

APARTHEID AND NEW DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA: CHANGES SINCE MANDELA'S EXIT, 1994-2020

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Abstract

This study examines the transformative political, social, and economic changes in South Africa from the end of apartheid in 1994 to the departure of Nelson Mandela's influence in 2020. As the nation transitioned from an apartheid regime characterized by institutionalized racial segregation and oppression to a new democratic framework, the trajectory of its evolution provides critical insights into post-colonial nation-building and the challenges of reconciliation and equity. Initially, the end of apartheid marked a historic shift with the establishment of a democratic government under Nelson Mandela, whose presidency symbolized a commitment to reconciliation and inclusive governance. This research explores the significant reforms introduced during Mandela's presidency and the early post-apartheid years, focusing on the dismantling of apartheid-era structures and the implementation of policies aimed at addressing historical injustices and promoting socio-economic development. Following Mandela's exit from the presidency in 1999, South Africa faced ongoing challenges in consolidating its democracy. The study delves into the performance of subsequent administrations in addressing issues such as economic disparity, corruption, and social cohesion. It analyzes key legislative and policy changes, including efforts to improve access to education, healthcare, and housing, and examines their effectiveness in ameliorating the conditions of marginalized communities. The analysis also considers the impact of global economic trends, domestic political shifts, and social movements on South Africa's development trajectory. By 2020, the country had seen both notable successes and significant setbacks, revealing the complexities of achieving equitable development in a post-apartheid context. This research contributes to a nuanced understanding of South Africa's post-apartheid journey, highlighting the interplay between legacy, leadership, and policy in shaping the nation's democratic evolution and future prospects. Qualitative methods, such as case study approach and content analysis of historical documents were used for this research, they provide deep insights into policy impacts and societal changes. While Postcolonial Theory was particularly relevant for this study, as it examines how former colonies negotiate identity and development in the post-independence era.

Introduction

The end of apartheid in South Africa marked a watershed moment in global history, signifying the triumph of democratic ideals over a deeply entrenched system of racial segregation and oppression. Nelson Mandela's ascension to the presidency in 1994 symbolized both a personal victory and a collective rebirth for the nation. Mandela's leadership set the tone for a new democratic South Africa, emphasizing reconciliation and nation-building. However, the complexities of transitioning from apartheid to democracy present a multifaceted narrative that extends beyond Mandela's presidency and encompasses the broader spectrum of South Africa's socio-political and economic evolution up to 2020.

Apartheid, a system of institutionalized racial segregation enforced by the National Party government from 1948 to 1994, left an indelible mark on South African society. The apartheid regime not only

entrenched racial divisions but also systematically disadvantaged non-white populations in areas such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunity (Legassick, 2000). This era of segregation was characterized by the implementation of policies such as the Group Areas Act and the Bantu Education Act, which reinforced the racial hierarchy and limited socio-economic mobility for black South Africans (Murray, 1980). The dismantling of apartheid involved not just political change but a profound societal transformation, requiring comprehensive reforms to address the legacies of inequality and injustice.

Nelson Mandela's presidency (1994-1999) was pivotal in laying the groundwork for a democratic South Africa. His administration focused on reconciliation and nation-building, aiming to heal the deep-seated divisions of the past. Key initiatives included the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which sought to address human rights violations committed during apartheid through a process of truth-telling and restorative justice (Hayner, 2001). Mandela's leadership also prioritized economic and social reforms, such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which aimed to address the immediate needs of marginalized communities (Bond, 2000).

Mandela's presidency is often lauded for its symbolic power and commitment to reconciliation. However, the challenges of implementing structural reforms and achieving substantive socio-economic change persisted beyond his term. The transition to democracy involved not only the establishment of new political institutions but also the management of entrenched economic disparities and social divisions (Mbeki, 2009).

The post-Mandela era, encompassing the presidencies of Thabo Mbeki (1999-2008), Kgalema Motlanthe (2008-2009), Jacob Zuma (2009-2018), and Cyril Ramaphosa (2018-present), has been characterized by both progress and significant challenges. Mbeki's tenure focused on economic growth and the promotion of African Renaissance, but was criticized for its handling of issues such as HIV/AIDS and economic inequality (Vawda, 2008). Zuma's presidency was marred by allegations of corruption and mismanagement, which undermined public trust and contributed to political instability (Pillay, 2015).

