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The challenges of democratic transition in South Africa

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OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES NR. 2

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1995

The challenges of democratic transition in South Africa

Simon Bekker[j]

> We are both humbled and elevated by the honour and privilege that you, the people of South Africa, have bestowed on us, as the first President of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa, to lead our country out of the valley of darkness.
> We understand it still that there is no easy road to freedom.

Nelson Mandela. Inauguration as President of the Democratic Republic of South Africa. 10 May 1994.

1. South Africa and Africa: the new discourse

Sub-Saharan Africa, its recent history, politics, and social economic conditions have been addressed by academics, expert commentators, and journalists as *one narrative.* This narrative typically begins with political independence, and moves on to the establishment of regional unions and alliances with changing East-West bloc political as well as economic goals, then moves to the rise of new elites in the post-colonial period, and the emergence of one-party states and military governments. Droughts and failing economies, based as they have been on primary - largely agrarian - production as well as the weakening of state organisation form an important element of the narrative. Conflicts based on ethic as well as socio-economic factors have been widespread. The narrative often closes with renewed World Bank intervention and the introduction of structural adjustment measures intended to address the financial relationship between these states and international financial bodies. Processes of democratisation coincide with, and are seen to be linked to, these interventions.

South Africa has not figured within this discourse. Its narrative was assumed to be different, for reasons not often spelled out. Crawford Young, for instance, in an article written in the mid-eighties on class, nationalism and ethnicity in Africa, does include South Africa in his narrative, but only as an exception to the generalisations he proposes for other countries. Other overviews of Africa simply left South Africa out. It was, after all, Africa's quintessential pariah state, with a white Afrikaner nationalist government, a semi-industrialised economy, and, accordingly, a country which qualified for membership in inter-state African alliances neither politically - since *apartheid* made it unacceptable - nor economically - for its economy appeared threatening to other African governments.

This exclusion from the master narrative on recent African experience has substantially weakened the credibility of that narrative. The development of mining on the Witwatersrand at the turn of the century, for instance, has had continuing economic and social impacts far beyond the boundaries of South Africa and has led to the claim that this mining centre played a critical role in changing patterns of subcontinental labour migration and of rural household income, with significant social and cultural knock-on effects in rural communities. More generally, South Africa's exports to other African countries, and its military destabilisation role in its subcontinent, particularly in the 1980s, are generally accepted to have been significant, as was the diplomatic pressure brought to bear on South Africa by the front-line states, *inter alia*, by affording asylum to the African National Congress-in-exile (ANC). In short, South Africa ought to have been included in this discourse.

Today, the discourse has changed. After the emergence of a new international global order, after the disappearance of the old order of Western and Eastern blocs, of capitalist and communist ideologies, of Third World countries as pawns caught up in the Cold War, the narrative has shifted focus to the three economic unions of the Northern hemisphere, and to those countries falling outside these three unions. Within Africa, South Africa is now squarely included in the African narrative.

It is within this changed narrative that I will tell you my story. As with other African countries, South Africa is experiencing strong currents of democratisation. It is experiencing rapid institutional restructuring of state, parastatal, and private sector institutions. New social movements are emerging, and new identities are being forged. Internationally, South Africa is seeking ways of realising its comparative advantages in a new and threatening global economy. It is widely perceived to have rejoined the African continent, and to be facing challenges similar to its African neighbours.

I agree with only part of this argument. If addressed historically, South Africa has always been part of the continent's experience. It reflects today important continuities with its past, as well as changes - sometimes even breaks - from its past. A new South Africa is not being invented from a clean slate. Rather, continuities, adaptations, and changes are taking place in complex and often in unpredictable ways. What is certain is that South Africa will be seen, irreversible, to have become more closely integrated with African experience in future.

In preparing this lecture, I have assumed that you have less knowledge about South African society than about other African societies. I make this assumption because

South Africa, until very recently, has not figured in the dominant discourse about contemporary Africa. Accordingly, I will begin with an overview of South African's geography. By geography, I mean more than physical geography. I will outline its current <u>demography</u> and processes of <u>urbanisation</u> from a spatial perspective. I will also outline its <u>administrative</u> and <u>political</u> features from this spatial perspective, and will do the same regarding its contemporary <u>economic, social and cultural</u> features. I will conclude this section by situating South Africa in an <u>international</u> context.

