find a niche between participation in an electoral process that they could not be part of and revolution.

Two such groups bear at least a brief mention here. We will, of course, return to them both in more detail shortly when we consider why apartheid collapsed.

First were the communists who began by organizing whites in the mines and factories during the interwar years. Because white manual laborers’ jobs were being taken over by blacks, the party did not strongly support racial equality at first. By the 1940s, however, a combination of shifts in the world communist movement and its own new, mostly Jewish leadership led it to the forefront of the opposition to apartheid. The Party was banned by the new government in 1950 and had a limited impact while operating underground after that.

The ANC was the most important of the largely black-based organizations. Formed in 1912, it initially endorsed the nonviolent resistance of the Indian Congress on which it was modeled. But with the emergence of its Youth League (whose members included Mandela) in the 1950s, it adopted the more militant Freedom Charter in 1955 and opened a Defiance Campaign to resist apartheid. Although the ANC was nominally legal, the regime continually harassed it. Among other things, the authorities tried to prevent the meeting at which the Freedom Charter was adopted.

At the end of the 1950s, many of its younger leaders came to doubt the effectiveness of nonviolence. The last straw for them came with the Sharpeville Massacre on March 21, 1960.

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3 This was not a coincidence. Mahatma Gandhi spent the first twenty years of his career as a lawyer and organizer of Asians in South Africa. See Chapter 12 on India.
when government troops fired on marchers at a peaceful rally held by another organization, killing at least sixty-seven. In its aftermath, all the leading ANC and other leaders were arrested.

The next year, the ANC reluctantly decided to approve using violent tactics and formed Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) to wage a guerilla struggle. It, too, was quickly thwarted, and the regime used the pretext of violence to ban the ANC and re-arrest most of its leaders. Some, like Mandela, would spend the next quarter century in prison. After Sharpeville, blacks and their allies could no longer press their political demands legally, so we can defer further discussion of their involvement until the section on the new South Africa.

The State
Like India, South Africa “inherited” traditional parliamentary institutions from its British colonial masters. These bodies and practices were laid out in the Union of South Africa Act, which the country used as its constitution from 1910 to 1984. That year, the leadership adopted a new constitution for a Second Republic that, paradoxically, was designed to solidify Afrikaner control while giving the appearance of more democracy.

It was a large and powerful state. By 1980 it employed over 30 percent of the white workforce. And as we will see in this section and the one on public policy that follows, it was responsible for everything from state security to economic development.

Parliamentary Institutions
South Africa became less democratic over the course of the National Party’s forty-six years in power in two ways. First, the executive gained power at the expense of the legislature and other bodies that elsewhere provide for democratic accountability. Second, as we will see in the next section, the regime increasingly relied on its security services to keep its opponents at bay.

Prior to 1984 power was vested in a bicameral, all-white parliament. As in Britain, its majority party or parties formed the government by naming the prime minister who chose the rest of the cabinet. The government stayed in power as long as it retained the support of that majority. Some minor changes were made when South Africa quit the British Commonwealth in 1961 and formally adopted its own constitution. These changes were mostly cosmetic, such as replacing the powerless governor general, who supposedly represented the British Crown as head of state, with an almost equally powerless president. (See Table 20.4.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prime Minister/President</th>
<th>Started Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Malan</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes Strijdom</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendrik Verwoerd</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By the late 1970s, however, the leadership felt it had to respond to growing pressures on the state from outside parliament. Therefore, Prime Ministers B. J. Vorster and P. W. Botha took steps to strengthen executive authority. Botha, for instance, replaced the partially elected Senate with a State Council appointed by the prime minister.

In 1983, the parliament adopted a new constitution that restructured parliamentary institutions. The traditional, British-style dual executive was abandoned in favor of a single state president, who was chosen by an electoral college. The president’s term was the same as the Parliament’s, but he could not be removed through a vote of confidence.

As a sop to international public opinion, the new Parliament had three houses—one each for whites, coloureds, and Asians. However, all real power was lodged in the whites-only executive and its house of Parliament. Most coloureds and Asians recognized that these institutions were shams and boycotted subsequent elections. Blacks were excluded altogether.

In practice, the presidency became the most powerful institution for the same reasons it did in France after 1958 or Russia after 1991. The president was the one politician with a national mandate, which gave him more exposure and de facto power than earlier prime ministers. Further, it allowed Botha and, later, F. W. de Klerk to transfer more and more power to the State Security Council.

The Repressive Apparatus

It would also be a mistake to think of the South African state as a whites-only version of a Western democracy. Especially from the mid-1970s on, it survived in large part because it developed a massive, ruthless, and effective police state led by civil servants who came to be known as securocrats.

In the 1970s white South Africans suffered two setbacks. First, when Richard Nixon resigned the U.S. presidency in 1974, South Africa lost its most loyal ally. Second, revolutions in Angola and Mozambique replaced Portuguese colonial rulers with radical governments who joined with others to form the “front line states” on South Africa’s borders giving the ANC bases much closer to the country from which to operate.

In response, the parliament passed the 1982 Internal Security Act, which created the National Security Management System headed by the State Security Council. This was a powerful body whose membership included the top cabinet ministers and the heads of the many police and military security units. It defined security as broadly as possible terms by giving the securocrats jurisdiction over everything that could potentially threaten the regime in the short or long term.

In the eyes of most observers, the council overshadowed the cabinet as the main decision-making body. And because it was extra-constitutional, there were few ways MPs could hold it accountable, had they been interested in doing so which, of course, they were not.
As hard as it may be to believe, as with the KGB in the Soviet Union in the late 1970s, the securocrats were not the most reactionary members of the South African elite. Many realized that they could not continue to stay in power through force alone and urged some reforms, such as allowing blacks to form unions as long as they were not political. But few people realized the importance of those reformist ideas at the time, because their most visible response to the opposition was to step up repression in ways that made any lingering thoughts that this was a democratic regime absurd.

Public Policy Under Apartheid

In its first years in power, the National Party passed a number of laws that formalized what had been only partially spelled out in the statute books before then. As would be the case throughout its time in office, the party often justified its actions in other terms, most frequently anti-communism. Nonetheless, the party’s primary motivation was to complete and formalize the separation of the races that had been common practice for generations. The most important of the laws were the:

- Population Registration Act (1950), which defined all people as members of one of the four racial groups.
- Group Areas Act (1950), which regulated the sale of property across racial lines.
- other acts passed from 1936 through the mid-1950s gradually took away the rights of blacks to live in “white” areas and authorized their forcible) resettlement.
- Prohibition of Mixed Marriages (1949) and Immorality (1950) acts, which banned sexual relations across racial lines.
- Suppression of Communism Act (1950), which outlawed the SACP and allowed the state to ban individuals from political life. It and subsequent acts were later used as justification for banning the ANC as well.
- Bantu Authorities Act (1951), which removed anti-regime “chiefs” in “tribal” areas and replaced them with government-appointed ones.
- Native Laws Amendment Act (1953), which allowed only blacks who had been born there to legally live in urban areas.
- Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953), which provided legal justification for separate, segregated facilities.
- Extension of University Education Act (1959), which prohibited Africans from attending the three major universities that had previously enrolled some black students.
- Bantu Homeland Constitution Act (1971), which allowed for the creation of nominally independent black homelands.

The state also rigidly enforced pass laws, which required blacks who moved from the homelands to the cities in search of work to carry what amounted to an internal passport whether or not they had the legal privilege to live in white areas. Employers used the laws to enforce labor discipline because any worker who was fired would have his or her passbook changed and would lose the right to visit, let alone live in, an urban area. Passbook checks and arrests were random and arbitrary, thereby instilling fear and uncertainty in the black community. Each year an average of 100,000 Africans were arrested and either jailed or sent back to the homelands for pass law violations. Sometimes the state used the laws to ban known opponents and troublemakers.
In urban areas, the government began forcibly relocating township dwellers in 1954 when it flattened the Johannesburg suburb of Sophiatown, where Tutu had been raised. Its sixty thousand residents were forced into a new slum that would later be known as Soweto (short for South Western Townships). Some 3 million people had been uprooted by the end of the 1980s.

The authorities stopped using overtly racist rhetoric after 1958, claiming instead that they were seeking the separate development of each community. Although this new language often seemed more benign to outsiders, the state’s policies and actions were just as brutal as they had been in the early years of apartheid.

The underlying rationale was that if the races were to develop separately, they should live separately or at least as separately as the economy permitted. Thus, areas of rural South Africa were set aside as homelands for blacks and supposedly granted a degree of self-government. In practice, these areas -- pejoratively known as bantustans -- occupied the 13 percent of the land that the whites did not want for themselves, could not economically support their residents, and had governments that were puppets of the National Party.

This shift toward a language of separate development assuaged some of whatever guilt Afrikaners felt and slightly improved the image of the regime abroad. Under the last two presidents, Botha and de Klerk, a few of the least important racial laws were eliminated without undermining the basic premises of apartheid. The arrogance and racism of those beliefs were graphically summarized by Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd (1901–66) in explaining why they had to keep control of the bantustans:

_There is nothing strange about the fact that here in South Africa the guardian in his attempts to uplift the Bantu groups who have been entrusted to his care must in various ways exercise supervision over them during the initial stage._

_Import Substitution from the Right_

Left-wing scholars insist that apartheid was far more than a racist policy. In addition, they claim it dramatically altered the distribution of wealth and power in South African capitalism in ways that mostly benefited Afrikaners.

When the National Party came to power, most Afrikaners had been left behind by the industrial development led by the English. Many were actually worse off than they had been earlier because of the declining role of agriculture and the use of cheaper African labor in the mines and factories.

For most Afrikaners, however, political power also brought economic power. Although they were anything but left wing, they pursued policies much like the import substitution that was used early on in many countries with left-of-center governments in the Global South.

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The South African industrial revolution began when World War II cut off access to the imported industrial goods its middle class wanted. After the war, the National Party government decided to continue the practice of import substitution and to support the development of South African–based industries, especially those owned or operated by Afrikaners.

By the 1970s, the nation had no choice but to develop the economy on its own. As we will see, the international community gradually distanced itself from South Africa. Although sanctions and the corporate withdrawals were never complete, South African businesses and consumers increasingly had to meet their own needs which, in turn, led to their reliance on a highly interventionist state.

It used its control over the Bantu Administration Boards to keep the costs of black labor down and thus encouraged foreign investment. It also actively encouraged an Afrikaner capitalist class by, for instance, shifting its accounts to banks they owned and awarding firms the owned contracts to rewrite school textbooks. The government also used taxation and other levers to encourage joint ventures between traditionally English-dominated firms and Afrikaner ones. Overall, the state’s share of overall investment grew to a high of 37 percent in 1992.

The government erected high tariffs and other barriers to imports and plowed the profits from the sale of gold, diamonds, and other exports into industrial development. Thus, it set up parastatals (state-controlled companies) such as ISCOR (steel), ESKOM (electricity), and SASOL (other forms of energy).

The strategy worked. The growth rate was quite high into the 1970s. Foreign investment flowed into the country. Major industrial firms from Europe, North America, and Japan all established subsidiaries, although the Japanese had to be declared honorary whites to do business in South Africa. Perhaps most important of all politically, the Afrikaners prospered. No longer were they among the poorest and least-educated white populations in the world. Instead, they enjoyed lifestyles not terribly different from those of most Europeans or English-speaking South Africans.

At this point, two problems surfaced, both of which begin to reveal the weak points of apartheid that helped do it in. First, black trade unions were formed, which drove the price of labor up and hence reduced the attractiveness of doing business in South Africa in many industries. Second, as a result of a worldwide antiapartheid movement, foreign investment declined, and some firms pulled out altogether. Neither change dealt the economy a crushing blow, but the economy stagnated in the early 1980s and suffered a limited, but real, decline in the second half of the decade.

The economic changes led to an intriguing contradiction that left-wing analysts, again, are convinced contributed heavily to the end of apartheid. As industrialization progressed and more and more Afrikaners attained middle-class status, they had no choice but to employ African workers, even though the apartheid laws banned Africans from living in the urban areas where the factories were located. The Afrikaners thus tacitly allowed a system of temporary migration of black workers, enforced using the pass laws and more, which, as we will see, only served to indirectly heighten opposition to the regime.
THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

On 2 February 1990, President F. W. de Klerk opened the new session of the National Assembly with a political bombshell:

*The prohibition of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, the South African Communist Party and a number of subsidiary organizations is being rescinded. The government has taken a firm decision to release Mr. Nelson Mandela unconditionally.*

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Profile

**F. W. De Klerk**

Early in his career, no one would have predicted that F. W. de Klerk would be one of the architects of the end of apartheid. His family had been involved in National Party politics from the days of Paul Kruger in the 1910s. His uncle was a leading architect of apartheid, and his father was a senator.

