

The Process of Democratization in Africa: The Case of Post Apartheid South African Democracy

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Abstract

According to written sources, division among the races in South Africa can be traced back to the Dutch East Indian Company which colonized the area in the 17th century. The ethnic isolation increased during the years eventually resulting in apartheid rule beginning in the 1940's. After the end of apartheid era, the post-apartheid government has largely been successful in ensuring that the citizens enjoyed freedom of speech, a just, free society and a transparent political system. This has been secured by the democratic constitution and the various acts and policies that were passed during post apartheid in the parliament of South Africa. Since 1994 with the end of apartheid system in South Africa different arrangements were happened. Among arrangements taken, implement various policies and acts aimed at ensuring that all citizens irrespective of race and colour as they enjoy with their rights in a unified, non-racist, non sexist in South Africa. The main aim of this paper is mainly examines the end of apartheid era and the birth of democracy in South Africa. As everyone know Africa continent is a place in which the leaders can do whatever they want. They do not follow the rule of law. Relatively, since 1994 these things were changed into democracy in South Africa. The paper is present to assess how could this democratic transition happened in South Africa. The paper has two parts. Part I provides survey of the post apartheid South African democracy and the apartheid era. Part II discusses the end of apartheid government and the birth of democracy in South Africa.

Keywords: Apartheid, Racist, Birth, *Afrikaners, Khoi-Khoi, San, Act, Mixed*

Background

Based on various sources, the history of discrimination and racial injustice against the indigenous population of South Africa has its roots with the arrival of the first Europeans from Holland in 1652. Soon after the subsequence Dutch and British domination in South Africa, racial discrimination against the indigenous inhabitants especially the khoi-khoi and the San was intensified.¹ The descendants of the Dutch, who become known as Boers, were disappointed with the British hold over south Africa in the mid 1800s and established their own inland colonies later. This brought clashes between the British coastal colonies and the inland states established by the Boers in (1899-1902), in which the British influence was extended over the Afrikaners.² Following, in 1910 the four areas were united as union of South Africa of British Empire.³

South Africa's racist administration was officially being in 1948 when the National Party came to power and introduced the policy of *apartheid* 'apartness'. The first South African Act of 1910 provided for an all white government and gave rise to a continued struggle by the majority for a system free from discrimination.⁴ A number of discriminatory measures were taken during this time including the passing of the 1913 land Act, which effectively deprive African people of their land. This was also the time of the birth of African National Congress which provided the largest mass based debate for the freedom struggle in South Africa.⁵ As I tried to indicate above, after the Afrikaner National Party came to power in 1948 ethnic discrimination was formally institutionalized.⁶

Initially, the main aim of *apartheid* was to maintain white domination while extending racial separation. To ensure this many laws and acts were passed during the *apartheid* era which undermine the position of the non-white population and effectively reduced them to second class citizens.⁷ The whole classification process was legally forced and more specifically on the basis of the 1950 Population Registration Act was frequently implemented. This act classified peoples according to race, dividing them basically into white and non-white. The non-whites were also subdivided into; colored (mixed race), Indians, Bantu (the majority black population). A wide range of further *apartheid* laws affected every aspect of the South African social life.⁸

In South Africa, abandoned discrimination and gross human right violation was characterized the National Party rule from 1948 to 1994s. On top of this, L. Athiermoonlam explained different acts designed during the *apartheid* era to safeguard white privilege and supremacy from 1948-1994 as follow;-

- *The South Africa Act was to ensure that an all-white government ruled the country.*
- *The Population Registration Act required that all South Africans be classified into one of four categories: white, black (African), Asian or colored (of mixed descent).*
- *The Mines and Works Act banned certain jobs for certain races and also made sure that white people always had a higher salary than black people.*

- *The Natives Lands Acts gave whites over 90 % of land of South Africa leaving only about 10 % of the land for the other races.*
- *The Native (Urban Area) Act declared residential segregation and forced blacks to carry a paper that allowed them to stay in the cities.*
- *The Native Laws Amendment Act established a system of pass-laws where the blacks had to carry a special identification pass if they wanted to enter white areas.*
- *Prohibition of Mixed Marriage Act forbidden marriages between blacks and whites.*
- *The Group Area Act segregated the four races white, black (African), Asian or colored (of mixed descent) and created geographical borders between these people.*
- *Criminal Law Amendment Act gave permission to police to give severe punishment to those who protested against apartheid.*
- *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act segregated people on buses, schools, parks, and many other places.*
- *The Bantu Education Act forced racial segregation in schools and provided blacks with gutter education, so that they would be the laborers.*
- *Native Resettlement Act relocation the majority of the blacks in to their ethnic background.*
- *Industrial conciliation Act allowed jobs be reserved for certain races and gave white people priority for jobs.*
- *The Bantu homeland citizenship Act aimed to make every black person a civilian of a homeland rather than a citizen of South Africa.*
- *Constitutional Act divided the South African parliament into three groups namely whites, colored and Asians, but blacks were denied any representation.*⁹