The second part of my story will cover recent historical events leading up to what has widely been called the South African miracle. The miracle refers to the relatively peaceful establishment in 1994 of a new democratic government in the country, against the backdrop of domestic as well as international expectations that the country would be plunged into an 'inevitable' black-white racial conflict. I will end this lecture with a discussion of shadows that fall across this miracle. Some of these shadows arose before the miracle and continue to darken South Africa's future. Others are of recent origin and are therefore more difficult to clarify, though they do appear as threats to future peace and prosperity.

2. The Geography of South Africa

Let us begin with a highly condensed description of the society:

Contemporary South Africa is a modern plural society in which its different groups have experienced division along lines, *inter alia*, of language (for over 200 years during which various languages changed, merged, were codified, and took root), of territory (before the twentieth century in separate pre-industrial and settler societies, and after, under different state-imposed orders), of race and changing culture, and of changing relationships to the South African state and to the economy of the country.

2.1 Demography and Urbanisation

(See *Tables* on Population and Urban/rural Distribution, 1993).

South Africa's population is 40 million. The annual growth rate is 2,3%, and because of high fertility rates, there is a high proportion of people under the age of 15 (some

37% of the population). Both fertility as well as the proportion of youth in the population are higher in rural than in urban areas.

As a result of, first, mining, and, later, domestic industrial activities, urbanisation has been a significant and rapid process during this century. By 1990, one half of all South Africans were urban dwellers, most living in one of the four metropolitan areas of the country. These are found in Gauteng, in Durban, in Cape Town, and in Port Elizabeth. Each of these metropolitan areas displays rapid population expansion, due more to internal urban population growth than to rural-urban migration.

Provinces accordingly vary significantly in terms of population. The Eastern Seaboard provinces, and Gauteng (PWV) have high population densities whereas other provinces display lower densities and numbers.

2.2 Administrative and political

(See *Tables* on Seat allocation in the national assembly.., 1994 and
Seat allocation in the provincial legislatures.., 1994)

Nine new provinces were delineated last year, before the April 1994 general elections, the first such elections in South Africa's history. The interim constitution provided for voters to choose parties, whose leaders nominated candidates for national and provincial lists. The ANC predictably won the election, securing overwhelming support from Black voters in most provinces. A government of national unity was formed, is ANC-led and includes both the National Party (NP) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

The majority of White, Indian and urban Coloured voters preferred the National Party, which took the Western Cape. The Inkatha Freedom Party entered the lists at the last moment and reached an agreement to accept their claim to an electoral majority in KwaZulu-Natal. The other seven provinces have ANC-led governments.

2.3 The space economy of South Africa

(See *Table* on Real GDP... 1988-93)

It is often believed that South Africa is an industrialised country which belongs to the group of countries enjoying affluent economies in North America, Western Europe, Japan and elsewhere in the Far East. This is a fallacy.

Let us consider the following comparisons: In size, (in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)), the South Africa economy is three times the size of that of Nigeria and fifteen times the size of that of Zimbabwe. Simultaneously, it is one third the size of the Netherlands economy and about 2 per cent the size of the US economy.

With this comparison in mind, the South African economy may be described by way of the following four adjectives:
it is **mineral-rich**, it is **semi-industrialised**, it is **open** (to trade with other countries), and it reflects **high racial disparities** regarding the benefits of economic growth.

Agriculture, together with minerals – gold in particular - make up the largest source of exports. The south of the country is a winter rainfall region and produces deciduous fruit and wine for export, and cereals for domestic consumption. Elsewhere, in summer rainfall areas, maize (both yellow and white) is produced in large quantities, as well as sugar and tropical fruit, and forestry sector (pine, wattle and eucalyptus) has been growing in importance, especially since foreign demand appears to be both growing and sustainable.

Stock-farming (cattle and sheep) is wide-spread and provides more than sufficient meat for domestic consumption, except during regular drought years. 1992 and 1993 were unprecedented drought years in the Southern African subcontinent and much of South African agriculture has yet to recover. In fact, most of rural South African can only be classified as agricultural in the weakest of terms, and would not have been able to perform as it has without substantial government subsidisation. Rural South Africa also displays clear dualistic features with modern capitalist farming being practised on predominantly white-owned land, and subsistence farming in the former black rural homeland areas.

Spatially, mining is concentrated in the north of the country whilst industrial and commercial activities are concentrated in the metropolitan centres, in Gauteng in particular (where close to 50% of such activities are situated).