Cyril Ramaphosa's presidency, commencing in 2018, has been marked by efforts to address corruption and revitalize the economy. Ramaphosa's administration has emphasized the need for institutional reforms and economic revitalization as key priorities (Klaaren, 2020). Despite these efforts, South Africa continues to grapple with high levels of inequality, unemployment, and social unrest, reflecting the complexities of achieving equitable development in a post-apartheid context (Altman & Croucher, 2020).

An examination of socio-economic policies implemented since 1994 reveals the persistent challenges facing South Africa. Despite significant investments in education and healthcare, disparities remain stark, particularly in relation to race and socio-economic status (Spaull, 2013). The South African government has introduced various policies aimed at redressing these inequalities, including Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action measures (Moyo, 2008). However, the effectiveness of these policies has been a subject of debate, with criticisms focusing on issues of implementation and the extent to which they have translated into meaningful change for disadvantaged communities (Hart, 2006).

Economic reforms and macroeconomic policies have also played a crucial role in shaping South Africa's development trajectory. The country's integration into the global economy and its response to economic challenges such as the 2008 financial crisis have influenced policy decisions and economic outcomes (Dlamini, 2011). The impact of global economic trends, coupled with domestic political dynamics, has shaped the nation's economic landscape and contributed to the ongoing discourse on economic justice and development.

Social movements and civil society organizations have played a vital role in advocating for social justice and accountability in post-apartheid South Africa. Movements such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall have highlighted ongoing issues of inequality and demanded systemic change (Morrison, 2016). These movements underscore the continued relevance of activism in shaping public discourse and influencing policy responses. The engagement of civil society in addressing issues such as corruption, service delivery, and socio-economic inequality reflects the dynamic interplay between grassroots activism and institutional governance (Cloete, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The research title "Apartheid & New Democratic South Africa: Changes Since Mandela's Exit, 1994 – 2020" addresses a critical gap in understanding the trajectory of South Africa's post-apartheid transformation. While the end of apartheid in 1994 marked a historic shift towards democracy, the years following Nelson Mandela's exit from the presidency reveal a complex landscape of progress and challenges. The central problem lies in assessing the extent to which the democratic transitions and policies implemented since 1999 have effectively addressed the deep-seated socio-economic inequalities and institutional issues inherited from apartheid.

Despite significant reforms aimed at reconciliation and development, South Africa continues to grapple with high levels of inequality, unemployment, and corruption. The performance of subsequent administrations, including those of Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, and Cyril Ramaphosa, highlights the difficulties in achieving sustained socio-economic improvements and political stability. This research problem requires a nuanced analysis of policy impacts, the effectiveness of governance, and the role of social movements in shaping post-apartheid South Africa. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for evaluating the success of the democratic transition and identifying pathways for future development.

Literature Review

After the collapse of apartheid in 1994, many scholars researched on the circumstances surrounding it and provided divergent views and opinions on how best to unit South African people. For instance, (Kaplan, D. 2010) in his contribution reviews South Africa's economic policies in the post-apartheid period, highlighting structural changes and their impacts on growth and inequality. The review emphasizes the challenges of transitioning from an apartheid economy to a market-driven system, noting that while some progress was made, significant disparities remain.

Hayner in his part evaluates the effectiveness of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in addressing past human rights abuses and promoting national healing. The review finds that while the TRC contributed to reconciliation, it also faced criticisms related to its limitations and selective justice (Hayner, P. B. 2001). Similarly, (Altman, M., & Croucher, R. 2020) analyzes labor market developments and poverty trends in South Africa from the end of apartheid to recent years. It underscores persistent inequalities and critiques the effectiveness of employment policies in reducing poverty.

On the other hand, (Pillay, D. 2015) explores the impact of Jacob Zuma's presidency on governance and corruption, highlighting scandals and their effects on public trust and institutional integrity. The study discusses the implications for South Africa's democratic consolidation. Hart, K. (2017) in like manner explores the concept of the developmental state in South Africa, assessing how post-apartheid policies

aimed at economic development and social equity have fared over time. The review identifies both achievements and shortcomings. Other scholars such as Hochfeld examined the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy, assessing its impact on economic redistribution and racial equity. Hochfeld, T. (2008) finds that while BEE has facilitated some progress, it has not fully addressed underlying economic disparities.

Hart, G. (2006) focuses on the effects of globalization on South Africa's socio-economic structures. It examines how global economic forces have influenced national development policies and social inequalities. While Seekings, J. (2007) argued that the political dimensions of poverty and inequality in South Africa, have continuously undermined development, which different administrations have failed to address these issues, hence, the present political implications that weakens the various policy responses.