De Klerk earned a law degree in 1958 and was slated to begin a career as a professor of law in 1972 when he was first elected to political office. In 1978, he was named to his first cabinet post. In 1986, he became leader of the National Party in Parliament. In that position, he was part of the group that convinced P. W. Botha to step down as president. De Klerk succeeded him and almost immediately gave his famous speech ending the ban on the ANC and announcing Nelson Mandela’s release from prison.

De Klerk and Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for their efforts in the transition. De Klerk resigned as deputy president in 1996, took the National Party into opposition, and retired from active political life (www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1993/klerk-bio.html).

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The Hurting Stalemate

Apartheid always had its opponents. Some, like the predominantly English-speaking liberals, tried to reduce discrimination by working inside the system. Because blacks could not vote and had no civil rights, there were no “inside the system” options open to them. Therefore, most black activists and their allies had no choice but to be revolutionaries of one form or another.

Neither group of opponents had much of an impact until the mid-1980s. Indeed, most observers assumed at the time that the apartheid state would not face a major challenge anytime soon. It did not seem to be quite as strong as the Soviet Union, but few people—including the two of us—expected either to disappear.

In retrospect, it was probably just a matter of time before apartheid collapsed. Although repression could keep the state in place and make it seem invincible, the National Party

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*Cited in Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*, 213.*
government was fighting a losing battle. If nothing else, the numbers were stacked against it. In the 1960s more blacks were born than there were whites of any age. Once some cracks in white and Afrikaner unity appeared, apartheid collapsed remarkably quickly, though not in the same ways or for the same reasons that communism did in Eastern Europe.

Rather, change became possible because the two sides realized that they had reached what students of conflict resolution call a mutually **hurting stalemate** in which each side comes to twin conclusions. It can continue to fight and might conceivably win someday, but the costs of continuing the struggle would far outweigh any conceivable benefits. A hurting stalemate does not necessarily lead to successful negotiations, as the continued tensions between the Israelis and the Palestinians attest, but it does make such talks possible.

It is safe to say that such a stalemate had been reached in South Africa long before negotiations began in earnest in 1989. The moment was eventually seized because remarkable leaders, most notably Mandela and de Klerk, took the political risk of gradually bringing the ANC and the National Party together.

As Mandela himself put it,

> *It was clear to me that a military victory was a distant if not impossible dream. It simply did not make sense for both sides to lose thousands if not millions of lives in a conflict that was unnecessary. It was time to talk.*

### The Sources of Resistance

Resistance to apartheid came from five main sources, each of which gained strength in the 1980s.

In the long run, the liberals were the least important. Nonetheless, there were some crusading moderates who occasionally dented apartheid’s armor, like the journalist David Wood, who broke the story about Steve Biko’s execution (see below). In all likelihood, they had the greatest impact internationally as people of good faith who demonstrated to opinion leaders in Britain and the United States that apartheid was unacceptable and that there was a non-revolutionary alternative to it.

Second were the churches. As in the American South during segregation, one of the few jobs an educated black could aspire to was the clergy. And because the Anglican (Episcopal in the United States) and some of the Calvinist churches were part of worldwide denominations, their African ministers gained a degree of international exposure that was denied other blacks.

Two names stand out. The coloured Dutch Reformed pastor, Alan Boeszak, was a major force attacking the immorality of apartheid until his own involvement in an affair forced him to resign from the clergy and destroyed his political credibility. More important to this day is Tutu, who was named Anglican archbishop for South Africa in 1989 and who won the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. The very naming of a black to head the Anglican Church was a political act. In addition, Tutu is a remarkable and charismatic man who would have been seen as one of the world’s great leaders of our time had he not had to share the limelight with Mandela.

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6 Cited in Waldmeier, *Anatomy of a Miracle*. 94
Profile
Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu grew up in a middle-class family by black standards. His father was a teacher, which was the younger Tutu’s first career as well. He came to the ministry relatively late, being ordained as an Anglican priest at the age of twenty nine. Much of his first fifteen years in the ministry was spent either teaching or engaging in further study.

He rose through the ranks of the church hierarchy quite quickly, having been named bishop of Lesotho in 1977 and secretary general of the South African Council of Churches in 1980. Nine years later he became Anglican archbishop for all of South Africa after winning the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. Tutu is widely respected at home and abroad for his moral courage and the compassion with which he as always treated his adversaries.

In 1996, he retired from his position in the church to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Tutu spent much of his time building the case against apartheid abroad and was a scholar in residence at the Carter Center at Emory University in Atlanta in the months after presenting Mandela with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report (www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html).

Third was the loosely organized and largely spontaneous Black Consciousness movement, which probably did the most to galvanize opposition in the African community in South Africa itself. It was inspired by Steve Biko (1952–77) and burst on the political scene in 1978. Biko had dropped out of medical school in the late 1960s to create an organization that could inspire a sense of identity, pride, and power among young Africans. He was part of a generation of students educated at segregated universities who were unwilling to put up with apartheid and who sought to organize younger, less-educated people in the townships. His supporters claim that he was largely responsible for the uprising that swept Soweto in 1976. The next year, he was arrested, tortured, and killed, which gave the opposition yet another martyr and more first-hand evidence of the state’s repression and corruption. It also marked the first time that many average Africans came both to doubt the possibility of a gradual solution and to realize that they would have to exert their influence from outside the system.

To see the impact that the likes of Biko had, consider the following passage from Mark Mathabane’s autobiography. In it he describes a conversation with his mother about his first real awareness of the pass laws, which came a few weeks after his father had been arrested because his book was not in order.

When will Papa be back? I don’t know. He may be gone for a long, long time.
Why does he get arrested so much? Because his pass is not in order.
Why doesn’t he get it fixed? He can’t.
Why? You’re too young to know.
What’s a pass, Mama? It’s an important book that we black people must have in order always, and carry with us at all times.

I don’t have a pass.

You’ll get one when you turn sixteen.

Will they take me away, too, Mama? Like they do Papa?

Hush. You’re asking too many questions for your own good.  

Prior to the mid-1970s, a boy like Mathabane would probably have accepted his family’s predicament as an unavoidable fact of life. Young urban blacks of his day, however, found that obeying the pass laws -- along with being forced to learn Afrikaans, enduring wretched living conditions, and the like -- was no long acceptable, and they lashed out whenever and however they could.

Black Consciousness lost in the short run because the state was able to put the movement down and weather its demands. It did, however, have a dual impact that would make a difference a decade or so later. First, it demonstrated that opposition was widespread, if poorly organized. Second, it left the ANC and the groups affiliated with it as the only opposition force with enough legitimacy and a popular base for the opposition to build on.

As we saw earlier, the ANC abandoned its commitment to nonviolence after it was banned in the aftermath of the Sharpeville Massacre. From then on, it waged a guerrilla war against the apartheid state. The ANC never had much of a fighting force. However, the combination of its underground organization at home, the appeals made by its leaders in exile, and the example set by Mandela and others imprisoned for so long went a long way toward strengthening opposition to apartheid at home and abroad.

Although it was an illegal organization, the ANC was strong enough to have a significant impact inside the country by the 1980s, largely because it was able to operate through two other, legal organizations. In 1983, it helped form the United Democratic Front (UDF), a coalition that eventually numbered nearly six hundred organizations. Although the UDF was not able to coordinate and control everything at the grassroots level, the fact that it was dominated by the ANC increased support for the banned and exiled party. Less visible but perhaps even more important were the trade unions, especially the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which is still affiliated with the ANC and which successfully organized industrial workers after multiracial unions were legalized in 1985.

Finally, the apartheid state faced growing pressure from abroad. As soon as the National Party took office, the international anti-apartheid movement was launched under the leadership of an English clergyman, Father Trevor Huddleston, who had worked in South Africa for many years. In the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa faced a mounting barrage of criticism, the impact of which has never been fully measured.

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7 Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a black Youth’s Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Plume, 1986), 36.
For instance, many U.S. universities and a few major pension funds divested themselves of stock in companies that did business in South Africa but did not oppose apartheid. This led to the creation of a code of conduct drawn up by the late Reverend Leon Sullivan that many companies voluntarily adopted and that gave rise to the broader investor responsibility movement that is best known today for its efforts to produce change in corporate environmental policy.

Similarly, most international athletic authorities imposed boycotts on this sports-crazy country. Indeed, there are some pundits who argue half seriously that the inability to see their beloved Springboks play rugby or cricket did the most to convince the Afrikaners to abandon apartheid.

Although the United Nations imposed an arms embargo in 1977, many powerful governments were slow to jump on the anti-apartheid bandwagon. A number of countries did impose economic sanctions. However, the United States under Ronald Reagan and Great Britain under Margaret Thatcher were by no means among the world’s leaders.

By the same token, the end of the Cold War put significant pressure on the ANC. The Soviet Union had provided it with much of its funding and military training. When its support disappeared, the ANC and other organizations like the Palestinian Liberation Organization found themselves in a financial bind. The events of the late 1980s and early 1990s were also a crushing emotional blow to the SACP that led many of its leaders to question their commitment to revolution. In particular, its chair, Joe Slovo (1926-1995), made a remarkable turnaround to become one of the ANC’s most fervent advocates of negotiation in the early 1990s and of reconciliation with the whites before his untimely death in 1995.

It is important to note that the ANC or the Black Consciousness movement did not wholly drive the resistance, which also used tactics those of us who live in more open societies would not find either normal or acceptable. There was a great deal of random violence, including “necklacings” (immobilizing people by putting large tires around them, dousing them in gasoline, and burning them alive) of young Africans thought to be traitors to the cause. Many of these and other acts of violence were carried out by ANC factions, including Winnie Madikizela-Mandela’s (Nelson Mandela’s former wife) “football club.” Frankly, some of these incidents were little more than an opportunity to exact vengeance on personal rivals or members of other ethnic groups. On balance, however, there was surprisingly little violence from the regime’s opponents, and it is not clear how important any of it was in forcing the apartheid state to its knees.

The Way It Happened
The crackdown following the Sharpeville Massacre took a heavy toll on the resistance. The ANC in particular was in tough shape. Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and most of its other key leaders were sent to prison on the infamous Robben Island. Oliver Tambo, Slovo, and the other leaders who managed to escape imprisonment ran the movement from exile. The armed uprising began with an act of sabotage in December 1961 during the annual commemoration of the Battle of Blood River. The ANC put sharp limits on Umkhonto we Sizwe, ruling out, for instance, attacks on white civilians. The uprising was not very effective because virtually the vast majority of the fighters were captured or killed within forty-eight hours of reentering the country.
Conflict
In South Africa

From all the discussion of protest and repression in this chapter so far, it is tempting to conclude that South Africa was overwhelmed with political conflict both during and after apartheid. This is actually not the case.

The apartheid state was powerful enough to keep the lid on most protests until the Soweto uprising in 1976. Even the ANC admits that its attempts to wage a guerrilla war were mostly unsuccessful. There were a lot more protests between the mid-1970s and early 1990s than in other periods in South African history, but less than were found in many other countries in the Global South.

The same is true today, although for different reasons. Groups on both the far left and far right which are opposed to the ANC and multiracial democracy have little popular support. Instead, unlike in most other Southern countries, there is a broad-based consensus that the new regime should be supported—at least for now.

The 1970s, however, saw a marked increase in anti-system activity. In part inspired by the U.S. civil rights and black power movements, Biko and his generation organized the first university student unions and then the broader Black Consciousness movement. Biko argued that blacks had to organize themselves, starting with, as he put it, “the realization that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.”

In so doing, the two sides set off an ever escalating cycle of protests and ensuing crackdowns that continued until apartheid collapsed. At each stage through the 1980s, the government was able to defeat the protesters in the short run. In the longer term, however, repression served only to deepen opposition at home and abroad.

In retrospect, it is somewhat surprising that the government initially allowed groups affiliated with the Black Consciousness movement to organize openly and legally. Although Biko himself was banned in 1973, there were large, public protests, such as one in 1974 in support of neighboring Mozambique, which had just thrown out its Portuguese colonial rulers. As was usually the case, the leaders were arrested but the organizations they created continued their tenuous legal existence.

