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# THE DEMISE OF POST-APARTHEID AND THE EMERGENCE OF POST-COLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA[1]

## Abstract

*The notion of post-apartheid initially signalled a unique South African social and political trajectory that differed from the conventional African colonial and post-colonial experience. However, this article demonstrates that post-apartheid was in fact a short-lived quasi-nationalist project that was soon surpassed by more conventional post-colonialism, both conceptually and empirically. The hegemonic role of the ANC is explored in this regard, as well as the party's management of an increasingly disgruntled and radical society. Having reconstructed these aspects, it is concluded that South Africa is likely to develop along a more orthodox post-colonial socio-political trajectory in the future.*

**Keywords**: Nationalism; rainbowism; post-apartheid; post-colonialism; Rhodes Must Fall; South Africa.

**Sleutelwoorde**: Nasionalisme; reënboog-isme; post-apartheid; post-kolonialisme; Rhodes Must Fall; Suid-Afrika.

> "South Africans, living in some isolation at the tip of a continent with which they don't interact much, are prone to both parochialism and South African exceptionalism. They are not only slow to accept that other countries have lessons for them and tend to believe that they are special, different, even the 'people of the miracle'".
>
> RW Johnson (2015)

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

In Cape Town, 9 March 2015 will most likely not be remembered for being another temperate summer's day, but rather as the beginning of the end of the pensive presence of Cecil John Rhode's bronze likeness, which had gazed over the University of Cape Town (UCT)'s campus for more than eighty years. The granite plinth upon which the statue stood borrowed poetically from Kipling

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in articulating Rhodes' grand dream of empire from Lion's Head, northward into Africa.

The emergence of the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement at UCT is by now well-known. A student had flung human faeces on the statue, claiming to act on behalf of the collective pain of all black people suffering under the "colonial dominance" he suggested was palpable at the university. He argued that the statue of Rhodes served as a painful symbol of this discriminatory culture, and should therefore be removed. The movement was soon joined by other actors outside the university, including the radical Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), who argued for the destruction of other colonial and apartheid-era statues.

With the removal of the statue of Rhodes the RMF movement gained a symbolic victory, but little substantive change was noticeable in the supposed "colonial dominance" at UCT. This would be challenged later in 2015 by the #Fees-Must-Fall movement that spread to most universities and culminated outside the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town.

This article argues that incidents such as these, are representative of a South African socio-political trajectory that has departed from that, which can be described as "post-apartheid", and is moving towards the more conventional post-colonial politics that have characterised other African states. Two decades after democratisation, South Africa's political consciousness has moved from its fixation with apartheid proper and has begun to interrogate the orthodox colonial nature of the past and, for some, the present. This is happening at a time when the country has begun to approximate a conventional African postcolony. Indeed, during an even more tempestuous episode in South Africa's recent political history, Piper (2009:105) presaged that, "The rise of Zuma suggests a watershed in South African politics […] [it] represents, at the political level, underlying socio-economic and cultural changes that lead the country to more closely resemble other post-colonial countries".

Accordingly, this paper investigates the "socio-economic and cultural changes" that are transforming South African post-apartheid politics into those that are typical of other African post-colonial polities. Following a descriptive and exploratory approach, the article focuses on:

•   The empirical characteristics of the African postcolony.

•   Delineating the critical and conceptual nature of the postcolony.

•   Exploring the concept of post-apartheid, its temporal influences and basic values as a nominal divergence from post-colonial orthodoxy.

•   The ANC's hegemony in post-apartheid South Africa and the party's predisposition to post-colonial rather than post-apartheid ideological outcomes.

•   The paradoxical liaison between growing radicalism and traditionalism as an example of the current South African post-colonial dynamic.

In the latter of these aspects, particular attention will be devoted to identifying trends that may signal the emergence of a post-colonial political dynamic in South Africa.

## 2.   THE DEVELOPMENT OF POST-COLONIAL AFRICA

It is difficult to define what exactly constitutes orthodox African post-colonialism. The diversity to be seen in all walks of life militates against any accurate generalisations. However, Tordoff (2002:1-5) identifies four commonalities that typified African states at the moment of their independence: historically, they were almost exclusively colonial, that is, ruled by one of the European colonial powers. In many cases, colonial rule was relatively brief, compared to pre-colonial history; culturally, they sought to establish a new identity as independent nation-states. This task was impeded by the diversity of the population groupings; economically, they were mostly poor, predominantly rural and over-dependent on exporting commodities to a volatile international market and; politically, they exhibited an unsettled political culture with weak political institutions and state capabilities.