Spaull, N. (2013) in his work critically assesses the state of education in South Africa post-apartheid, focusing on systemic issues and policy interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes and addressing inequalities. Also, (Klaaren, J. 2020) underscores the importance of Cyril Ramaphosa's efforts to rejuvenate South Africa's democracy, focusing on anti-corruption measures and economic reforms. His work evaluates the successes and challenges of Ramaphosa's presidency. Although, these scholars through their work provided a framework for understanding the political and social challenges that confronted South Africa in the post-apartheid years, however, none assessed the extent to which the democratic transitions and policies implemented since 1999 have effectively addressed the deep-seated socio-economic inequalities and institutional issues inherited from apartheid.

Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial theory was used in this study, it provides a critical lens for analyzing "Apartheid & New Democratic South Africa: Changes Since Mandela's Exit, 1994 – 2020." This theoretical framework, rooted in the works of scholars like Edward Said (1978) and Homi K. Bhabha (1994), focuses on the enduring legacies of colonialism and the complexities of identity, power, and resistance in postcolonial societies. Postcolonial Theory emphasizes the ways in which colonial histories shape contemporary social, political, and economic realities. In the South African context, this theory helps examine how apartheid's racial and economic structures—products of colonial exploitation—continue to influence post-apartheid governance and social dynamics. It provides insights into how systemic inequalities and power imbalances persist despite formal political changes.

Hybridity and resistance are central to postcolonial discourse, it elucidates the complex interplay between colonial legacies and the efforts of new democratic structures to address them. The theory explores how South Africa's democratic transition has navigated these legacies, revealing the tensions between traditional power structures and new forms of governance. In addition, the theory considers and uses identity and agency framework, which help in understanding the ongoing struggles of marginalized communities and the quest for genuine transformation. By employing this framework, the analysis critically assesses whether post-apartheid South Africa has effectively dismantled colonial-era disparities or merely adapted them under a new guise.

Research Methodology

This research on "Apartheid & New Democratic South Africa: Changes Since Mandela's Exit, 1994 – 2020" employs a case study approach complemented by content analysis to explore the transformations in South Africa's socio-political and economic landscape.

The case study approach is utilized to provide an in-depth examination of specific events, policies, and periods in South Africa's post-apartheid history. This methodology allows for a detailed analysis of pivotal moments and transitions since Nelson Mandela's exit from the presidency. Key case studies include: Economic Policies Post-1994, examining the shift from apartheid-era economic policies to those implemented by subsequent administrations. This includes analyzing the impact of neoliberal reforms introduced under Thabo Mbeki and their effects on inequality and economic growth (Dlamini, 2011).

Also, corruption and governance under Jacob Zuma is considered by investigating the effects of corruption scandals on governance and public trust during Zuma's presidency. This case study highlights the impact of state capture and the subsequent efforts of Cyril Ramaphosa to combat corruption (Pillay, 2015; Klaaren, 2020). On social reforms and educational outcomes, analysis focuses on the effectiveness of social and educational reforms in addressing apartheid-era disparities, including efforts to improve educational access and quality (Spaull, 2013).

Content analysis is employed to systematically review and interpret qualitative data from various sources, including government reports, policy documents, and media coverage. This technique involves: document analysis, which centers on reviewing official documents such as policy papers, legislative records, and annual reports from relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations. This helps trace the evolution of policies and their impacts over time (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005). It will as well utilize media analysis - analyzing media reports and opinion pieces to understand public perceptions and discourse surrounding key events and policies. This provides insights into societal reactions and the media's role in shaping public opinion (Bond, 2015). By integrating case studies with content analysis, this research methodology offers a comprehensive understanding of South Africa's post-apartheid changes and the ongoing challenges faced by the nation.

Economic Policy Shifts and Their Impact on Inequality in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has undergone significant economic policy shifts aimed at transforming its economy from a racially segregated system to a more inclusive and market-oriented one. These shifts, which include neoliberal reforms, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies, and recent interventions aimed at reducing inequality, have had a profound impact on the country's economic landscape and social inequality.

In the immediate aftermath of apartheid, South Africa adopted neoliberal economic policies under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. The government pursued market-oriented reforms designed to integrate South Africa into the global economy. Key policies included trade liberalization, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and deregulation (Bond, 2000). These reforms were intended to stimulate economic growth and attract foreign investment. While they succeeded in fostering economic growth and increasing South Africa's global economic presence, they also exacerbated income inequality.