An uprising in Soweto proved to be an important turning point in this early phase of mass protest. It began on June 16, 1976 and was led by high school students protesting a new rule that made Afrikaans the language of instruction in black schools, which next to none of them either spoke or wanted to learn. The police fired on the crowd, killing twenty-three people according to the official figures, which was almost certainly an underestimate. More protests broke out around the country in which again, according to official figures, nearly six hundred died. (See Table 20.5.)
Table 20.5

Key Events During and After the Transition to Democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Initial discussions between the ANC and the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>F. W. De Klerk replaces P. W. Botha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Mandela released; ANC ban lifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Whites-only referendum endorses negotiations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>First elections; Nelson Mandela president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Growth, Employment, and Rehabilitation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Truth and Reconciliation Commission report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Thabo Mbeki elected president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Jacob Zuma elected president</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After that, the movement grew in two directions, both of which worked to the ANC’s advantage. First, many of the protesters left the country to join the armed struggle. Second, a decade-long “battle for the townships” began in which blacks stopped attending school, paying rent for public housing, and patronizing white businesses, in what came to be known as the “ungovernability campaign.” As noted earlier, in 1983, many of the protesters formed the UDF, which was dominated by ANC activists. The state continued to counterattack, detaining forty thousand people and killing four thousand more from 1979 on.

Meanwhile, pressure from abroad intensified. The United Nations suspended South Africa’s membership in the General Assembly in 1974, imposed a global arms embargo in 1977, and declared apartheid a crime against humanity in 1984. Demands for corporate disinvestment and sanctions imposed by individual European and U.S. governments continued to grow. By the early 1980s more than two hundred American corporations had pulled out of the country. Although many critics of apartheid complained that corporations and governments did not do enough soon enough, Chase Manhattan Bank led a number of its peer institutions in refusing to extend South Africa $24 billion in short-term loans in 1985. The next year, the U.S. government passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, which, among other things, outlawed further U.S. investment in South Africa. The European Union and most individual European countries followed suit.
Globalization

In South Africa

We generally think of globalization in terms of the spread of global markets and neo-liberalism. As we will see in the section on public policy, these forces are at work in the new South Africa. However, it makes more sense to stress how global opposition to apartheid helped bring down the regime in the early 1990s.

No one knows how to measure the impact of sanctions and embargoes. Similarly, no one in the National Party elite has been willing to say how much international pressure contributed to the party’s decision to capitulate. Nonetheless, as Archbishop Tutu pointedly asked, if sanctions were not having a major impact, why did the elite oppose them so strongly? In short, international pressure did more to change the behavior of the National Party government than it would with the Baath regime in Iraq over the next decade. This may say less about the sanctions, which were far more severe and more strictly enforced in the Iraqi case, than it does about the two regimes. Here, the key may have been that the Afrikaners were not willing to jeopardize their economic and cultural gains “just” to retain apartheid and minority rule. By contrast, however, Saddam Hussein and his colleagues were willing to risk everything to stay in power as we saw in Chapter 14.

Meanwhile, the international reputation of Mandela and the ANC soared. The regime and its apologists abroad tried to paint the ANC as communists and terrorists, but more and more people thought those claims paled in comparison with what they took to be the government’s human rights violations. Further, the ANC, Tutu, and others were able to convince people around the world that their cause was just, that they had turned to violence only because they had no other option, and that they were only attacking the South African state, not the white population as a whole.

The government knew it was in a bind and responded with political carrots and sticks.

The ill-fated 1983–84 constitutional changes were designed to undercut ANC support, as were later reforms that ended the pass laws and other so-called “petty apartheid” policies. The reform effort failed—and failed abysmally. More than three fourths of the eligible coloureds and 80 percent of the Asians, for example, boycotted the elections in which members of “their” houses of Parliament were elected. More protests followed in the wake of those elections.

In the meantime, the National Party government grew more intolerant and repressive as it became clear that the reform legislation and decrees were not having the intended effect. The infamous Bureau of State Security stepped up the repression, arresting about twenty-five thousand blacks and killing another two thousand in the late 1980s alone. It also declared a series of states of emergency while the security situation continued to deteriorate.

Negotiations

Although no one outside of the top leadership of the ANC and the government knew it at the time, secret negotiations began in 1985. While Mandela was recuperating from minor surgery, he began meeting with the attorney general. The next year, he was allowed to see former Nigerian
Relations between Mandela and his jailers improved. One day he was taken for a drive by a warder, who went into a store to buy him a soda and left the keys in the ignition. Mandela did not try to escape. Mandela’s relationship with the men assigned to guard him became so close that their chief, James Gregory, actually voted for the ANC in 1994 and was invited to his inauguration.

Meanwhile, the ANC and interlocutors for the government began holding informal “track two” meetings outside the country. Little substantive progress was made, but the participants on both sides got to know each other and saw that they actually had a lot in common personally, if not yet politically.

Things had progressed enough by 1989 for Mandela to have a face-to-face meeting with President Botha. They did not accomplish much. Instead, both refused to budge on the conditions surrounding the release of the world’s most famous political prisoner. Nonetheless, Botha later acknowledged that he considered releasing Mandela, although he publicly refused to do so until and unless the ANC renounced violence.

As is so often the case, a historical accident made a huge difference. In January 1989 the intransigent Botha suffered a serious stroke. Later in the year, his party convinced him to step down to be replaced by F. W. de Klerk.

De Klerk was no liberal. His uncle had been prime minister, and his father was one of the architects of apartheid in the 1950s. De Klerk, himself, rose through the National Party ranks because he was mostly seen as a member of its right wing. He came to power ready to make reforms that would dilute apartheid. He was not, however, prepared to give up Afrikaner control.

Nonetheless, the Afrikaners’ world had begun to change even before he took office. As early as 1986, a number of Afrikaner clergymen who were close to de Klerk began meeting with ANC leaders at their bases in Angola. The head of the Broederbond circulated a document that called for a negotiated settlement as the only approach that could ensure the survival of Afrikaner culture, although he stopped short of advocating one person/one vote. Officials, including some in the security services, then began secret, informal, and unauthorized discussions with the ANC, often brokered by leaders of the biggest South African business, the Anglo-American Corporation, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Ford Foundation. One of the most important meetings took place under the auspices of the Consolidated Goldfields Company at its Mells Park country home in England, where the ANC’s Mbeki and his white interlocutor ended their work by watching Mandela’s release from prison on television.

Although the details are still not completely known, the most powerful wing of the seculocrats apparently convinced de Klerk that a negotiated settlement including some sort of power sharing had become the government’s only viable option. Indeed, one of the most important of them, Niel Barnard, conducted many of the secret talks with Mandela and apparently played the leading role in convincing de Klerk.

Meanwhile, Mandela and the ANC had reached a similar conclusion. In particular, they understood that there would never be a resolution unless they found a way for the Afrikaners to retain their culture and, even more importantly, their dignity.
Thus, in a series of forty seven meetings in which he normally spoke in the Afrikaans he had learned in prison, Mandela kept stressing the need to share power and the fact that blacks and whites had one thing in common: they were all Africans. Meanwhile, the government permanently moved Mandela from Robben Island to a small, comfortable home, both to make meetings with him easier to arrange and to send a signal that he was being taken seriously. Mandela so appreciated his time there that he had a replica of the house built in his hometown, which served as his first retirement home.

Finally, an agreement was reached that made it possible for de Klerk to give his shocking speech to the National Assembly in 1990. Mandela was released the next day. That afternoon, he spoke to a crowd estimated at over 100,000, many of whom had never even seen a picture of the man who had not been mentioned in the South African media since his imprisonment twenty-seven years earlier.

Formal negotiations began soon afterward but did not go well. The ANC and the government were poles apart, and at first, Mandela and de Klerk did not get along well personally.

Gradually, things began to improve. The Afrikaners even discovered that they liked the communist Slovo, who seemed more like a grandfather than a guerrilla. Sometimes they found common ground on important political issues and other times on seemingly more mundane matters such as everyone’s desire to see South African sports teams competing again internationally.

In the end, it took three years for the Conference on a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) to reach an agreement. In between, there were walkouts, more repression, and an upsurge of violence, including the murder of Amy Biehl. She was a recent Stanford graduate who was helping the ANC on the transition and living in Cape Town. One day she was driving some colleagues to their homes in one of the townships when a group of angry young blacks pulled her from the car and beat her to death. We will have more to say about her legacy and her parents’ remarkable response when we get to reconciliation.

At long last, the parties agreed to an interim constitution in 1993. It called for elections in which all South African adults could vote for the first time. While thereby assuring an ANC victory, it also contained provisions that guaranteed cabinet posts to all parties that won at least 20 percent of the vote.

The ANC won in a landslide. To no one’s surprise, Mandela was chosen president and named de Klerk first deputy president. In 1996, a permanent constitution was adopted that did not retain the minority representation clauses at which point, the National Party left the coalition and de Klerk retired.

Critics were quick to point out that South Africa faced what seemed like insurmountable difficulties. Crime and violence were both at an all-time high, and economic growth was slow.

Towering above all the other problems, South Africa had to confront the enormous emotional legacy of three and a half centuries of white rule. As any American who has seriously thought about the legacy of slavery has to acknowledge, the kind of discrimination and abuse suffered by Africans left emotional scars that could not be healed with “mere” majority rule.

That legacy makes the accomplishments of the first few years of the “new” South Africa all the more remarkable. Knowing that it could not risk alienating the white population, the new
government decided to take the country in an unusual direction. Rather than seeking vengeance and the spoils of majority rule, it sought reconciliation, nation building, and consensus.

South Africa’s track record since 1994 has been as remarkable as the negotiations that freed Mandela and brought him to power. The new regime had broad-based support and even integrated whites from the old regime, including much of the security service, into the new bureaucracy. The principle of one person/one vote is more securely established than anywhere else in Africa or, for that matter, most of the rest of the Global South.

South Africa also had no trouble making the transition from Mandela to his successors even though Mbeki and Zuma lacked Mandela’s charisma and have made their share of political mistakes, as we will see shortly in the section on the state. Nonetheless, the government continues to function smoothly and enjoy massive popular support.

As we discuss those accomplishments, do not forget that the ANC “inherited” a country that was well off by African standards. It had the twenty-seventh largest population in the world and, by conventional accounting methods, was also the twenty-seventh richest. It was far more industrialized than any other country in Africa with manufacturing accounting for a quarter of its GNP. South Africa also sat atop tremendous mineral resources, including 40 percent of the world’s known gold deposits and more than half of its diamonds, manganese, and chromium.

**Political Culture**

Two key lessons stand out from the research done on democratic political culture in general. First, a tolerant culture with a strong civil society helps sustain democracy. Second, political cultures change slowly.

What South Africa shows us is that while the first conclusion may be correct, the second need not be. The dramatic shifts in less than two decades of democracy show that the core values of most people in a country can indeed change very quickly and that a government can help make that happen.

There have been few systematic studies of South African political culture. However, the impressionistic evidence plus a few recent polls suggest that the new government is doing what it can to create a participant and tolerant culture as quickly as possible. Overall, support for the national government has hovered between 64 and 70 percent between 2005 and 2007, a figure that compares favorably with any major country. But South Africans are also realists; in early 2008, almost a third of them thought that the country would experience more strife during the upcoming year (http://www.afrobarometer.org). In another 2010 poll, about three quarters of those sampled said they had confidence in the presidency, the national government as a whole, and the supreme court. The people showed less trust in such institutions as the police, but even there the level of support grew dramatically after 2006 (http://reconciliationbarometer.org).

South Africa does not seem to suffer from one of the cultural problems that exist in much of the Global South: the lack of a national identity. Indeed, one of the reasons it was so hard to find the common ground that allowed the various communities to do away with apartheid was that they all were convinced that they were patriotic South Africans. Unfortunately, each had a very different conception of what that meant.
The new government has gone out of its way to be as inclusive as possible. The constitution, for example, guarantees people the right to an education in their own language. The government has also tried to promote a sense of inclusiveness through symbolic measures that are probably more assuring than they might seem at first glance. Thus, in 1995, Mandela resisted efforts on the part of many ANC activists to ban rugby, a sport played almost exclusively by Afrikaners and seen as a bastion of their culture and a symbol of their racism. Instead of acceding to their demands, Mandela went to the 1995 World Cup final match wearing a copy of the uniform shirt of captain François Pienaar and warmly greeted the Afrikaner when handing him the winners’ trophy, an exchange that has been portrayed with reasonable accuracy in the feature film *Invictus*.