Additionally, in the years following independence, Tordoff (2002:6-14) identifies the following trends: The rejection of political pluralism in favour of the centralisation of power; structurally, this resulted in unitary, rather than federal forms of state; following centralisation, the personalisation of power through the party/state leader; the adoption of socialism in various forms and to various degrees and usually hybridised with African nationalism; the decline of party politics and the rise of the bureaucratic and military establishments and; a surge in urbanisation.

Young (2012:8) has similarly argued that, "distinctive though overlapping moments of the postcolonial trajectory can be identified", and he delineates them according to the six phases represented in the table below:

**Table 1: Six Phases of post-colonial development**

| Phase | Period | Mood | Main attributes |
|-------|--------|------|-----------------|
| 1 | 1956-60s | Optimism | Decolonisation, Independence |
| 2 | Early 1960s-70s | Pessimism | Authoritarian drift, Single parties, Military coups |
| 3 | 1970s | Optimism | Civil wars end, State expansion, Nationalisations, Radicalisation |
| 4 | 1980s | Pessimism | Economic decline, Political decay, State crisis |
| 5 | Early-1990s | Optimism | Democratisation |
| 6 | 1990s-present | Mixed | Varying itineraries: Consolidating democracy; Semi-democracy; Civil war; State collapse |

This chronology adequately illustrates the well-known sequence of events that had an influence on the predominantly pessimistic view of post-colonial Africa, seen in the popular imagination. Elsewhere, Young (2004:37) notes that, "The postcolonial state became the object of withering criticism. An array of novels portrayed the state as predator, pirate, or even vampire, terms that crept into everyday vocabulary [...] Questions began to appear about the empirical validity of the state". Likewise, in a typical description of the African "postcolony", Chapman (2011:69) explains that, "It is racially diverse; heterogeneous in language, culture and religion. It is characterised by sharp economic and educational disparities. It is susceptible to disease and crime. Its civil institutions are fragile. Its literacy and literary life are uneven. Hard won, liberation-movement freedoms can be at odds with the former liberation movement that is now the ruling party. The Big Man syndrome can signal compromised leaders. The 'people' are often at the rough edge of service delivery."

These representations serve to highlight the unstable and volatile nature of the socio-political reality of Africa since decolonisation. The comparative disadvantages common to Africa in terms of human development, security, political stability and economic growth are well-known, and will not be recounted here. However, although exploring the postcolony in empirical terms is important in orienting oneself in contemporary African politics, such a line of inquiry does not adequately interrogate the conceptual nature of the post-colonial as a notional construct. The latter, in turn, plays a pivotal role in identifying the putative shift from a post-apartheid to a post-colonial South Africa and, as such, it is considered in the section that follows.

## 3.   POST-COLONIAL AS A CRITICAL CONCEPT

When delineating the post-colonial, it is immediately relevant to distinguish between post-colonialism as a purely temporal aftermath (a period of time after colonialism, empirically defined) as noted by Blunt and McEwan (2002:3) and as a critical aftermath (cultures, discourse and critiques that lie beyond, but remain closely influenced by colonialism). Post-colonialism in the critical sense is a contested terrain that conceals diverse interpretations and approaches (Aschroft *et al*. 1995), reflecting a "constellation of meanings" which are variously used in academia, literature and journalism (Sidaway 2000:593). Noting this, McEwan (2008:17) accordingly delineates the understanding of post-colonialism as:

- "After colonialism", signifying the notion of a time or new epoch (the temporal aftermath, discussed in the preceding section).

- A "condition", related to the state of "after colonialism" (the empirical dimension of the above-mentioned).

• A metaphysical, ethical and political theory dealing with issues such as identity, race, ethnicity and the challenges of developing post-colonial national identities.

• Anti-colonialism, a critique of all forms of colonial power.