South Africa's industrial strategy of import substitution, designed through protection to add value to raw resources, to develop jobs in an economy with high rates of unemployment, and thereby to create domestic wealth and employment, reflects a classical problem faced by medium-sized countries outside the three economic unions of the Northern hemisphere. Foreign exchange is earned through the export of primary commodities, manufacturing is protected by tariffs, and most manufactured commodities compare poorly with international competitors. Since the domestic market is limited, quality needs to improve, and commodity prices need to drop. Accordingly, a growing volume of manufactured imports (machinery, mechanical and electrical appliances, vehicles and oil) need to be imported, thereby placing strain on the balance of payments. Though semi-industrialised, South Africa continues to import – mainly from the European Union – far more in the manufacturing sector than it exports. No easy way out of this dilemma is apparent, particularly since GATT is currently placing additional pressure on South African financial authorities, and on importers and exporters.

2.4 Social and cultural features

(See 'The RDP', and the Table on Languages used.., 1993)

Social and welfare inequalities are wide-spread in the country. Affluent urban communities, including most while households, receive superior educational, welfare, health, housing delivery, and locality-bound services. Poorer communities, including the large majority of black households in both urban and rural areas, receive inferior services. As a result, the government of national unity has introduced, as its primary policy goal, a programme designed to address these inequities. It is called the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

In cultural terms, the plural nature of South African society is best presented in terms of language. English is only the fifth most common home language in the country, spoken as a first language by less than one South African in ten. Zulu is the largest language group, followed by Xhosa and Afrikaans. National government policy is that eleven languages are to be instituted as

official languages though this policy will be difficult and costly to implement. Languages also reflect clear regional patterns, with English being confined to metropolitan areas, Zulu to the north-east of the country, Xhosa to the east-central region, and Afrikaans to the south.

2.5 South Africa and its regional links

The South African Customs Union (SACU) which comprises Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana and, latterly, Namibia, share a common currency and tariff policy with South Africa. This *de facto* common market has been operating for more than a decade and has resulted for the smaller members as well as for South Africa in mutual benefits, the stabilisation of macro-economic policies in particular.

At subcontinental level, the former union of front-line states, established in opposition to South Africa, has been re-established as the Southern African Development Commission (SADC). It now includes South Africa. This union comprises bilateral as well as multilateral trade agreements, and allows multiple membership in regional unions. Neither a common currency nor free trade are presently envisaged within SADC.

Currently, preliminary discussions are taking place between government representatives of a number of countries on the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR), Australia, India and South Africa in particular. These may well stimulate increased trade between IOR countries but expectations that free trade may develop in the short to medium term seem utopian. Two-way trade between South Africa and the European Union makes up one half of South Africa's total international two-way trade.

3. The South African miracle: a condensed political history

3.1 Before the miracle

During the twentieth century, as part of the British Empire, South Africa rapidly developed a modern economic system. From the 1920s, the government promoted domestic manufacturing. This process of industrial development was accompanied by a related process of urbanisation. Black South Africans joined and were drawn into this developing economy in ever increasing numbers. Initially on white-owned commercial

farms – land colonised by settlers during the previous century – and on mines, and subsequently in industry, their increasing involvement in the labour market reflected the process sketched above. Their presence in South African cities and towns expanded in parallel.

After the Second World War, three crucial political developments took place in South Africa. The government which had from its inception in 1909 been elected by an overwhelmingly white electorate, formally instituted itself in the early 1950s as a white government, elected by white South Africans alone. This statutory racist element became one of the two cornerstones of *apartheid.* In the second place, since a majority of this electorate was Afrikaner, this government demanded and achieved increasingly independence from British Empire and Crow, deciding in 1961 to break all ties and establish a Republic, thereby realising the mission of Afrikaner nationalism whose supporters dominated the government from that point on.

The other *apartheid* cornerstone was the establishment of a series of separate 'homelands' for different black South African communities. Located mainly in areas where the remnants of nineteenth-century African pastoral societies persisted, governed and financed by the central state officials, this *apartheid* homeland policy was designed to justify the exclusion of black South Africans from participation in the central political system and from permanent residence in South African cities by creating, for them, separate government-defined ethic states within the country.

Black reaction to these processes of increasing economic incorporation and sharpening political and residential exclusion changed from acquiescence and negotiation to political and economic action, and finally, from the mid-nineteen-seventies to nineteen-ninety, to resistance and violent confrontation with the South African state, both domestically as well as from exile.

The black anti-*apartheid* movement used two primary justifications for its opposition, resistance and armed struggle against the apartheid government. The first, the democratic project, espoused most clearly and consistently by the ANC, was that of establishing a non-racial democracy in the country. In order to achieve this, against a recalcitrant and powerful state, the means chosen was that of armed struggle, in partnership with the working class, the oppressed urban communities within the country, with foreign support from the Soviet bloc and its allied communist ideology.