Since then, most of the sports authorities have made major progress in integrating the national teams, bringing blacks into the rugby squad and firing the coach when he resisted doing so, while including more whites into the previously almost all-black soccer team. Afrikaners we know speak with delight about taking blacks after those visits were reciprocated. One of the consequences of all this was FIFA’s awarding of the 2010 World Cup to South Africa, the first time the global sports extravaganza was held in Africa.

Inclusiveness is not just government policy. Even prior to 1990, foreign governments and private foundations had donated hundreds of millions of dollars to fund NGOs trying to end apartheid and build bridges between the communities. Typical of these is the National Business Initiative (NBI www.nbi.org.za). The organization that turned into the NBI was founded by Theuns Eloff, who is the great-great-grandson of Paul Kruger, who led Afrikaner forces into the Boer War. Eloff is a Dutch Reformed Church minister who had grown disillusioned with apartheid in the 1980s and began meeting secretly with ANC officials outside the country. When, following Mandela’s release, the negotiations bogged down and township violence escalated, Eloff and his colleagues realized they had to help people from all racial and ethnic groups find common ground. Eloff argued that only if people could find ways to cooperate with rather than shoot at each other would South Africa make it through the transition.

No one has done research on the impact of organizations like NBI. Certainly, none of them were significant enough to move the entire country toward a consensus on their own. However, it is also clear that each helped create a larger “space” in which blacks and whites can interact with each other peacefully and comfortably. Intriguingly, in 2001, this man who was once shunned by his own parishioners was named president of Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, the most prestigious Dutch Reformed seminary. Three years later, he guided it through a merger with the predominantly black North-West University where he currently serves as vice-chancellor, which is the equivalent of an American university president.

One poll conducted by Africa Barometer for the Institute for Democracy in South Africa echoes many of these anecdotes but also provides us with some concerns for the future (www.afrobarometer.org). The survey reveals a country in which blacks and whites live, think, and vote differently. But it also offers a picture of a society in which all groups are more optimistic than one might otherwise expect. Whites are a bit more supportive of core civil liberties including free speech and a free press, but a majority of both communities support all of these rights. Both cited civil liberties and freedoms as the most important characteristic of democracy. Majorities in both groups endorsed multiparty democracy and rejected anything like military rule, although the support was slightly higher among whites than blacks. Only 12
percent of whites (but, oddly, 11 percent of blacks) wanted to go back to the apartheid regime. Perhaps most telling of all, 73 percent of blacks and 63 percent of whites were convinced that South Africa would remain a democracy.

To no one’s surprise, race and ethnicity still deeply divide South Africans and will continue to do so for decades to come. This is easiest to see in the crime and violence that has wracked the country since the transition to democracy. Violent crime has always been a serious problem in the townships, where the murder rate is ten times that in the United States.

More important for our purposes was the violence centered on the “hostels,” which housed men who worked in the townships while separated from their families because of the apartheid laws. Clashes between supporters of the ANC and the IFP (see the section on political parties below) resulted in the deaths of well over ten thousand people in the first half of the 1990s. This violence reflected the frustrations of a generation that seemed consigned to permanent poverty as much as the ideological differences that have long separated the two movements.

On balance, however, no country has made as serious an attempt to bring former adversaries together in cooperative and constructive ways. There is no better evidence of this than the fact that South Africans have been called on to help calm ethnic tensions in such faraway places as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Northern Ireland, not to mention neighboring Zimbabwe, which was mired in an ongoing violent dispute as we wrote.

If nothing else, South Africa has been able to avoid the civil wars—almost all of which were rooted in issues of religion, ethnicity, or race—that have engulfed much of the Global South. Remember, too, that South Africa had a “worse” historical track record than most of those countries. Yet, somehow, it has managed to avoid the carnage that has devastated countries like Rwanda, where the majority Hutu systematically slaughtered 10 percent of the country’s population, including virtually all the minority Tutsi, in a three-month period in 1994.

Although Mandela and his colleagues get much of the credit, it is important not to understare the role played by the National Party and the white community in general. Affluent whites could have opposed the new regime or taken their money and fled, which as many as one in five of them did in the first years after apartheid ended. Today, almost all remaining whites have consciously chosen to stay and to give the new regime at least their grudging support. There are fringe elements in the Afrikaner population who want to restore apartheid and, failing that, to acquire their own independent homeland. However, such groups have minimal influence, and unless the bottom falls out of the economy or the crime and violence escalate out of control, the regime seems likely to keep that support.

**Political Participation**

The key to the “input” side of South African during the first state’s first seventeen years lies in the way people have participated in its four national elections. However, the issues and the stakes we will be seeing in this section are very different from those covered in comparable parts of almost every other chapter in *Comparative Politics*.

In most democracies, political parties at least start by basing their election campaigns on their positions on the “big issues” confronting the country. For reasons discussed in the section on the apartheid state, the most important issue was never on the electoral agenda until last few
years before the transition. And even since then, the biggest issues—reconciliation and economic growth—have not recently been on center stage because they are not very controversial at least for now. With the exception of some truly minor parties, everyone accepts the fact that South Africa is a multiracial democracy with a mixed, but basically capitalist, economy.

Though few admit it publicly, the central issue today is the role the ANC could and should play in South African politics. For the moment, the ANC is the world’s most dominant party in an open political system. It has won between 63 and 70 percent of the vote in every election since 1994 (See Table 20.6).

That figure of roughly two-thirds is important in two ways. First, it shows just how dominant the ANC has been. Despite the fact that there are signs that it may not do as well in 2014, it will take a lot for it to lose its dominant position. Second, a party needs two-thirds of the votes in the legislature to pass constitutional amendments. And, even though the ANC surpassed that total twice in the four elections, it made no significant attempt to do so—which is another sign that democracy is on reasonably firm footing. Nonetheless, we will also see reasons why some observers think that South African democracy is in some jeopardy.

Table 20.6
Elections in the New South Africa: Major Parties Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1994 (%)</th>
<th>1999 (%)</th>
<th>2004 (%)</th>
<th>2009 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkhata</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNP</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANC, African National Congress; COPE, Congress of the People; NNP, New National Party.

The African National Congress

The ANC (www.anc.org.za) did not begin as a “normal” political party. Like its Indian namesake, its original purpose was to end an unjust system by whatever means that were either necessary or possible. Unlike the Indian Congress, however, it was denied the right to pursue that goal at the ballot box. As we saw in Chapter 12, India’s Congress relied heavily on civil disobedience but also began contesting elections in the 1930s and gained valuable experience running local governments prior to independence. The ANC never had that opportunity until literally weeks before it came to power.

The ANC had to operate underground and in exile until 1990. In less than four years, it turned itself from a party of armed resistance into one that could run the new South Africa’s government. In the process, it changed dramatically. It continues to run the country today and will probably do so for some time to come.

Two reasons for that stand out.
First, it easily turned itself from a radical liberation movement into a conventional political party. It was, in fact, ideally suited to prosper in the South Africa. If nothing else, it was the only party with a track record as a multiracial organization. It also boasted Mandela, Slovo, and other leaders who had been known to South Africans for more than a generation. And because of its underground organization and role in the UDF and the unions, it had a large, if not always disciplined, organization.

The ANC turned those assets into a landslide victory in 1994, winning almost 63 percent of the vote and 252 of the 400 seats under South Africa’s provincially based version of proportional representation. Despite the economic difficulties the country encountered during his term and the fact that Mandela retired, the ANC actually increased its support slightly in 1999. And it did so again in 2004 when it surpassed the two-thirds of the seats needed to amend the Constitution. As noted above, that is something it has not chosen to do other than to slightly change the borders of seven of the nine provinces. Its total fell to just below 66 percent in 2009. However, it is hard to anticipate it losing its lock on a majority vote even if it does dip well below the two-thirds figure in upcoming election.

For example, the AfroBarometer survey in 2008-9 found that 79 percent of the entire electorate and 88 percent of the blacks identified with the ANC, by far the largest proportion to align with any one party in all of the countries covered in this book. In the most recent (and not very important) 2011 local elections, it exceeded pollsters’ expectations by winning 64 percent of the vote, although it did lose some support in the biggest cities. As a result, it had little trouble converting that support into loyalty at the polls despite dangers posed by its opposition, its internal dynamics, and the quality of its own leadership, all of which will be considered in the rest of this chapter.

Profile
Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was born in 1918. His father was a chief in the Thembu tribe but died while he was quite young. Afterward, Mandela was raised by even higher-status relatives.

Mandela studied at the all-black Fort Hare University but was expelled in 1940 for participating in demonstrations. He finished his B.A. by correspondence and earned a law degree in 1942. He was one of the first blacks to practice law in South Africa.

He joined the African National Congress and in 1944 helped form its Youth League, which moved the organization leftward. In 1952, he was elected one of its four deputy presidents.

Mandela was first arrested for treason in 1956 but was acquitted five years later. In 1964 he would not be as lucky. Sentenced to life in prison, he spent twenty-seven years in custody, the first eighteen on the infamous Robben Island.

During the negotiations with the apartheid government and later as president, Mandela was able to combine what can only be described as remarkable personal charm with a powerful commitment to equality and an unbending negotiating style to become arguably the most respected world leader of his generation (www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1993/mandela-bio.html).
Second, the party has also succeeded because it has profoundly moderated its ideology. The ANC committed itself to socialism in the 1950s and forged a long-term alliance with the Communist Party, which continues to this day. It is strong enough that the old regime was able to convince some people at home and abroad that they were one and the same. Although it took pains to deny government charges that it was itself communist, the ANC never wavered from its commitment to a more egalitarian society—until coming to power, that is.

The ANC obviously did not come to power because of its economic viewpoints. However, since 1994, poll after poll has shown that economic issues and especially inequality are by far the ones voters care about most. Thus, when the AfroBarometer pollsters asked which issues voters thought was most important, over half cited the need to improve economic conditions for the poor. No other issue was mentioned by more than fifteen percent of those sampled.

We will put off discussing the party’s new economic focus until the section on public policy. Here, it is enough to note that its acceptance of neo-liberal policies with a commitment to reducing inequality has paid off handsomely at the polls.

Despite these strengths, the ANC could face far more serious competition in the future. There are also two reasons why that could be the case. Neither is likely to hurt it in 2014 when the still popular Zuma is expected to run for and win reelection. The choice of his successor five years later could well be a very different matter.

First, there is nearly universal agreement that neither Mbeki nor Zuma come close to matching Mandela’s abilities and appeal as a leader. In other chapters, we saw that charismatic leaders often have a hard time transferring their unusual leadership skills to less dynamic leaders who have to govern through conventional institutions and practices.

That is particularly true in South Africa. There was no one with anything like his charisma to replace Mandela. Perhaps because he spent more than two decades in exile, Mbeki never developed a close emotional connection with rank and file voters. Zuma did spend the bulk of the time during the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and is very much a creature of the ANC organization. However, if nothing else, his lack of formal education makes it hard for him to develop anything like Mandela’s charm.

Instead, leadership issues that their critics think at least border on scandal have tarnished both of their terms in office. In a few paragraphs, we will see how Mbeki’s obsession with AIDS policy magnified existing hierarchical tendencies within the party, contributed to his declining popular approval, and led to his resignation several months before his second and final term was due to end. President Zuma also has a tarnished reputation. He has been accused of both corruption and rape, although his supporters claim that Mbeki manufactured both charges. Although exonerated on all counts, many think he is less than honest and, more importantly, also not a fitting heir for Mandela.

Both Mbeki and Zuma were born in 1942, which means that they are among the last members of a generation that forged the ANC’s victory from exile or underground. There is little indication that the next generation will generate anyone who could provide the kind of leadership we saw from Mandela and Tutu’s contemporaries.

In short, Zuma may prove to be a transitional leader serving until the next generation of activists is ready to hold the top offices. Whatever the uncertainties about the future leadership,
the bottom line is clear. There seems to be little chance that the ANC will be displaced as the dominant political party in South Africa for decades to come.