The latter two approaches are of particular relevance in charting any presumed transference from post-apartheid towards post-colonial political realities, and speak to Jacobs' (1996:25) view of post-colonialism as a, "set of formations which negotiate the ideological, social and material *structures of power* established under colonialism" (own emphasis). Simlarly, Loomba (2005:16) argues that, "it is more helpful to think of post-colonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the *contestation of colonial domination* and the legacies of colonialism" (own emphasis). Pursuing this idea of post-colonialism as it relates to structures of power, domination and their contestation, Mazrui (1995:28) provides an incisive perspective into the nexus between the critical spirit of post-colonialism on the one hand, and the state as structure of power on the other, "[w]e used to think that decolonization consisted of the nationalist struggle against colonialism, the granting of independence, and the replacing of colonial symbols of authority with national flags and national anthems. Decolonization was complete, we thought, when colonially educated members of the African elite, the author included, came to the fore, and when some of us […] inherited the reins of the colonial state from our colonial masters. The question that has arisen lately, however, is whether real decolonization is not the winning of formal independence, not the changing of the guard on independence day, the raising of new flags, or the singing of new national anthems, but the *collapse of the colonial state itself, the cruel and bloody disintegration of colonial structures*. Liberation and decolonization can no longer be equated" (own emphasis).

Mazrui is considering the argument that, for the legacy of colonialism to be truly abolished in a post-colonial society, all remnants of colonialist structures of power and domination: must be purged – cleansed with blood, according to his idiom, in order to herald an authentic post-colonial order. This perspective underscores the interconnection between the political instability and volatility of temporal post-colonialism and its pessimist subtexts, discussed previously, and the critical conceptual notion of an authentic post-colonial polity. In other words, colonialism so profoundly continues to shape the African state that, in order for it to become authentically post-colonial, it had to tear itself apart and constitute itself anew.

This theme of the "disintegration of colonial structures" is naturally applicable to a wider purview than the structures emphasised by Mazrui. Migdal (1988:36) has typified post-colonial society as being "web-like", arguing that, "[a]lthough there certainly have been connections between the parts and some

parts have obviously been more important than others, often no single part has been totally integral to the existence of the whole".

In a similar manner, Mbembe (1992:4) speaks of the fragmented nature of post-colonialism as it affects the identity of the individual. This is particularly germane to the discussion on post-apartheid that follows. He explains that, "[t]he postcolony is made up not of one single 'public space' but of several, each having its own separate logic yet nonetheless liable to be entangled with other logics when operating in certain specific contexts: hence the postcolonial 'subject' has had to learn to bargain in this conceptual market place. Furthermore, subjects in the postcolony have also had to have a marked ability to manage not just a single identity for themselves but several, which are flexible enough for them to negotiate as and when required."

From these perspectives it emerges that if the post-colonial concept is considered to be the antithesis of coloniality, it presupposes the latter's disintegration and necessitates the emergence of a fluid, less institutionalised, more personalised environment characterised by web-like socio-political relations at the societal level and a plurality of identities at the individual level. Ultimately, this would represent an authentic post-colonial environment; the colonial project which aspired towards uniformity, control and domination disintegrates and is succeeded by complexity, variability and the diffusion of authority.

Thus, to the extent that one may venture to speak of a post-colonial orthodoxy with its chronological trajectory of political development which has been generally volatile, and its critical tradition that emphasises the antithetical nature of post-colonial society in contrast to colonialism, one must ask what the implication is for the South African context where apartheid, and not orthodox colonialism represents the counterpoint to an authentically "new" South Africa? In answering this question, it is necessary to explore the conceptual meaning of post-apartheid, its distinction from apartheid and, subsequently, post-colonialism.

## 4.    EXPLORING THE NOTION OF POST-APARTHEID

It is important to understand the notion of post-apartheid as it forms part of a distinctive trajectory that differs from the remainder of Africa. This unique status is based on three well-known factors. Firstly, South Africa was the first African colony to achieve independence from a metropolitan power. This did not, however, mark the end of the institutionalised colonial state. Secondly, white minority rule was perpetuated through settler colonialism which was largely achieved through segregation legislation, which included the Natives Land Act of 1913, Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, and the Native Administration Act of 1927. Thirdly, the ideology of segregation was institutionalised as "apartheid" after 1948, under white (and specifically Afrikaner) minority rule.

During the period of minority rule, the South African economy, based upon agriculture, manufacturing and mining was modernised. By 1989, South Africa's GDP per capita was $3,621 compared to the sub-Saharan average of $606. Therefore, with the advent of majority rule, the South African economy was significantly more modernised and diversified than other African states at the time of their decolonisation (see Padayachee 2010; Lester *et al*. 2000). Similarly, South Africa, even during apartheid, had a long experience of institutionalised politics, as well as a robust civil society and media. These economic and socio-political features differentiated South Africa from the conventional decolonised and post-colonial state and served to emphasise the unique circumstances faced by the ANC and the African majority when it attained political power in 1994.