The neoliberal agenda led to significant structural changes in the economy, including the privatization of key industries and the reduction of trade barriers. While these measures contributed to an overall increase

in GDP, they also deepened the economic divide. Wealth accumulation was largely concentrated among the already privileged, while the benefits of economic growth were unevenly distributed, leading to a widening gap between the rich and the poor (Seekings & Natrass, 2005).

In response to the growing inequality, the South African government introduced Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies in the early 2000s. These policies aimed to address historical injustices by promoting black participation in the economy through measures such as preferential procurement, ownership targets, and employment equity (Hochfeld, 2008). BEE was designed to create a black business elite and ensure that economic benefits were more equitably distributed among historically marginalized groups.

While BEE policies have succeeded in creating a black business class and increasing the representation of black South Africans in corporate leadership, critics argue that they have not significantly reduced overall economic inequality. Instead, benefits have been disproportionately received by a small elite within the black community, leading to criticisms of BEE as a tool for elite enrichment rather than broad-based economic transformation (Friedman, 2014).

In the wake of the global financial crisis and the growing socio-economic challenges, the South African government has shifted its focus towards increased social spending and poverty alleviation. Under President Jacob Zuma and his successor Cyril Ramaphosa, there has been a greater emphasis on addressing inequality through social grants, housing programs, and education reforms (Spaull, 2013). These measures aim to improve access to basic services and support the most disadvantaged segments of the population.

Despite these efforts, the impact of recent interventions has been mixed. While social spending has provided crucial support to millions of South Africans, it has not been sufficient to counteract the deep-seated structural inequalities that continue to pervade the economy. High levels of unemployment, especially among the youth, and persistent disparities in educational outcomes remain significant challenges (Altman & Croucher, 2020).

Political Corruption and Governance Challenges

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has faced significant challenges related to political corruption and governance. The transition from a racially discriminatory regime to a democratic society promised a new era of transparency and accountability. However, the political landscape has been marred by instances of corruption and governance issues that have undermined democratic institutions and public trust.

One of the most notable periods of corruption in South Africa's recent history occurred during Jacob Zuma's presidency (2009-2018). Zuma's administration was plagued by allegations of corruption and state capture, a term used to describe the manipulation of state institutions for private gain. The Gupta family, close allies of Zuma, were implicated in numerous scandals involving the illicit influence over government contracts and appointments (Pillay, 2015). This period was characterized by a significant erosion of institutional integrity and a weakening of democratic norms.

The scale of corruption during Zuma's tenure was profound, with reports indicating that billions of rand were siphoned off through corrupt practices. The state capture phenomenon involved the systematic exploitation of state resources for personal and political gain, which had a debilitating impact on key

sectors such as procurement, law enforcement, and public services (Matisonn, 2018). The revelations of these practices led to widespread public outrage and protests, highlighting the urgent need for reforms.

In response to the pervasive corruption, Cyril Ramaphosa's presidency, which began in 2018, has focused on addressing these issues. Ramaphosa has prioritized anti-corruption measures and institutional reforms as central to his administration's agenda. His government has taken steps to investigate and prosecute those involved in state capture and to restore credibility to public institutions (Klaaren, 2020). The establishment of the Zondo Commission, which investigated allegations of state capture, is one example of these efforts.

Despite these positive steps, Ramaphosa's administration faces significant challenges. The fight against corruption is ongoing, and the extent of institutional damage inflicted by previous administrations means that rebuilding trust and effectiveness in public institutions is a lengthy process. The effectiveness of reforms is still being tested, and the persistence of corruption and governance challenges remains a critical issue for the country.

The corruption scandals and governance challenges have highlighted broader institutional weaknesses within South Africa's democratic framework. The political and administrative systems have often struggled with issues of accountability and transparency. Weaknesses in the judicial and law enforcement systems have impeded efforts to combat corruption effectively. Furthermore, the influence of political patronage networks has undermined merit-based appointments and decision-making processes (Sikhakhane, 2020).

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive institutional reforms. Strengthening oversight mechanisms, enhancing the independence of judicial bodies, and ensuring greater transparency in public procurement processes are crucial steps. Additionally, fostering a culture of accountability and ethical leadership is essential for rebuilding trust in public institutions and ensuring that democratic governance is upheld.