To complicate matters even further, the unions, communists, Youth League, and others on the left are not happy with the ANC’s acceptance of capitalism. For now, there seems to be little chance that the ANC will split and give birth to a more orthodox left wing party. But should economic growth slow and the gap between rich and poor remain wide, such an outcome should not be ruled out.

As we write, the most important problem facing the ANC is how it deals with Julius Malema, the recently suspended head of its youth wing. Among other things, he has endorsed President Mugabe in Zimbabwe and used a song from the underground days that includes the words “kill the boer.” Late in 2011, he was disciplined for bringing the party in “disrepute.” The furor over his role will undoubtedly pass. However, he and his ideas are extremely popular among young and left-wing activists who someday might decide to quit the ANC and form a new party that is truer to the ANC’s founding beliefs.

Second and related, the party’s critics point to what they consider its oligarchical, if not authoritarian, tendencies. A little over a century ago, the Italian sociologist Roberto Michels introduced what he called the “iron law of oligarchy.” As political parties and other organizations get larger, power inevitably becomes concentrated in their leadership. Oligarchy does not mean that a single individual rules or that there is no disagreement within a political party or interest group. However, if Michels and his disciples are right, it is hard to sustain democratic dynamics in a mature group with a national organization or impact. Oligarchical tendencies may be particularly pronounced in the ANC, which had to maintain something like iron discipline during the thirty years it was banned and waged its revolutionary campaign against the whites-only regime.

Oligarchical tendencies are found in almost everything the ANC has tried to do since Mandela stepped down. Here, we will focus on Mbeki’s frankly bizarre policy on AIDS because it is both important and is not one of the issues we will concentrate on in the public policy section.

By the time he came to office in 1999, there was a nearly universal, global consensus that the HIV virus causes AIDS. Then and now, anti-retroviral drugs hold out the most promise of preventing the infection from turning into a full-blown and fatal case of AIDS.

AIDS was and still is a serious problem for South Africa. It has among the highest infection rates in the world. Millions of South Africans have died, including a number of leading ANC politicians. Millions of South African children are AIDS orphans, having lost one or both parents to the disease.

For a student of political science, the interesting aspect of the AIDS issue is not the cost of the drugs—which certainly was more than the country could afford, at least until the prices for them dropped in the first decade of this century. What does matter is how Mbeki and his government responded. They began by joining the ranks of the so-called AIDS deniers and claimed that there was no link between HIV and the disease and that it was somehow foisted on Africa as a continuing impact of imperialism. Even more important for our purposes, Mbeki and his colleagues forced party leaders to adopt these far-fetched beliefs in making public policy,
which was all the more appalling when it was revealed both Mandela and Zuma lost adult children to it.

Many of Mbeki’s critics claim that his policy positions reflect his power-hungry and perhaps even paranoid personality. We have no way of knowing if those people inside and outside the ANC are right. What we can say with some certainty is that leadership under both Mbeki and Zuma has been concentrated in ways that should give those of us who embraced the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle reason for doubt.

The Inkatha Freedom Party

Among blacks, the most serious opposition to the ANC comes from Mangosuthu Buthelezi (1928–) and his Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (www.ifp.org.za). He is from KwaZulu, one of the tribal homelands created by the apartheid government, which was incorporated into the new province of KwaZulu Natal in 1994. Although the ANC leadership wanted to prevent the creation of regional and therefore ethnically based parties, Mandela and Oliver Tambo had been close to Buthelezi during their student days and understood that he was highly popular among Zulus who make up about one sixth of the South African population and comprise the country’s largest ethnic group. The various dialects of isiZulu are spoken by about half the people. The ANC therefore felt it had little choice but to authorize creation of the IFP.

In retrospect, that may not have been a very wise decision because the IFP and Buthelezi have been thorns in the ANC’s side ever since. In the 1980s, Buthelezi began informally cooperating with the authorities (it is now known that the IFP was partially funded by the security services) and was seen by conservatives abroad as a potential moderate alternative to the ANC.

Buthelezi also has a monstrous ego and resents not having been a major player in the negotiations that led to the 1994 transition. Indeed, he frequently walked out of the discussions and only agreed to IFP participation in the 1994 elections at the eleventh hour. Nonetheless, because of the power-sharing provisions for the first government, Buthelezi became minister for home affairs, a post he held until 2004.

Far more important than any positions the IFP takes is the fact that it is a regional and increasingly ethnically defined party. It wins next to no support outside of KwaZulu Natal and Zulu enclaves in Johannesburg and other metropolitan areas. And although it originally won some white and Asian support in the state (there are very few coloureds in the eastern half of the country), its electorate now is almost exclusively Zulu and amounts to only about 5 percent of the total black vote.

On balance, the IFP has mostly been a disruptive force. Its supporters were largely responsible for the political violence that afflicted the country during the first half of the 1990s. And its support has steadily declined from almost 11 percent in 1994 to less than half that total a decade later.

Most important for our purposes is the fact that the IFP is little more than Buthelezi. If nothing else, he was born in 1928 and is not likely to be politically active much longer. What’s more, he has done little to either groom a successor or build a grass roots organization.

Its future is therefore, very much in doubt.
**Congress of the People**

The debate over Zuma’s leadership did split the ANC. In 2008, a group of Mbeki loyalists founded the Congress of the People (COPE), which held its first meeting in the symbolically laden town of Bloemfontein. As Table 20.6 shows, COPE did poorly at the 2009 election, winning only 7.4 percent of the vote.

COPE defined itself as a multi-racial party that wants to break the stranglehold on power the electoral system gives the ANC. Otherwise, it supports much the same policies as the majority party but is critical of it for not delivering on its promises.

Its most visible leader was Alan Boesak, one of the most prominent early opponents of apartheid whose theological career was all but destroyed when it was revealed that he had had an extramarital affair. He left the ANC when it refused to endorse same-sex marriage and joined COPE. He left that party in 2009 beginning a flood of departures, culminating in the departure of the former SACP activist Philip Dexter in January 2012.

COPE only won two percent of the vote in the 2011 municipal elections which means that its future, too, is very much in doubt. Even if COPE does not survive, it is hard to believe that there will not be other break-away groups from the ANC or other attempts to forge multiracial coalitions.

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**Gender in South African Politics**

Given the history and the recent origins of the South African regime, it is not surprising that women play a major role in mainstream political life. With 44.5 percent of the members in the National Assembly, only Rwanda, Andorra, and Sweden have a larger proportion of women in the more powerful house of a national legislature.

It also has no shortage of women’s groups that address gender issues along economic, racial, and issue-based lines. Among the most interesting of these is the Women’s Net, which uses information technology (a booming industry in the country) to build support for ending discrimination against women. On the other end of the technological spectrum, the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation (funded largely by the Christian Democratic Union) has endorsed the Rural Women’s Movement in KwaZulu Natal, which now has 50,000 women who are organized to press women’s issues in the agricultural sector.

The largest and most influential feminist group is the Progressive Women’s Association of South Africa which was created in 2006 in commemoration of the first major march against apartheid composed exclusively of women. With allies in the ANC and elsewhere, it seeks to confront patriarchy in all its forms. It is also one of the few feminist groups with branches in all nine provinces.

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**The White-Based Opposition/Democratic Alliance**

At first, the main opposition to the ANC came, not surprisingly, from the National Party. It probably changed more than any other group and perished in the process.

To the surprise of many, the National Party did not become the party of white resistance and did fairly well at first among coloured voters. Still, as Table 20.6 shows, it won barely 20
percent of the vote in 1994, did not even reach half that total in 1999, and disappeared before a small rump organization ran -- and had a disastrous showing -- five years later.

By then, it had been reconstituted as the New National Party (NNP), which was a new party in almost every respect. In 1996 de Klerk resigned from both the government and his position as head of the National Party so that it could make a fresh start in the opposition. It also had to endure the defection of its heir apparent, Roelf Meyer, who formed a new party that tried to counter the National Party’s inability to attract African voters but who later left active political life.

After those setbacks, the NNP worked hard to redefine itself as a multiracial alternative to the ANC. It presented itself as more pragmatic and responsible than the government, and it proposed to implement change more gradually. Ironically, for the party that created the strong state economically as well as politically, the NNP claimed to want less government involvement in the economy and in people’s lives.

Its leader, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, reacted to its 1999 electoral debacle in ways no one could have imagined a decade earlier. He merged the NNP with the ANC. Some party stalwarts refused to go along with the merger, but the rump party only won 1.7 percent of the vote in 2004. It decided to disband the following spring, and all of its members of Parliament joined the ANC, a remarkable fact for a party whose parent organizations created apartheid in the first place.

Given the difficulties we have just seen, the leading--and predominantly white--opposition to the ANC today comes from a new coalition/party, the Democratic Alliance. It has multiple roots, including both white progressives from the apartheid era and dissident members of the NNP who left the party when it merged with the ANC.

The DA is not a right wing party. Its roots lie primarily among the small group of white progressives who were largely frozen out of power under apartheid. It has made a gallant effort to recruit black voters and activists but it has succeeded only in the Cape province where its leader Helen Zille is Mayor of Cape Town and the new party controls the provincial government.

Because it came in second in 2004 and 2009, it is the official opposition to the ANC. In a 2008 relaunch, it committed itself to building a nationally based party that would be eventually capable of winning a general election. It is far from there at this point.

It is hard to tell exactly where the alliance stands on most substantive issues (www.dp.org.za) other than its firm support for human rights and democratic principles. It tends to endorse the policy goals similar to those of the ANC, but as a party with strong liberal roots, it wants to reach them through by issuing vouchers and giving grants rather than the more top down planning preferred by the government.

More important than its stance on social and economic problems is the fact that it is fast becoming the party whites are most likely to support. Its leadership is biracial. But if it is going to become a viable opposition to the ANC, it must find a way for its electorate to become more like its leadership which has won rave reviews for its tolerance and openness, especially Zille’s administration in Cape Town.
The New State

As we saw in the section on the negotiations, the ANC won its most important demand: a democracy based on one person one vote. It did make concessions that granted minority representation in the cabinet for the first few years. Otherwise, the basic constitutional provisions are quite similar to those in other democracies (http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/).

Rights and Freedoms

In part because it is new and in part because of South Africa’s troubled history, the constitution enumerates more rights and guarantees than most. For instance, people are guaranteed the right to an education in their own language, and women have the right to an abortion. Overall, people’s rights (including whites) are more securely guaranteed than at any time in South African history. The only even vaguely controversial limits are a ban on hate speech and the ANC’s acceptance of an employer’s right to lock out workers.

President and Parliament

The constitution calls for a traditional parliamentary system in which the executive is responsible to the lower house of a bicameral parliament (www.parliament.gov.za). Thus, the key to South African politics is the 400-member National Assembly. Its members are elected under a complicated system of proportional representation in which a party must get slightly over 2 percent of the vote either nationally or in one of the nine provinces to win any seats. In 2009, only the four parties we just discussed passed that threshold nationally. None of the others won even 1 percent of the national vote, but they did win seventeen seats in Parliament because of their regional support usually. However, that was by no means enough for any of them to have an impact on the National Assembly day-to-day proceedings.

The National Assembly elects the president, who is the equivalent of the prime minister in most parliamentary systems. The president chooses up to twenty-seven members of a cabinet and a deputy president. Under the interim constitution, all parties that won at least 20 percent of the vote had to be included in the cabinet, which had two deputy presidents (initially de Klerk and Mbeki). Those provisions for minority representation were dropped when the permanent constitution went into effect in early 1997 and the National Party resigned from the government. There is also now only a single deputy president. Needless to say, the ANC has all but total control of the cabinet.

The National Assembly must pass all legislation, and it initiates all bills authorizing the expenditure of funds or raising new taxes. It can also amend the constitution with a two-thirds vote. Although the ANC has crossed that threshold in two of the four elections, it has not shown any sign of wanting to change the constitution in a way that could lead to a de facto one-party state as many critics feared. In other words, the constitutional order is likely to continue as it is at least through the first term of Zuma’s presidency.

Like a prime minister, the president is subject to a vote of confidence. Given the size of the ANC’s majority, it is hard to imagine any president losing such a vote for years to come. In fact, only one even half-serious attempt to depose a government has occurred so far. In 2010, President Zuma acknowledged that he had fathered a child out of wedlock in addition to those he
had had with his three wives. COPE then tabled a vote of no confidence. Given the party discipline one expects in parliamentary systems, Zuma won easily with 241 votes against the motion and only 84 for it.