The second, the Africanist project, espoused most clearly and consistently by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BC), sought political emancipation and individual worth through the common identity of being African. It was through solidarity and mobilisation as Africans that national freedom would be achieved. The BC movement extended the definition of 'African' to 'black', thereby including Coloureds and Indians into the dispossessed group, and emphasised the positive conscientising identity of being-black. Throughout the period of anti-*apartheid* struggle leading up to 1994, an uneasy alliance between these movements was maintained, the one broadcasting a non-racial inclusive political ideal, the other a political ideal in which black renaissance was held to be a precondition for full democratic inclusion.

Though the time leading up to this period of resistance and violent confrontation was not without strife, it is striking how much more political violence took place during the last decade of this period of South African history. To illustrate, during the five year period from 1984 to 1988, it was reported that over 4000 people were killed in incidents of civil unrest, the majority of them black urban residents; approximately 45000 people were detained without trial; insurgent actions of various kinds by the ANC increased from 44 in 1984 to 209 in 1988; and there was a virtual breakdown of, and rebellion against the system of black education, as well as of township and local government structures.

Macro-conflict during this period was guided by a single theme, a principle which was sweeping the globe during the same period. It was the imperative of democratic inclusion of all societal groups into a single nation-state. Simultaneously, in South Africa, struggle over this principle was refined by two allied, equally universal, sub-themes: the quests for non-racialism and for an inclusive nationalism in a modern plural society.

3.2 The miracle

At the close of the nineteen-eighties, South Africa appeared poised on the edge of an abyss. Embroiled in a seemingly unwinnable was in Namibia against Angolan and Cuban troops, stretched to its limit in the black townships of its cities and towns, the state security establishment had only succeeded in maintaining order through increasingly brutal means. Civil unrest had turned the country into a series of beleaguered communities and was causing serious damage to the country's open economy. Internationally, *apartheid* had become a major international problem and

few governments were prepared to engage positively with the South African government.

Black resistance was likewise in turmoil. The ANC-in-exile was married to a Marxist strategy of armed struggle against a militarily unbeatable opponent. Urban insurrection in the country was taking on increasingly divergent and brutal faces. Continued struggle between the two evenly matched protagonists increasingly took on the form of a battle of attrition, pointing toward a downward spiral where all in the country would be the losers.

Two events were critical to the breaking of the log-jam. The first was the demise of the Soviet Union and the rapid dissolution of its super-power status, dismantling and dissipating its supportive institutions, resources and ideological underpinnings. The second was a purely domestic matter. The National Party (NP) - the governing party in the country over the past forty years - changed leadership and elected a new leader and State President who had few ties with the state security establishment. These two events acted upon one another. With promises of support from Western governments, the NP decided in 1990 to launch a process of negotiations with its primary protagonists, the banned black resistance movements and their leaders.

The period of negotiations which led to establishment in 1994 of the first South African government elected on popular franchise was characterised by a series of violent events reflecting the two sub-themes mentioned above: the quests for non-racialism and for an inclusive nationalism in a modern plural society. Attacks on white persons, on predominantly white institutions (such as churches and places of entertainment) were examples of the Africanist consciousness manifesting itself in a period lacking institutionalised forms of popular expression. Equally, incidents of white separatist Afrikaner insurrection were numerous, culminating in acts of sabotage immediately before the general elections.

The main parties sought compromise, and successive rounds of negotiations were circumscribed by the determination of the National party to find a constitutional mechanism to ensure its continued share in future political arrangements. The compromise - an elaborate exercise in power-sharing - aimed at achieving non-racial democratic inclusion at a national level, at least for an initial 5-year period.

The main parties, moreover, sought to involve other movements in the exercise. Thus, major efforts were made to involve parties within both the PAC and BC movements

within the negotiating process, and the primary negotiators agreed to continued negotiations with Afrikaner separatists, after the general elections, on possible partition of the country.

These concessions, particularly by the NP regarding the Africanist project, and by the ANC regarding the Afrikaner separatist project, appear to have been successful for neither radical Africanist nor Afrikaner separatist movements have become salient since. Nor has any overt racially-based movement developed. By agreeing to, and establishing, over an initial five-year period, a government of national unity under an interim constitution, the ANC and the NP appear to have facilitated a transition largely devoid of divisive racial or nationalist fissures. In these regards, optimistic international expectations for democratisation in the post-cold war era seem to be on track in South Africa.