Educational Reforms and Social Inequality

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has embarked on a series of educational reforms aimed at redressing historical injustices and promoting equity in education. Despite these efforts, significant social inequalities persist, reflecting the complexities of transforming a deeply entrenched system of educational segregation into a more equitable one.

Under apartheid, South Africa's education system was racially segregated and grossly unequal. The end of apartheid brought a commitment to educational reform aimed at dismantling these disparities. The South African government introduced several key reforms, including the National Education Policy Act of 1996, which aimed to create a unified and equitable education system (Department of Education, 1996). These reforms were designed to address issues such as access to quality education, resource allocation, and curriculum development.

One major reform was the introduction of the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) system in 1998, which sought to improve educational outcomes by focusing on what students should be able to do at the end of each educational phase. The OBE system was replaced by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2011, in response to criticisms about its implementation and effectiveness (Taylor, 2014).

Despite these reforms, significant challenges remain in addressing educational inequality. One of the most critical issues is the disparity in resources between schools in affluent and impoverished areas. Schools in historically disadvantaged areas often lack essential resources such as textbooks, qualified teachers, and adequate infrastructure (Spaull, 2013). This disparity perpetuates a cycle of inequality, where students from less privileged backgrounds face greater obstacles to achieving educational success.

Moreover, socio-economic factors continue to influence educational outcomes. Children from low-income families often attend schools with lower levels of academic achievement and fewer opportunities for advancement (Van der Berg, 2018). These socio-economic disparities are compounded by geographic factors, where rural schools are particularly disadvantaged compared to their urban counterparts.

In recent years, the South African government has increased its focus on addressing these inequalities through various initiatives. For example, the introduction of the National School Nutrition Programme aims to improve the health and academic performance of disadvantaged students by providing meals at schools (Pelser, 2018). Additionally, efforts have been made to improve teacher training and support, with initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education in under-resourced schools.

However, progress has been uneven, and many of the underlying issues remain unaddressed. Addressing educational inequality requires a multifaceted approach that includes increasing investment in education, improving the quality of teaching, and implementing targeted support programs for disadvantaged students (Howie, 2017). Furthermore, efforts to tackle broader socio-economic inequalities, such as poverty and unemployment, are essential for creating a more equitable educational environment.

The Role of Civil Society in Post-Apartheid Transformation

In the aftermath of apartheid, South Africa's transition to a democratic society was significantly influenced by the active engagement of civil society. Civil society, encompassing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), trade unions, and advocacy groups, played a crucial role in shaping the new democratic landscape. This essay explores the contributions of civil society to South Africa's post-apartheid transformation, focusing on its impact on policy advocacy, social justice, and democratic consolidation.

Civil society organizations have been instrumental in advocating for policy reforms and influencing government decisions. During the transition period and in the years that followed, NGOs and advocacy groups worked to ensure that the new democratic government addressed critical issues such as human rights, social justice, and economic inequality. For instance, organizations like the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) were pivotal in pushing for the protection of human rights and legal reforms (Kane-Berman, 2011).

The role of civil society in policy advocacy continued post-1994. NGOs such as the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) and the Black Sash played crucial roles in monitoring the implementation of policies related to education, health, and social welfare. These organizations provided critical feedback and mobilized public opinion to hold the government accountable (Bond, 2000). Their efforts contributed to the development of more inclusive and equitable policies that aimed to address the legacy of apartheid.

Beyond policy advocacy, civil society has been at the forefront of advancing social justice and addressing inequalities entrenched by apartheid. NGOs and community organizations have worked to improve

access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and housing. For example, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) played a significant role in advocating for affordable antiretroviral treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS, challenging both the government and pharmaceutical companies to address the epidemic more effectively (Geffen, 2009).

Furthermore, civil society organizations have been active in promoting gender equality and the rights of marginalized groups. Initiatives led by groups such as the Women's Legal Centre and the South African Human Rights Commission have focused on advancing women's rights, combating gender-based violence, and ensuring the protection of LGBTQ+ rights (Hassim, 2006). These efforts have been essential in fostering a more inclusive society and addressing the socio-economic disparities that persist post-apartheid.

Civil society has also played a vital role in strengthening democratic practices and consolidating the new political order. Organizations dedicated to promoting civic engagement and political participation have been instrumental in encouraging voter education, electoral monitoring, and the protection of democratic processes. For instance, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) has been involved in monitoring elections and promoting democratic governance throughout the continent, including South Africa (EISA, 2011).