The National Council of Provinces was created by the 1996 constitution and replaced the former Senate. It is indirectly elected by the nine provincial legislatures and has ninety members—ten from each province—who also serve five-year terms. Like most upper houses, it has limited budgetary powers and no control over the executive. Its primary mission is to protect minority cultural interests.

**Figure 20.1: Decision Making in South Africa**

![Decision Making in South Africa Diagram](image)

*The Rest of the State*

The nine provinces were also granted considerable autonomy, especially over education and cultural affairs. More important in the long run, perhaps, is the fact that the ANC won control in only seven of them in the 1994 elections (losing KwaZulu Natal to the IFP and the Western Cape to the National Party), which seemed to mean at the time that credible opposition to the ANC could be built on the provincial level. However, by 2004, the ANC had won control of those two states. The Democratic Alliance did win the Western Cape five years later. Still, it now seems as
if the provinces are not likely to be a springboard for building a national opposition anytime soon.

For the first time, South Africa has an independent judiciary. The nonpartisan Judicial Services Bureau appoints judges at all levels. Like many countries, South Africa’s judiciary has two wings. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court deals with appeals regarding cases that do not involve constitutional matters. Those that do are referred to the Constitutional Court. (www.constitutionalcourt.org.za). It has ten judges. Six are appointed by the president on the basis of recommendations by the Judicial Services Bureau; the other four are chosen by the president and the chief justice of the court itself. It is too early to tell how effective the courts will be, but they certainly are more independent than their apartheid-era predecessors. To cite but two prominent examples, the courts forced the government to revise the draft 1996 constitution to, among other things, make it harder to amend if civil liberties are at stake. Six years later, it ordered the Ministry of Health to nationalize a floundering program designed to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS from pregnant mothers to their fetuses.

The Court has not been able to escape political controversy. Indeed, as we write, there is considerable debate over President Zuma’s its new chief justice, Mogoeng Mogoeng. Not only was Mogoeng a rather junior sitting justice, he had been criticized for his lenient rulings in cases involving marital rape which is illegal in South Africa. He also belongs to a church that argues that homosexuality is a sin and can be reversed. Although he was confirmed easily given the ANC’s massive majority, his nomination will undoubtedly somewhat undermine the court’s reputation and credibility.

The most surprising, and perhaps most encouraging, long-term trend is the ANC’s decision not to purge the bureaucracy. It would have been understandable if the new government had gotten rid of everyone who had helped make and implement apartheid public policy. Instead, reflecting their desire for reconciliation, the ANC decided to retain most incumbent civil servants. Critics have accused the ANC of filling new state positions with their own members. In fact, one cannot help but be struck by the other side of the coin: the number of Afrikaners who remain in positions of responsibility. This is true even in such sensitive areas as law enforcement and education, where only people who committed the worst offenses have been fired.

South Africa does have an affirmative action program to help women, people with disabilities, and members of minority groups to find jobs and build careers. Such a program is needed despite the overwhelming black majority because racial and other forms of inequality are deeply entrenched, beginning with the school system if not in the conditions under which infants and toddlers are raised. It will literally take generations before blacks and whites have equal opportunities for careers that could lead to the top of the civil service. With the growing number of retirements and the affirmative action program, more and more top civil servants (and corporate executives) are non-white, but the transition has been slower than many on the left would have wanted.

**Toward a One-Party State?**

Critics are also worried that South Africa will turn into a one-party state, as many African countries have over the years. Those concerns are not new and date back at least to the close ties the apartheid era ANC had with the SACP. Most observers today acknowledge that there is little
or no chance that the party could adopt anything resembling a Marxist economic policy even if it wanted to.

The concern instead is that the party will build on dynamics similar to those we saw in AIDS policy and create a de facto one-party state. If these interpretations are correct, competitive elections would not disappear. However, the ANC would use all of its political levers to make effective opposition difficult.

The new South African state inherited a massive and well-equipped military, especially if you include the domestic security apparatus in the calculations. By 1994, the country faced no external threats. If anything, the neighboring states had vocally opposed apartheid and were among the new regime’s leading cheerleaders.

Nonetheless, South Africa’s government reentered the arms trade with a vengeance, and in so doing made itself vulnerable to charges of corruption and abuse of power that touch especially on President Mbeki before and after he assumed office. The details of the arms scandal would take us far beyond the scope of this book. Suffice it to note that ANC leaders used insider information and contacts to steer contracts for a number of weapons systems to their favorite foreign suppliers and received handsome payoffs in return. When some ANC and other politicians brought evidence of the misdoing to light, the party imposed tight discipline, which led some of the whistleblowers to recant their story and others to leave political life and the country altogether.

If the critics are to be believed, like the AIDS controversy discussed earlier, the arms sales could be the tip of larger and more worrisome political iceberg. The ANC may talk of democracy, transparency, and equity, but its behavior has not lived up to its rhetoric. It is too early to tell if these issues are aberrations or if the ANC will turn into some sort of machine run in a top-down manner—or worse.

However, there are equally compelling reasons to believe that the ANC will not abuse its power. Indeed, virtually everything in its record since the negotiations began in the late 1980s suggests that it is an unusual political movement, one that is truly committed to democracy and reconciliation despite these worrisome lapses. For example, it willingly agreed to proportional representation that would grant smaller parties a voice in the National Assembly even though the old first-past-the-post system would have given it even a larger proportion of the seats. Similarly, it allowed the IFP to assume power in KwaZulu Natal in 1994 and 1999 even though there was considerable evidence that Buthelezi’s party won only through fraud and intimidation.

Public Policy

Mandela’s government came to power amid great expectations, but it also faced the tremendous challenge of bringing together a society that had been riddled with hatred for so long. To make matters worse, it simultaneously had to deal with the massive economic gap between blacks and whites at a time when the economy had been shrinking for at least a decade, largely as a result of international sanctions and disinvestment. Given what we have seen in other chapters about transitions in troubling times, the new South African state has done surprisingly well, even if it has fallen short of its own goals and those of its supporters.
Profile

Thabo Mbeki

Thabo Mbeki was elected the second president of democratic South Africa in 1999 (www.info.gov.za/leaders/president/index.htm).

Mbeki was born in 1942. His father was an active communist who spent time in prison with Mandela. The younger Mbeki escaped from South Africa in 1962 and moved to the United Kingdom. The African National Congress (ANC) paid for him to study economics at the University of Sussex. As a young man, he was very much on the left, having studied at the Lenin School in Moscow and having served on the South African Communist Party politburo.

In office, he was more authoritarian than Mandela was and spoke less about the need for reconciliation. However, he did not waver from the ANC’s decision to sustain its democracy and move toward a more open economy.

He resigned in 2008 after losing an election for a possible third term as head of the ANC to Zuma. From then until the next year’s election, the country had an interim president who was so insignificant that there is no need to mention him in this book.

Therefore, it makes sense to focus here on the two policy areas in which the new government has done the most to meet these challenges. As should be clear from the discussion so far in this chapter, we should not expect the government to have been able to meet either of them fully in seventeen years. Nonetheless, it has taken some important first steps.

Truth and Reconciliation

As we have already seen, the new government has not sought revenge. Instead, it has taken its commitment to a multiracial South Africa seriously.

Central to these efforts was the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As of late 2011, there more than twenty such bodies had been created by governments in countries that had been through traumatic periods in their history. Many of them were inspired by the South African TRC, although few sought to go as far.

They all have a number of common denominators, two of which are important here. First, they are attempts by a country to deal with a society-wide phenomenon akin to the PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) which many combat veterans, rape survivors, and other suffer from (www.traumacenter.org). Second, they are part of a broader movement for restorative justice that is causing quite a stir in legal circles (www.restorativejustice.org). Traditionally, new states have sought to punish the perpetrators of crimes against humanity by seeking retribution and even vengeance. By contrast, in restorative justice, the emphasis literally is on restoring the situation of the victims before the crimes occurred to the degree that it is possible. Together, the two common denominators reflect the unusual political assumption that recovery from trauma can only begin with an honest confrontation with past horrors and a vision of justice that revolves around restoring healthy relationships.

South Africa’s TRC sought to go farther than most of these bodies. To be sure, the commission did all it could to document offenses that occurred between the Sharpeville
Massacre in 1960 and the transition to democracy thirty-four years later. However, it was a truth and reconciliation commission whose more important goal was to use the truth about apartheid as an important first step in healing the wounds it had created.

Formed following the passage of a law in 1995, the commission was chaired by Archbishop Tutu, unquestionably the most authoritative moral voice in the country after Mandela (http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html). Its mandate allowed the Commission to grant amnesty to people whose crimes were political in nature, who confessed fully and publicly, and who expressed remorse for their actions. The assumption underlying its work was that learning the truth and beginning to build bridges across communal lines was far more practical than prosecuting tens of thousands of wrongdoers and risking further deepening tensions as a result.

In many ways, the logic behind the TRC and reconciliation lies in a word found in almost all southern African languages--ubuntu. It can be translated in many ways, the most useful of which for our purposes is that “a person is a person through another person.” In other words, I define who I am in part through my relationship with you. If those relationships are out of balance, so are those within a society as a whole.

In the three years between its formation and the publication of its report in late 1998, the commission held hearings around the country in which victims and perpetrators alike told their stories. The results were mind boggling because many people were hearing systematic accounts of the atrocities under apartheid for the first time. They also witnessed the remarkable spectacle of many people who committed the crimes confessing in public before the world’s television cameras.

When all was said and done, the country probably learned as much as it could have about what had happened. Although the security services destroyed thousands of documents in the early 1990s, the Commission uncovered abundant evidence about a period when authorities thought it was perfectly acceptable to torture and kill their opponents. After wading through the evidence of 20,000 witnesses, much of which is published in the 3,500-page report, the commission minced no words about apartheid.

The country learned that the cabinet and, almost certainly, de Klerk knew of a shadowy “third force” of vigilantes who terrorized blacks and their allies on the orders of the security services. Botha, in particular, was singled out for having fostered a climate in which torture and executions were tolerated, if not encouraged. He refused to appear before the commission and was found guilty of contempt, although the verdict was overturned on appeal in 1999. It was never likely that someone well into his eighties would be sent to prison. However, the mere fact that a former president both refused to cooperate and was convicted for doing so is a sign of how much South Africa changed in a few short years.

The commission not only tried to uncover the old regime’s misdeeds, but also conducted hearings into the ANC’s excesses. Among other things, it was judged to have summarily executed members who were suspected of collaborating with the regime and killed more civilians than security officers in the underground struggle.

Most notable here was the testimony about the president’s former wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, who had long been a controversial figure. On the one hand, she had stood by her husband during his years in prison and served as a powerful symbol and organizer for the
ANC within South Africa. On the other hand, she and her entourage were implicated in much of the violence in the townships and were accused of murdering opponents.

In September 1998, she appeared before the commission to answer charges that she was involved in eighteen human rights abuses, including eight murders. Although she refused to testify about any specific allegations, she acknowledged her involvement and guilt, and like many others who appeared before the commission, expressed remorse for her actions. The commission, however, still found that the Mandela United Football Club that she headed was a “pure vigilante unit.”

When an interim report was handed over to President Mandela on 28 October 1998, it was already controversial. At Mbeki’s urging, the ANC had gone to court to try to block its publication because of its judgments about the resistance.

Archbishop Tutu was adamant. There was no doubt that the white authorities committed the overwhelming majority of the crimes and the ANC and the rest of the resistance occupied the moral high ground. There was also no doubt that the insurgents used “unjust means” toward “just ends” on numerous occasions. As Tutu himself put it, “Atrocities were committed on all sides. I have struggled against a tyranny. I did not do that in order to substitute another. That is who I am."

By the time the full report was released, the committee on amnesties had dealt with most of the applications before it. To the surprise of many, it had granted amnesty to only 849 of the 7,112 people who applied as of January 2001. It rejected over 5,000 applicants because the actions were not linked to the kind of political causes specified in the authorizing legislation. Individuals who were not granted amnesty are subject to criminal prosecution, though as of this writing more than a decade later, it is clear that such prosecutions will be few and far between.

Any focus on prosecutions misses the most important point: the commission’s primary task was to establish the truth and then use it as a starting point toward reconciliation. As Tutu saw it, that first step was a hard one because it required bringing the horrors of South Africa’s past into the open, but it was also a necessary one. Again in his words from the report,

Reconciliation is not about being cozy; it is not about pretending that things were other than they were. Reconciliation based on falsehood, on not facing up to reality, is not reconciliation at all.