3.3 Shadows across the miracle

During the past 40 years, South Africa appears to have passed through a reasonably clearly defined period of change:

* rapid industrialisation and urbanisation;

* increasing economic inclusion of black South Africans in these processes;

* increasing political and residential exclusion of black South Africans from these processes;

* increasing resistance and struggle by the excluded majority against the Afrikaner nationalist government and its *apartheid* policy; and

* the establishment of a democratically elected national government the main mission of which is to institute equity, reconciliation and prosperity in the society.

Macro-conflict, particularly during the nineteen-eighties and early nineties has generally been interpreted within the context of this type of change:

* struggles over racial and political discrimination;

* struggles over access to economic wealth and security; and

* struggles over capitalist and communist, Afrikaner nationalist and African nationalist, ideologies.

From the late nineteen-eighties, however, a new form of conflict has emerged in South Africa. The overwhelming majority of participants and of victims in this conflict have been urban blacks. Over the past eight years, some 14000 deaths resulting from this conflict have been recorded. The objectives of the combatants appear to cover a

bewildering range of local issues: struggles over local community control, over land, over access to local scarce resources, over allegiance to traditional or to modern leaders and institutions. In KwaZulu-Natal, where the conflict is mainly found, its cycle peaked during 1990, the year during which the political process of national negotiations was launched, and peaked again in early 1994 immediately prior to the general elections. After these elections, the conflict appears to persist. From 1990, moreover, Zulu immigrant communities in Johannesburg and its environs have become involved in a series of related conflicts during which confrontation took place along lines defined in explicit ethic (Zulu/non Zulu) terms.

One major interpretation of this conflict points to competition for grass-roots Zulu support between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The latter party – based in KwaZulu-Natal – has developed in ideology and policy which amalgamates a liberatory with an ethically explicit programme of action: democratic values are promoted within the context of respect for traditional Zulu leadership and values. More recently, after the provincial electoral victory by the IFP in KwaZulu-Natal, the new provincial government is promoting the idea of renaming the province the kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal.

Building on an older Zulu cultural movement, the IFP was launched in the mid-seventies by Chief Buthelezi, the then Chief Minister of the homeland of KwaZulu. It refined and broadcast its liberatory and cultural programme from within this homeland ambit and soon found itself at loggerheads with the liberation strategies of the ANC-in-exile. By the mid-eighties, this relationship had deteriorated into one of enmity and bitterness. During the negotiation period of the nineteen-nineties, the IFP withdrew from national negotiations and was accordingly party neither to the drafting of the interim constitution nor to agreements on the form the government of national unity would take.

The province of KwaZulu-Natal is dominated economically by the city of Durban within which close to one half of its eight million residents live. Over the past two decades, large numbers of rural Zulu-speaking families have migrated into the city has developed a large industrial sector in which a substantial black working class have taken root. Outside of Durban, the province comprises large areas of the former homeland of KwaZulu in which Zulu rural families live in poverty, dependent upon family members working in cities and mines elsewhere.

A number of scholars of Zulu history have pointed to the persistence of Zulu cultural symbols and identities which have accompanied this process of industrialisation and urbanisation. Guy, for instance, concluded his work on the destruction of the Zulu kingdom with the following words: 'The Zulu nationalist movement today, whose leaders are in many cases the direct descendants of the men who fought the civil war, and who draw consciously on the Zulu past, is a force which will still affect the course of southern African history'.

Scholars have also pointed to the military metaphors which have often accompanied these symbols.

> 'The significance of Zulu ethic associations and cultural nationalism in diffusing class-based organisations and fracturing national movements is no new phenomenon…
>
> In 1937, the Zulu Cultural Society was founded by Albert Luthuli, later to become President of the ANC and a winner of the Nobel Prize…
>
> (This society's) own glorification of a Zulu cultural identity was as much shaped by elements of popular consciousness coming from below as it was a shaping force in the making of that consciousness… the problem for Africans in Zululand and Natal, however, was the ways in which a pre-colonial past provided military metaphors for mobilization'

Inadequate though these remarks may well be to explain the rise of this new form of conflict and violence in contemporary South Africa, they do suggest that these shared and reconstructed memories are powerful indicators of the potential for new forms of ethic identity and solidarity in a society experiencing strong currents of democratisation, and in a society presently seeking stability by means of nation-building.