Starting in the 1960s a plan of “*grand apartheid*” was executed emphasizing territorial separation and police repression. Race laws touched every aspect of social life. Certain jobs were classified as for whites’ only.¹⁰ In the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s the South African government implemented a resettlement policy forced people to resettle in their allocated areas. It is estimated that more than three and half million people were resettled forcefully during this time.¹¹ Due to this, on March 2,1960 the members of Pan African Congress marched to the public station in the township of Sharpeville near the Johannesburg. As a result, many African demonstrators were killed by the government police. Consequently, 69 Africans died and 186 were wounded.¹²

In the history of black South African resistance against the *apartheid* rule, the 1960 Sharpeville massacre was the turning point for South Africa liberation movements. In the mean time the South African government banned both the African National Congress and Pan African Congress as the result of movement.¹³ However, movement continued against the National Party. On June 16, 1976 thousands of black school children in Soweto demonstrated against instruction in Africans. By February 1977 nearly 575 Africans has been killed, 137 under the age of eighteen.¹⁴ The struggle for freedom reached its height in the 1970s and 1980s when state repression, internal opposition intensified and international attention focused on the plight of South Africans.¹⁵

One of the significant developments in this period was the adoption of a new constitution in 1983 a spectacularly unsuccessful attempt to restructure racial and political arrangements while keeping power in the hands of the white minority.¹⁶ This constitution created tri-cameral parliament which was meant to designate supposed coloreds and Indians into the national parliament in separate houses, each deal with their own affairs. The African majorities were completely excluded from this arrangement and were to find their political voices either in black local authorities in their townships or as citizens of independent homelands or self governing territories regions recognized by no other country in the world except South Africa.¹⁷

It is well known that the international community played an important role in dismantling apartheid through various means including sanctions and boycotts.¹⁸ The rising protest movement in the country was made up of various disparate forces which formed a united opposition to the regime including trade unions, students movements and religious groups, as well as alternative structures of local governance which had mushroomed as a result of result of the apartheid government’s unwillingness to provide proper services in black areas.¹⁹

In short, it was clear that the crisis reaching unmanageable proportions and the policy of apartheid was not sustainable. With the election of Nelson Mandela, South Africa entered a new stage of its history. The country was experiencing democracy for the first time in many decades and the police had to adapt to this situation.

The End of *Apartheid* and the Birth of Democracy in South Africa

The minority white ruled regimes of southern African were confronted by guerrilla organizations that enjoyed regional and intentional support. The *apartheid* system was clearly unable to reform itself; pressures for change must be applied from outside the country. This meant above all financial and other economic sanctions.²⁰ There are different contributors externally and internally for the development of South African democracy and for the end of apartheid era. Externally, in the mid 1980s, the US and European community (now European Union)

imposed sanctions against South Africa apartheid government. In the USA the Congress instead over ruling a presidential veto, that strong sanctions are applied.²¹ During 1986 alone, responding to growing demands by public opinion, some fifty US corporations terminated their South African operations; financial sanctions, meanwhile, were beginning to prove still more effective. The south African government was faced by an acute difficulty in finding the means to meet payments on its foreign debt.²² Other western government agreed that the outside world had a duty to limit the disaster caused by apartheid.²³ By the end of the 1980s the European Community had in place a variety of sanctions against South African; restriction on specific scientific, military, diplomatic, trade, sporting and cultural contacts. On September, 27,1986, the European Community agreed upon a partial adoption of the package of sanctions decided upon the June meeting of the Hague. These measures included a partial ban on the import of iron and steel. The steel and iron concession was marginal; affecting just 2 percent of South African's exports to the European community in that year. However, the fall of apartheid was the goal to be reached in the early 1990s, while the strengthening of the new democratic system become the central objectives of the European Union and United State assistance after 1994.²⁴

Obviously, different parties; the African National Congress, Pan African Congress, United Democratic Front,...challenged the apartheid government internally to end the system. Diplomatic pressure and internal violence converted President P.W. Botha to begin dismantling apartheid system. After Botha in 1989, F.W. De Klerk his successor continued the policy of ending apartheid system. On February 2,1990 President De Klerk delivered a historic speech in parliament, announcing the unbanning of the African National Congress and Pan African Congress and south African Communist Party, the removal of restriction on suspect organization, trade union and the release of political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, who from prison had recently proposed negotiation between the African National Congress and the government.²⁵ Negations continued with different parties up to the final election of 1994.²⁶

By the end of 1991 the legal framework of *apartheid* had been canceled. Despite continue violence, negotiation le by Mandel and De Klerk agreed in 1993 on a timetable for the implementation of majority rule.²⁷ After Mandela appeal to the Unite Nation in September remaining international sanctions on South Africa were lifted. In October 1993 De Klerk and Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In December 1993 the South African parliament passed a temporary constitution that gave equal rights to all South Africans and abolished the homeland.²⁸