We believe we have provided enough of the truth about our past for there to be a consensus about it. We should accept that truth has emerged even though it has initially alienated people from one another. The truth can be, and often is, divisive.

However, it is only on the basis of truth that true reconciliation can take place. True reconciliation is not easy; it is not cheap.8

The TRC was less than ideal as is the case for any political institution. However, progress on race relations and related issues is remarkable, at least some of which can be attributed to the

commission. According to the 2010 poll for the Reconciliation Barometer mentioned above, two-thirds of the population think a united South Africa is a definite possibility. The same proportion of the people talk to someone of a different race at least weekly, although only about one in five socialize with members of other groups. Nine out of ten people of all races believe that apartheid was a crime against humanity. Three-quarters affirm that the country needs a work force that is representative of all racial and other groups. Half approve of interracial marriage. Two-thirds would be comfortable living in mixed neighborhoods. The same number would be comfortable working for a person from another race.

Most readers of this book are from the United States. Answers to such questions there would now be roughly the same. But Americans would do well to ask themselves how long it has taken their country to make this much progress and do so from a much more “favorable” starting point.

The journey toward reconciliation can be summarized in facts and figures. For good or ill, however, they do not get at the raw emotion that was—and still is—involvement. Nothing does that better for non-South African readers than the story of the late Amy Biehl.

In 1993, Biehl was a white, twenty-five-year-old Fulbright scholar who had gone to South Africa to help prepare for the first multiracial elections. As an undergraduate at Stanford University, she had become fascinated with South Africa and Mandela. Therefore, after graduation, she moved to South Africa to do what she could.

Biehl had spent the day with black friends helping organize a voter registration campaign. She was driving them back to their home in Gugulethu township on the outskirts of Cape Town. A gang of black teenage boys who belonged to the Pan-African Congress had been chanting “one settler, one bullet” and forced her to stop. Four of them dragged Biehl from the car, beat her, and stabbed her to death on the assumption that she was a white South African.

Despite its deserved reputation for reconciliation, South Africa was a very violent place between the time of Mandela’s release from prison in 1990 and his inauguration as president in 1994. Thousands were killed in violence that ranged from the explicitly political to the plainly criminal. Biehl’s murder lay somewhere in the middle because it was carried out by highly politicized teenagers but was completely unprovoked.

At the time, her death caused a brief stir in the media because Biehl was a white American. Her murderers were duly arrested, convicted, and sentenced to eighteen years in prison.

It was only three years later that the Biehl story became worth retelling here. As was their right, the four young men who killed her applied for amnesty to the TRC. They did not seem like good candidates to get it.

But then Amy’s parents stepped in.

Peter and Linda Biehl had done a lot of soul searching in the three years since their daughter’s murder. Along with the grief that accompanies the loss of a child came the realization that her work and her cause were all the more important because of her death.

So, in keeping with the South African commitment to reconciliation, they decided to continue their daughter’s work in the only ways they could. First, they appeared before the Truth
and Reconciliation Commission in support of her murderers’ request for amnesty. Second, they met with the mother of one of the young men.

After that emotional trip to South Africa, they devoted their lives to the newly formed Amy Biehl Foundation in the United States and the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in South Africa (www.amybiehl.org). The Biehls contributed quite a bit of their own money and raised more than $2.5 million (including $1.9 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development) to fund the kinds of projects Amy believed in. Among other things, the foundation has helped finance a group of small bakeries, training programs for troubled teenagers, and a series of after-school programs for children. In keeping with Amy’s love of competitive sports, it has also opened a driving range in a poor area of Cape Town; the foundation’s website asks for donations of golf clubs and balls because poor blacks cannot afford their own.

Most remarkably, the Biehls learned that two of the men responsible for Amy’s death wanted to meet with them. The other two—who had been primarily responsible for the murder itself—had committed other crimes and disappeared. These two, however, had taken advantage of the amnesty program and had put their personal priorities in order. Then, in what can only be called the ultimate gesture of reconciliation, the Biehls decided to use foundation funds to help pay for their training and hired them afterward. Their logic was the same as that for all the foundation’s work: if they could help South Africans escape poverty and the legacy of apartheid, and then help improve conditions in their country, it was worth the money.

There are no other Amy Biehls in Comparative Politics, because there could not have been a politically significant young woman like her in any of the other countries we discuss. In none of them did the horrors and hopes of political life attract young idealists like her to make a long-term commitment. In none of them was there the kind of social and political chaos that made the all-but-random killings of young people—black and white—a part of everyday life.

In other words, Amy was drawn to South Africa for the same reasons the country as a whole should be included in courses on comparative politics. In her day, South Africa had just taken the first steps from having one of the most brutal, repressive, and racist regimes in history toward being a country that ranks among the world’s leaders in reconciling people with its negative history. Or, as the title of a documentary about the TRC put it, she was part of a “long night’s journey into day.”

The Economy

The end of apartheid alone would do nothing about the fact that over half the blacks—but only 2 percent of all whites—lived in poverty, earning less than the equivalent of three hundred dollars a month. A third did not have access to safe drinking water. Only 20 percent had electricity in their homes. To make matters even worse, economic conditions deteriorated during the first few years of the 1990s before the transition to majority rule. To this day, all public opinion polls show that South Africans see economic inequality—not race relations—as the most important and difficult issue facing their country.

Given its traditional commitment to socialism, as well as these appalling conditions, no one was surprised when the new government announced its Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) in 1994, placing “the basic needs of the people”—jobs, housing, electricity, telecommunications, health care, and a safe environment—ahead of economic growth.
The new government started with an advantage no other African country has enjoyed—the industrial and financial foundation created under colonial and National Party rule. South Africa was far more advanced than all the other countries in Africa, and today accounts for 40 percent of all economic activity on the continent. It has a significant industrial base and, by African standards, a relatively well-trained workforce. Thus, one trade group estimates that it has the fourth most extensive mobile telephone network in the world on a per capita basis. Even at the beginning of the transition, there was already a substantial regional trade network involving South Africa and its neighbors. Therefore, it is the logical place for foreign investors to place their money, at least for the southern third of the continent. The lifting of sanctions and the goodwill generated by the transition produced a short-term growth spurt, averaging 3 percent per year in 1994 and 1995.

By 1996, however, the government realized that its strategy was not good enough. None of the policies under consideration would yield a growth rate that could come close to funding the jobs and services it felt the country needed. The best estimate was that if it continued to follow RDP, unemployment would actually increase by 5 percent by 2000. And one worst-case scenario predicted that less than 10 percent of the young people entering the workforce each year would find a job. In reality, per capita GNP declined from 13 percent of that in the United States to 8 percent between 1995 and 2000. By then, the unemployment rate hovered around one-fourth, concentrated, of course, in the black community.

In short, the government reached a reluctant decision. It had to adopt an economic strategy that would get the growth rate up to 6 to 7 percent per year. That, in turn, would require adopting the kind of structural adjustment policy we saw in India and Mexico. (See Chapters 12 and 16.)

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**Economic Liberalization**

**In South Africa**

South Africa has not gone as far with liberalization as either Mexico or India. However, the pressure to do so has been growing ever since the government introduced GEAR in 1996.

Initially, the government was reluctant to sell off state-owned enterprises in large part because whites, who benefited from subsidized prices, would undergo a steady erosion of their standard of living. Nonetheless, the same international pressures that led the ANC to open up the private sector to more outside investment continue to build, and the government may eventually decide to speed up the sale of nationalized and parastatal industries. No one knows for sure when or how that will happen, but it is already anticipated on the websites the government has created to help convince foreigners to invest in the country.

This, of course, produced one of those ironies that are so common in political life. It was the right-wing National Party government that introduced import substitution, a policy normally associated with the left. And it was the radical ANC that turned its back on massive state intervention and adopted something like the hands-off policies advocated by the most conservative, market-oriented economists.
This new policy was laid out in a plan by Finance Minister Trevor Manuel known as the **Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR)** Program, that would cover the last five years of the twentieth century. GEAR’s goal was to maximize growth by increasing foreign investment, which required giving businesses considerable freedom to chart their own course. Priorities included developing industries to manufacture goods that could be priced competitively for domestic and international markets, creating a business climate of low inflation and stable exchange rates to encourage investment, making public services more efficient, improving the infrastructure, and adding to labor market flexibility.

To accomplish this, tariffs and other “demand side” taxes were cut, and the state offered the private sector incentives to become more productive and profitable. Government spending shrank so that the budget deficit could be reduced to 3 percent by 2000. The government also called for negotiations leading to a national plan to keep wage and price increases below the rate of growth in productivity. And, much like Labour in Britain (see Chapter 4), the South African government thought that much could be accomplished through cooperative “partnerships” between the public and private sectors in which the latter plowed back some of its profits in the form of both investment and community-oriented projects. Thus, in the automobile industry, the government and the major foreign companies worked together to lower production costs so that cars produced there can find a market elsewhere in Africa.

Critics properly pointed out that GEAR marked a major shift in ANC policy toward capitalism, if not the outright abandonment of socialism. However, it did not represent it as a marked a shift toward an all but total profit orientation that most structural adjustment programs emphasize.

The government stressed investments that could provide long-term employment, empower Africans, and redress the inequities between rich and poor. Typical here is the September 1998 announcement that the Philadelphia-based Kearsarge investment firm would funnel millions of dollars to the African Harvest Asset Management group as part of a program aimed at, in its words, “empowering communities” in South Africa. Funds were made available to companies that either were black-owned or had a deep commitment to affirmative action. It was part of the larger “Reinvest in South Africa” appeal to socially responsible funds that had pulled out of the country as part of the investor responsibility movement in the 1970s and 1980s to return.

GEAR officially ended in 2000. However, most of its basic principles guide economic policy to this day.

As with any government’s policy, it is hard to determine just how much GEAR and its successor programs contributed to South African economic performance. It certainly was one of the reasons the economy grew by about five percent per year for the first decade of this century. Per capita income reached an all-time high vis-à-vis the United States at 15 percent of the latter in 2010, but it is no closer to the distribution of income and wealth that one finds in advanced industrialized countries than it was at the time of the transition from apartheid.

That said, South African economic policy has been far more egalitarian than most structural adjustment programs that put overall growth and private sector competitiveness at the top of their list of priorities. The still left-leaning ANC instead has decided to use a disproportionate share of the revenues from economic growth to fund both infrastructure projects that benefit everyone and the kinds of programs initially laid out in the RDP.
It committed itself to free basic health care for pregnant women and infants and to a program of land reform that will turn over about 5 million acres of land to the poor. Zuma has announced plans to create 5 million new jobs by 2020, though it should be pointed out that no post-apartheid government has ever reached such an ambitious goal. It is hoped, too, that the constitution’s decentralization provisions will lead the provinces and municipalities to launch labor-intensive projects of their own. However, it is also clear to everyone that the state will play a lesser role in determining how that growth occurs and that progress will come more slowly than most in the old anti-apartheid coalition would have liked.

The government has also announced a series of Spatial Development Initiatives. The plan is to channel investment capital to, and offer “tax holidays” for, targeted industries and communities beyond Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, and Durban where recent growth has been concentrated. It is hoped that these funds will stimulate the development of aluminum production and other key manufacturing sectors that could lead to export opportunities.

Today, most investments funds are directed toward black-owned firms in underdeveloped regions. The best known of those projects is the Maputo Development Corridor, a devastated region that straddles the border between South Africa and Mozambique. Funds have been provided to build transportation and telecommunications networks to facilitate such activities as tourism and the export of crops and manufactured goods. It is assumed as well that once these infrastructural projects are finished the region could provide a trade outlet for Swaziland and Botswana.

Along similar lines, the government is considering the creation of nine Chinese-like special development zones adjacent to its major ports and international airports. The best developed is Coega near the Eastern Cape city of Port Elizabeth. The joint public-private partnership is designed to turn the area into a world-class seaport and create spin-off investments in such fields as zinc refining, fertilizer manufacturing, and petrochemicals in one of the country’s act regions.