Apartheid was a system of government that was predicated upon the "separateness" of the races in South Africa. It was therefore unequivocally exclusive in nature, attempting not only to exclude black South Africans from political representation, participation and decision-making, but also to exclude interrelations between the different groups. This was achieved not only by discouraging cooperation between different so-called racial groups, but also between the ethnically diverse constituents of these nominal races. Structurally, the design of grand apartheid aimed to divide and conquer African ethnicities through the establishment of independent homelands. This Bantustan policy, concealed an insidious exclusivity – that of nationalism. Indeed, the apartheid project was inextricably linked to the developing of the dominance of Afrikaner nationalism. It accorded the Afrikaner "volk" the principal role in shaping the destiny of South Africa.

The demise of apartheid coincided with the conclusion of the Cold War (in which apartheid South Africa had been a minor player) and the apparent triumph and vindication of liberal democracy in the realm of international relations. It was therefore to be expected that, whatever political arrangement was to supplant apartheid, it would reflect newly ascendant liberal democratic values. It was expedient for the ANC, as political heir-apparent, to embrace these values, not only because it would align it with the now-dominant West internationally but, also because it represented the opposite of apartheid's quasi-authoritarianism domestically. It also underlined the apotheosis of its own Freedom Charterist political identity.

It was during this immediate post-Cold War period that a renewed intellectual focus emerged internationally on the importance of human rights and civil society. This also influenced the negotiations that would constitute a post-apartheid order (Wilson 2001:2). Habermas (1995:157-158) described such a "civil society" as juxtaposed to that of historical nationalism, arguing that, "The meaning of the term 'nation' thus changed from designating a pre-political entity to something that was supposed to play a constitutive role in defining the political identity of the citizen within a democratic polity […] The nation of citizens does

not derive its identity from some common ethnic and cultural properties, but rather from the praxis of citizens who actively exercise their civil rights. At this juncture, the republican strand of 'citizenship' completely parts company with the idea of belonging to a pre-political community integrated on the basis of descent, a shared tradition and a common language."

Walzer (1991:6) also dissected the nature of civil society by contrasting it with the values of nationalism, explaining that, "The picture here is of people freely associating and communicating with one another, forming and reforming groups of all sorts, not for the sake of any particular formation – family, tribe, nation, religion, commune, brotherhood or sisterhood, interest group or ideological movement – but for the sake of sociability itself. For we are by nature social, before we are political or economic beings" (Walzer 1991:5). Furthermore, Walzer identifies the affinity between liberalism and civil society. He argues that, in a civil society, competing approaches to the realisation of the "good life" are premised upon, "accepting them all, insisting that each leave room for the others, therefore not finally accepting any of them. Liberalism appears here as an anti-ideology, and this is an attractive position in the contemporary world". Indeed, its attractiveness was such as to ensure its virtual unassailability, and it was in this historical window period that a post-apartheid society was conceived. Thus, in the course of the CODESA negotiations, it became clear that constitutionality with its principle of "sufficient consensus'" would embody this liberal-democratic ethos.[2]

The timing of the advent of majority rule would therefore necessarily influence the nature of the post-apartheid nation and nationalism with the emphasis on civic, rather than ethnic, affiliation. For Ignatieff (1995:5), civic nationalism maintains that, "[T]he nation should be composed of all those – regardless of race, color, creed, gender, language, or ethnicity – who subscribe to the nation's political creed. This nationalism is called civic because it envisages the nation as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values. This nationalism is necessarily democratic, since it vests sovereignty in all of the people."

African post-colonialism routinely emphasised civic nationalism during independence struggles as a means to unite disparate ethnicities towards the goal of national self-determination and prevent tribalist tendencies. However, such civic nationalism rarely proved durable in the postcolony, as noted previously. Thus, Forrest (2006:34) refers to the, "degeneration of civic nationalist unity in the wake of parochial, 'ethnic-nation protecting' political claimants, while narrowly based patrimonial regimes cling to power by relying on a praetorian, centralist,

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2    Numerous key concessions were made by the participating parties, not least of which was the NP's relinquishment of the principle of group rights and the adoption of individual rights, as now reflected in the Bill of Rights (and to which the SACP was strongly opposed). The deciding factors were the liberal-democratic/civil society norms that were ascendant during the time.

and exclusivist pattern of rule". It was essential to avert this pattern of post-colonial ethnic nationalism and adhere to the prevailing political climate of the time, for as Comaroff & Comaroff (1999:289) note, "When black South Africans at last threw off their colonial constraints, much of the rest of the continent had learned the harsh truth about the postcolonial predicament". It was recognised that South Africa required a transcendent post-apartheid civic nationalism of its own, or to quote Barrington (2006:12), "a kinder, gentler nationalism associated with tolerance and the overcoming of ethnic divisions".