Additionally, civil society's role in advocating for transparency and accountability has been crucial in holding government officials and institutions accountable. Civil society organizations have utilized legal action, media campaigns, and public advocacy to expose corruption and promote good governance (Pillay, 2015). Their efforts have contributed to a more robust and transparent democratic system.

Conclusion

Moving from apartheid to a new democratic South Africa was a monumental shift, significantly influenced by Nelson Mandela's leadership. Since Mandela's departure in 1994, the nation has undergone remarkable changes, but challenges persist. To fully understand this evolution, a comprehensive examination of the socio-political and economic transformations since Mandela's exit is essential.

Firstly, the post-apartheid era has seen substantial progress in political reforms. South Africa's transition to democracy under Mandela's presidency laid a strong foundation for institutional democracy. However, the trajectory of this democratic evolution since his retirement reveals both achievements and ongoing issues. The adoption of the 1996 Constitution and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were pivotal steps in addressing apartheid's legacies (Lodge, 1999; Southall, 2006). Since then, subsequent administrations have continued to refine democratic processes, although challenges such as corruption and political instability have emerged (Klotz, 2013).

Economically, the end of apartheid opened opportunities for growth and development. The economic policies implemented in the early 2000s aimed to reduce inequality and stimulate growth (Seekings & Natrass, 2005). However, disparities persist, with high levels of unemployment and poverty remaining prevalent. The socioeconomic reforms introduced under the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) policies have sought to address these issues, yet their effectiveness and impact remain subjects of debate (Bond, 2000; Natrass, 2004).

Socially, South Africa has made strides in improving access to education and healthcare. The implementation of social welfare programs has aimed to mitigate the inequities of the past. Nevertheless,

disparities in quality and access highlight the ongoing need for reform and investment (Spaull, 2013).

The transition from apartheid to democratic rule in South Africa, however, represents a complex and ongoing process of nation-building. While the end of apartheid and the advent of democratic governance marked significant milestones, the subsequent years have revealed both progress and persistent challenges. The legacy of apartheid, coupled with the evolving political, economic, and social dynamics, continues to shape South Africa's trajectory. However, the paper attempts provide analysis that will help in understanding the changes since Mandela's exit involves examining the successes and limitations of various policies and leadership approaches, as well as the ongoing efforts to address the legacies of apartheid and build a more equitable society.

Some of the critical intellectual engagements herein centers on the economic policy shifts in South Africa since 1994, which reflects a complex interplay of neoliberal reforms, targeted empowerment policies, and social interventions. While these policies have contributed to economic growth and structural transformation, they have also highlighted and, in some cases, exacerbated the inequalities that remain entrenched in South African society. Addressing these inequalities requires a continued focus on inclusive economic policies, effective implementation of social programs, and structural reforms aimed at achieving equitable growth.

Another highlight of this study was the analysis of the political corruption and governance challenges that have been significant impediments to South Africa's democratic consolidation and development. While recent efforts under Cyril Ramaphosa's administration represent a positive shift towards addressing these issues, the legacy of corruption and institutional weaknesses continues to pose significant hurdles. Ensuring effective governance and combating corruption will require sustained commitment to reform, greater transparency, and robust institutional oversight.

Regarding educational at different levels,there exist reforms in post-apartheid South Africa have made strides toward addressing historical injustices and promoting equity. However, significant social inequalities persist, reflecting ongoing challenges in resource allocation, socio-economic disparities, and systemic issues within the education system. For meaningful progress to be made, continued commitment to reform, increased investment, and targeted support are necessary to ensure that all South African students have access to quality education and opportunities for success.

Aside the efforts of the political class, the role of civil society in South Africa's post-apartheid transformation has been multifaceted and impactful. Through policy advocacy, social justice initiatives, and efforts to strengthen democracy, civil society organizations have significantly contributed to the development of a more equitable and democratic society. Their continued engagement remains essential for addressing ongoing challenges and ensuring that the promises of democracy and equality are fully realized.

Indeed, understanding the changes in South Africa since Mandela's exit involves analyzing political stability, economic progress, and social reform. Comprehensive studies, such as those by Lodge (1999), Seekings & Natrass (2005), and Spaull (2013), provide critical insights into these dimensions. Continued research and policy development are essential for addressing the remaining challenges and advancing the goals set forth in the post-apartheid era.

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