Without a democratic culture to direct and regulate it through institutional processes, macro-conflict in South Africa has tended to be violent, suppressed during certain periods by various means, and playing itself out by force during others. Today, drawn as it is into international currents of democratisation, this society's potential for violent conflict remains.

Potential lines of conflict follow the cleavages identified above: ethic differences, especially where these are perceived to coincide with felt group deprivation; racial differences, especially now that expectations for the rapid removal of racial discrimination and subordination are high; and secessionist claims in a world in which the principle of self-determination has become legitimate. In this new world order, increasingly, representatives of these various groups in South African society, in search of cultural rights, and of equity in access to resources, will no doubt consider mobilisation strategies based upon these felt differences.

How is the new government of national unity (GNU) addressing this challenge? Racism (and sexism) are constitutionally forbidden. Appointments to its national cabinet display a serious attempt at installing a 'rainbow' leadership. The charisma and powerful symbolism of the President are consistently used to broadcast non-racial democratic values.

In relation to racist and Afrikaner nationalist cleavages, these techniques appear to have succeeded in the short term. In relation to Zulu ethic mobilisation, they have been singularly less successful. Faced with the IFP as recalcitrant junior partner in the GNU, a party which has withdrawn both from post-electoral constitutional negotiations and from local government election planning, the ANC and the President have threatened military and state fiscal intervention in KwaZulu-Natal to avert further violence. To them, the ethic challenge appears particularly perverse precisely because it emanates from an historically oppressed black constituency whose leadership has consistently articulated the values of democratic inclusion, albeit in Zulu cultural context.

This shadow across the miracle clearly has deep historical roots. Others, which are currently vague and appear to be no more than emergent, are of more recent origin.

The first relates to the political roles that elites, both new and old, are playing. During the difficult period of political negotiations leading up to the interim constitution and the April 1994 elections, deals were often struck by political elites under enormous pressure, without significant participation by other stakeholders. Equally, during the wrap-up after these elections, after a voting process which displayed numerous signs of crisis management and possible breakdown, national political elites negotiated an electoral outcome in KwaZulu-Natal based on elite national considerations rather than on the vote count. Such elite accommodation does not augur well for the establishment of a democratic political culture in a plural society which is certain to experience continuing political tension and crisis in its future.

The second shadow emerges from the apparent incapacity of the state to develop implementation strategies to realise the critical goals of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). While the new values of transparency and accountability do not appear to have been consistently applied to critical constitutional matters, these are applied with such vigour to development and welfare matters that populist paralysis is a frequent consequence. Continuous debates on interpretations of

RDP policy, and of action strategies which ought to flow them, block intentions to translate voice into action. These constrains are deepened by on-going restructuring of state and parastatal bodies, resulting in not only new faces but also new and changing missions and organisational structures.

The third shadow emerges from the salience of the affirmative action policy in the society. Based on the principle of correcting historical injustice in education and employment, it is being interpreted by an expanding number of commentators as creating a new black elite in the Africanist idiom. This state policy has only been in place for a short period, and needs to be monitored and evaluated in terms of identifiable goals, but the tendency to implement it uniformly across all sectors of society is a cause for concern both in terms of rising sentiments of grievance as well as in terms of declines in performance. Such uniform application, moreover, creates little opportunity to identify and learn from diverse failures and successes.

Finally, there is the government's nation-building project. Built around the scaffolding of the country's emergent constitutionalism - its Bill of Rights, its constitutional court, and its state commitments to equity, to development, and to the eradication of poverty - this government-driven project envisages the rapid growth of a single South African identity and nation which would supplant, at least in the public domain, other identities and forms of incipient group solidarity. Once established, this new national culture would become sovereign, and could justify concerted national action against deviant sub-national ethnopolitical activities.

In such a forma, this project ha little change of success. The plural nature of South African Society defies its viability, particularly under modern democratic conditions. The historical analysis offered above points instead to contemporary racial, ethic and exclusivist nationalist tendencies with significant historical roots which contest the peaceful emergence will mitigate the violent consequences of such tendencies. At worst, aggressive government-driven nation-building will exacerbate them.

The alternative path is the nurturing of the constitutionalism which is presently taking root in the society. It is possible that these values will take root in a society which continues, possibly more than before, to display changing cultural features. Strong sub-national identities are not necessarily incompatible with growing constitutionalism. And growing cons constitutionalism itself may develop sufficient institutional processes to direct macro-conflict away from its violent past toward a more regulated future.

NOTAS

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 All information in the appendix drawn from:
Race Relations Survey 1994/95
Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg 1995.