The 1994 South African Democratic Election and Its Results

The democratic remarkable expansion of multiparty composition in African political systems started from the 1990s. According to various written sources; during 1985-1989, competitive elections were held in only five African countries; like Botswana, Gambia, Mauritius and Zimbabwe.²⁹ From 1990 to 1994, more than thirty-eight countries held competitive elections.³⁰ South Africa's election of 1994, serve as one of the most example of African democratic transition. For the first time voters of all races cast ballots in free and fair elections that ushered in South Africa's first multiracial, multiethnic, and multiparty democracy.³¹

Nelson Mandela, who had spent nearly 28 years in prison under the previous apartheid system, was elected as a president and the party he represents, the African National Congress, won 62.6 % of the popular vote, 252 of 400 seats in the National Assembly and majority share seats in seven of the nine provincial legislatures.³² Accordingly, F.W De Klerk, the last president of the apartheid era and his Afrikaner National Party which dominated African politics from 1948-1994, won only 20.4 % of the popular vote (82 National Assembly Seats) but majority control of the legislature in the western cape province, which is predominant inhabited by Afrikaners.³³ For more information about the 1994 South African democratic Election results are present as follow.³⁴

Party	Voters Million	Perce-ntage	Seats National Assembly	Seats Senate
ANC (African National Congress)	122,376	62.6	252	60
NP (national Party)	20,583	20.4	82	17
IFP (Ikatha Freedom Party)	39,837	10.2	43	5

Source: Sang-Hyun,Seo, P.413.

In generally, the 1994 first South African democratic election brought Nelson Mandela to power. In April 1994 the Mandela Party ANC won South Africa's first democratic election and in May the National Assembly chooses Mandela to head a government of National Unity, including De Klerk as his second deputy president.³⁵ In addition to this, after Mandela was elected as the president of South Africa in 1994, Schraeder explained as follows about Mandela;-

On May 10, 194, Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as South Africa's first democratically elected leader. His inauguration in many respects represent the culmination of his "long walk to freedom," to quote the title of his internationally acclaimed autobiography. Mandela spent nearly three decades (1962-1991) as a political prisoner due to his conviction that all means, including guerrilla straggle, were to be employed to

*destroy the racist system of apartheid that existed in South Africa from 1948-1994... Mandela's incarceration ended on February 11, 1991 in full view of the international media. At age 73, his unrelenting opposition to the apartheid system, which had cost him nearly three decades of freedom, had transformed him into one of the most celebrated and admired political figure in the world. He becomes the symbol of a domestic and international antiapartheid movement that culminated in South Africa's first multiracial, multiparty, democratic election in 1994. Rather than seeking to punish his former jailers once he and the ANC emerged victorious in those elections, Mandela magnanimously, extended the olive branch of cooperation to all ethnic and racial factions in South Africa.*³⁶

The post Apartheid Acts passed to Ensure Democracy in South Africa

Since the democratic elections of 1994, the new government passed different Acts in order to effect transformation in society and to remove all past discrimination policies from the statute order. The take apart of the apartheid policies was a boring and long drawn out process as parliament struggle to cancel the multitudes of discriminatory acts and to replace them with acts that would uphold the principles of democracy, justice and equality in a previous divided and racially stratified society.³⁷ According to L.Athiemoolam explained, some of these acts passed to ensure democracy in South Africa post apartheid are the followings;-

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996*
- *Human Right Commission Act 54 of 1994*
- *Commission on Gender Equality Act 39 of 1996*
- *The Restitution of Land Right Act 22 of 1994*
- *Promotion of Equality and prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000*
- *Employment Equality Act 55 of 1994*
- *Pan South African Language Board act 59 of 1995*
- *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995...*³⁸

These acts focused on rectifying the inequalities of the past by providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups to enjoy right and freedoms previously denied to them. The corn stones of these rights and freedoms are highlighted in the constitution; surely one of the most liberal in the developed world.³⁹

Conclusion

Division among the races in South Africa started following the Dutch East Indian Company colonizes the area. But the racial segregation escalated after the National Part came to power in 1940s and applied the policy of apartheid system. They designed their administration structure and various Acts to rule the area up to 1990s. The Acts they designed were full of discrimination and racial prejudice against the indigenous population of South Africa. The known political leaders against apartheid system were arrested. After great challenges the political prisoners like Nelson Mandela and other were released. The ANC leaders and government discussed each other to end the apartheid system in 1990s. So, South Africa's founding election of 1994, serves as one of the most model of African democratic election. The 1994 first South African democratic election brought Nelson Mandela the leader of ANC to power. As stated above, after came to power the new government of South Africa developed and adjusted a latest democratic constitution. The constitution contains social right and a substantial conception of equality, affirmative state duties, horizontality, participatory governance, multiculturalism, and historical self-consciousness. Therefore, I believe that my study account of the Process of Democratization in Africa: the case of post apartheid South African democracy will pave the way for further historical research by adding a brick to the topic.

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Declaration

I declare that the paper entitled with "The Process of Democratization in Africa: The case of post apartheid South African democracy" is my work and that all source materials used for the article have been duly acknowledged.

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