South Africa is also the one country covered in this book to have seriously experimented with microcredit strategies. First developed by Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (see Chapter 11 and 17), microcredit uses small loans to help poor people form small businesses. One of its goals is to help give the ultra-poor incentives and skills to pull themselves and their families permanently out of poverty. In South Africa, the government’s hope is that microcredit can also create more black-owned businesses and, in time, reduce income and wealth differentials. By 2007, the small loans totaled 30 million rand and were regulated under the National Credit Act because there were so many of them and they were subject to at least a degree of corruption.

The best known is the Small Enterprise Foundation, which operates in the Northern Cape Province, where up to two-thirds of the population is unemployed. By 2007, the foundation had 65,000 active clients who had borrowed an average of three hundred dollars each. In all, it has issued almost three quarters of a million loans since it was created in 1997. As is typical of microcredit programs, 99 percent of the loans went to women for dressmaking, hawking, and “spaza,” which are small grocery stores operated from either a shack or someone’s home. In all, it had 100 million rand in outstanding loans at the end of 2010. Less than 1 percent of the loans have not been repaid.
Borrowers are organized into small groups of five or six who meet every other week to make their payments and discuss their progress or setbacks. A similar organization operating near Cape Town gives its borrowers a “township MBA” or basic business training before a loan is issued.

Small Enterprise Foundation clients typically employ the equivalent of 2.5 full-time workers. The poorest families are able to use the money made in the business to afford three meals a day, not one. More affluent families are able to send their children to secondary school, add electricity to their homes, and purchase other “luxuries.” Studies of microcredit operations in South Africa and elsewhere have also found that they offer women an unprecedented degree of independence and can be a lifeline for those who have suffered spousal abuse. Profits from the program are, in turn, reinvested in the form of new loans that further contribute to community development.

The government has one other trump card it has just begun play to bring in a short-term infusion of cash—selling off state-owned companies that were created by the National Party government. Some observers estimate that they make up at least half of South Africa’s total capital stock. As of this writing, the government has not moved rapidly in this direction, but it has sold some small parties and minority interests in the telecommunications and airlines industries. The water supply, for instance, is now privately owned. But, anticipating the criticisms we are about to see, privatization’s track record is uneven. Price increases for water have been so steep that many families have had to rely on other, more polluted sources to meet their needs.

Last, but by no means least, is South Africa’s growing role in the international economy. As early as 2001, exports reached 29 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), almost three times what they had been when Mandela was released. Foreign investment has picked up albeit in an uneven fashion. Foreign investment also began to pick up in the middle of the decade, most notably when Barclay’s bought a major bank and British based Vodafone acquired South Africa’s Vocacom.

South Africa’s progress has been so dramatic—if unexpected—that it got its ultimate reward in April 2011 when it was asked to join Brazil, Russia, India, and China in the informal BRIC group (now BRICS). As we saw in Chapter 11, BRIC is a term invented by a team of investment bankers at Goldman-Sachs led by Jim O’Neill to call attention to the most dynamic emerging economies that have large enough populations to exert global political clout. O’Neill does not include South Africa in his list. However, as the countries themselves started to organize in 2010, they sought to add an African country. South Africa was the only viable possibility and hence the shift from BRIC to BRICS. The original BRIC countries also wanted greater access to South Africa’s mineral resources and to, through the country as a whole, sell more goods and services to the more than one billion other Africans.

Not all the news is good, however. Development is still clustered around the four major urban areas while most of the rest of the country remains mired in poverty. The national unemployment rate remains at about one-quarter and could well be over half for people under

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Foreign investment has yet to reach the level the government had hoped and planned for, which has limited its ability to reach its other ambitious economic goals. Reasons range from potential investors’ concerns about profitability to the high crime rate.

The economic policies are also still controversial, sparking protests from the left-wing members of its coalition, including the SACP, COSATU, and the ANC’s own youth group. Of particular concern here is COSATU, which represents about 17 percent of the employed workforce, and whose members tend to be noticeably better off than the black population as a whole. Not surprisingly, COSATU leaders (who are also ANC executives) are reluctant to endorse policies that would both slow the redistribution of the wealth and hurt their own members’ standard of living. Thus, according to former COSATU president, SACP central committee member, and premier of Gauteng Province. Mbahazima (Sam) Shilowa, “GEAR is a neo-liberal plan which poses serious difficulties for the working class and the country as a whole. Something has gone terribly wrong that such a document could be . . . on the table.”

As much as COSATU and others have complained, only a few of labor and left-wing leaders have quit the ANC, including Shilowa. Most union officials realized that they have no realistic alternative to the ANC and are willing, at least for now, to run the risk that GEAR and related policies will pay off at some point in the not-so-distant future.

We also cannot ignore the fact that all economic and social policy is shaped and hindered by one the world’s worst AIDS epidemics, which is far more costly than we could suggest in the section on political participation. The best estimate is that one South African in eight is infected with HIV, including one-third of all people under thirty. The overwhelming majority of those infected are black. Even with the creation of the Global AIDS Trust Fund and the sharp reduction in the price of anti-retroviral drugs, the odds are that at least 90 percent of these people will die. People are currently dying from AIDS and its side effects at the rate of about 1,000 a day.

One can present statistics galore. However, one recent compilation of anecdotes suggests how tragic the situation is. Most South Africans spend more time at funerals than getting their hair cut or enjoying the country’s beloved barbeques. In any given month, twice as many South Africans go to a funeral than to a wedding. This may well change now that President Zuma has reversed Mbeki’s policy and acknowledged the depth of the crisis.

The beleaguered health care system simply cannot handle as many as 5 million people. And because HIV infection is particularly pronounced among young adults, many companies assume that they have to hire two or three people to be reasonably certain that one of them will survive long enough to establish a career.

The mixed overall economic record, curiously, can be seen in the impact of South Africa’s hosting of the 2010 World Cup. The very fact that it was chosen to be the first African country to host soccer’s quadrennial championship was a feather in South Africa’s symbolic cap. What is important here is that there was never any question that the tournament would be run by the public good except in the most indirect of ways that economists call “trickle down” effects. The promoters estimated that the Cup would add over $5 billion and 400,000 jobs to the economy, numbers that are all but impossible to verify despite the success of the games. For all intents and purposes, the games were managed by foreign firms (including Budweiser and Coca Cola, their official drinks) with the sole exception of South African Telkom. For Zuma and his colleagues, the Cup was an opportunity to “brand” South Africa and to show the world that the
continent as a whole was “open for business.” At the same time, few average South Africans were able to attend a match; tickets for early round games started at over $75.

THE MEDIA

There is no area in which change is more evident than in South Africa’s mass media. Under apartheid, almost all newspapers were aimed at a white readership. Those that were not were subjected to censorship and were owned by conservative white conglomerates. Similarly, the South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC) had a monopoly on television and radio broadcasts and was little more than a propaganda mouthpiece for the regime. In an intriguing historical irony, the apartheid government long resisted allowing television into the country. When they finally gave in to demand, color television was already widespread, and the country could avoid the expensive transition from black and white to color altogether.

Today, the SABC still dominates free over the air radio and television broadcasting, but even its critics acknowledge that it is more open to dissenting viewpoints than it was prior to 1994. It also faces competition from satellite television which was introduced in 1995, although only a tiny proportion of the majority population can afford it.

The same holds for about twenty daily newspapers with a general circulation, all but three of which are published in English. Some, like the Sowetan, are explicitly aimed at the black population. Most are still white-owned, but, like television and radio, are far more liberal than they used to be.

SOUTH AFRICA: IN PERIL OR A ROLE MODEL?

South Africa is a rarity in comparative politics, because so much of the news from there has been good over the past two decades. Whatever one’s ideological position, it is hard not to acknowledge that ending apartheid so peacefully not only removed one of the greatest human rights violations of our time but also propelled the country toward a more just and egalitarian future. The joy and optimism that came with the transition to majority rule are reflected in the titles of the two most popular books on South Africa in the 1990s, Anatomy of a Miracle and Tomorrow Is Another Country.

The transition has occurred with minimal strife and bloodshed. Plans have been laid for a new economy that can build on the legacy of the apartheid years to create a regional hub for the southern third of the continent. Some important first steps have been taken to ease the burden of centuries of racism and racial antagonism. Things have progressed so far that South Africa is now looked upon as a role model for other divided societies seeking to make the transition toward a more democratic and inclusive government.

In purely economic terms, it probably does not belong in the BRICS at the exclusion of Mexico, South Korea, and a handful of other countries. Whether one agrees or not, South Africa is not as far along on the path toward structural adjustment than other “candidates” for this most informal of international organizations (see Chapter 17).

South Africa has more than its share of problems, all of which could prove to be a political tinderbox should it face economic or other ostensibly non-political difficulties, such as a sharp rise in the already high crime rate. So far, the mostly poor and black half of the population
has shown remarkable patience, more than one would find in almost any country. The question is: how long can it last?

In the end, this chapter shares the sense of optimism one finds in most of the literature on the remarkable, unexpected, and unprecedented changes that have taken place since the late 1980s. South Africa’s democracy remains fragile as it enters the post-Mandela era. It could well become even more fragile when—and if—a credible alternative to the ANC emerges. And the economic future is even more uncertain. No one knows if the strategy laid out in the GEAR report and later planning documents will reach their stated goals, let alone provide a more just and equal society.

If nothing else, one thing is clear. South Africa demonstrates for the early twenty-first century what the collapse of communism did for the 1980s. Nothing is permanent, and nothing should be taken for granted in political life today.

**Key Terms**

*Concepts*

Afrikaner
apatheid
Boers
hurting stalemate
import substitution
microcredit
pass law
restorative justice
securocrat
structural adjustment

*People*

Biehl, Amy
Biko, Steve
De Klerk, F. W.
Madikizela-Mandela, Winnie
Malan, Daniel
Mandela, Nelson
Mbeki, Thabo
Slovo, Joe
Tutu, Desmond
Verwoerd, Hendrik
Zuma, Jacob

Acronyms
ANC
CODESA
COPE
COSATU
GEAR
IFP
NNP
SACP
UDF

Organizations, Places, and Events
African National Congress
Black Consciousness movement
Blood River, Battle of
Broederbond
Conference on a Democratic South Africa
Congress of South African Trade Unions
Congress of the People
Democratic Alliance
Freedom Charter
Great Trek
Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Act
Homelands
Inkatha Freedom Party
National Assembly
National Party
New National Party
Sharpeville Massacre
South African Communist Party
Soweto
State Security Council
Truth and Reconciliation Commission

*Umkhonto we Sizwe*

United Democratic Front

**Websites**

South Africa Online is the best general portal for information about the country and has an extensive set of political links. Woyaa (voted one of the top fifty websites in Africa by UNESCO) has the most extensive set of links to official South African organizations. This directs you to the portion of its site that deals with politics.


[http://www.woyaa.com/English/Society/Politics/index.html](http://www.woyaa.com/English/Society/Politics/index.html)

IDASA is a nonprofit institute that works on democracy in Africa in general and South Africa in particular. It also has sponsored and publicized some of the best polls since the end of apartheid.

[www.idasa.org](http://www.idasa.org)

The African Barometer and the Reconciliation Barometer are the two best sources of data and information in general on public opinion and reconciliation.

[www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)

[www.reconciliationbarometer.org](http://www.reconciliationbarometer.org)

There are dozens of good sources of news on South Africa. Two of the best are:

[www.politicalanalysis.co.za](http://www.politicalanalysis.co.za)

[www.polity.org.za](http://www.polity.org.za)

The South African government now has an excellent website that links users to the entire system.


The World History Archives has an excellent compilation of documents on South Africa under apartheid.


Finally, Aardvark is a search engine that includes only South African sites. Its focus is not politics, but it is a sign of how well developed the online world is there.

[www.aardvark.co.za](http://www.aardvark.co.za)
Further Reading


Faure, Murray, and Jan-Erik Lane. *South Africa: Designing New Political Institutions*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996. An anthology on the basic institutions—how they were created and how they are supposed to work—in the new South Africa.

Feinstein, Andrew. *After the Party*. London: Verso 2009. By a former ANC member of parliament who led the campaign against the illicit arms deals mentioned in the text. Feinstein’s experiences have led him to become one of the world’s leading experts on the underground trade.


Slovo, Gillian. *Every Little Thing*. London: Faber & Faber, 1997. Half an autobiography and half an account of her relationship with her famous parents, Joe Slovo and Ruth First, also a leader of the SACP, who was assassinated by the security services in Angola. Gillian
Slovo also writes novels, many of which deal with the struggle to end apartheid and her troubled relationship with her father.