## 5.    POST-APARTHEID CIVIC NATIONALISM AND RAINBOWISM

The CODESA negotiations confirmed the notion that "post-apartheid" should not only come to mean that which came after apartheid, but should, more importantly, also come to signify its antithesis. In substantiating this objective, CODESA conceived numerous agreements and institutions that would precipitate this authentic post-apartheid order. They were embodied in a civic nationalism, and premised upon human rights and civil society as seen in:

- The 1992 referendum, in which white voters were asked whether they supported the continuation of the reform process which aimed at a new Constitution through negotiation.

- The first fully democratic elections held on 27 and 28 April 1994.

- A Government of National Unity consisting of the ANC, NP and IFP.

- A 1993 interim Constitution followed by the 1996 Constitution.

- The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which aimed to "build a strong nation" (ANC 1994).

- The establishment, in 1995, of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to investigate "gross violations of human rights" during apartheid (1960-1994).

    To a large extent, the immediate post-1994 focus on creating and legitimising the apartheid antithesis was most conspicuously exemplified by the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The timing and substance of the TRC (active 1995-1998) was highly conducive to shaping a new narrative. It was a captivating, public process consisting of "a peculiar mix of religion, theatre, quasi-legal process and a great deal of raw emotion" (Johnson 2009:273). These elements, combined with the high-profile leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, resulted in the TRC being the definitive post-apartheid exercise, "not only towards building a state of right, but also towards using human rights talk to construct a new *national identity*" (own emphasis) (Wilson 2001:13). Whether

the Commission's goals of restorative justice and reconciliation were achieved, remains subject to dispute (see Jeffery 2010; Shea 2000; Gibson and MacDonald 2001; Wilson 2001), yet it enjoyed widespread international approval and legitimised the moral authority that would be the hallmark of a notional post-apartheid era.

The TRC established several important themes that would permeate post-apartheid discourse and serve as the mantras of the era, such as "nation building", "rainbowism" and "*Ubuntu*". Tutu frequently referred to South Africa as the "Rainbow Nation of God", and this "rainbowism" came to be symbolically associated with the "new" South Africa and the imagery of a new nation. (Baines 1998:1). These watchwords reflected the exuberance of the immediate post-transition years, even though in many instances they were at best superficial and romanticised idealism or (more disconcertingly) wilful denial of complex realities for the sake of political expediency. In this regard, the notion of *Ubuntu* is a well-known example. It became the yardstick for post-apartheid societal dealings and, as such, the axiom of the new South African civic nationalism.

Since the mid-1990s *Ubuntu* has attained both ubiquity and authority through its association with Nobel laureates Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, despite the concept's inexact and nebulous meaning (see Gade 2012). Such was the apparent universal value of the term, that it was even included in the Interim Constitution, echoing the characteristic moral tone of post-apartheid, "there is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *Ubuntu* but not for victimisation" (South Africa 1993). Indeed, *Ubuntu* represented an "ethnic tranquillity" (Smith 1986:256) and a point of cultural consensus in an otherwise diverse ethnic and racial South African configuration. *Ubuntu* therefore served as a touchstone of African culture that could transcend the tribalism which had remained relatively dormant in the face of the common enemy, apartheid, and which now constituted the basis of a South African "rainbow nationalism".

The concept was soon part of the superficial indigenisation of many post-apartheid institutional domains where Western (read colonial) legacies were firmly established. In the business sector, for example, it served as the socio-cultural justification of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) (see Andreasson 2010) and jurisprudence (see Mokgoro 1997). However, such experiments were usually controversial. Regarding the incorporation of *Ubuntu* into South African jurisprudence, Cockrell (1996:12, 25) argued that, in the strenuous context of constitutional adjudication, "The necessity to make hard choices such as these is fudged by rainbow jurisprudence, which states blandly that *all* competing values can, mysteriously, be accommodated within the embrace of warm, fuzzy consensus […] A prominent theme in the judgements of the Constitutional Court over the period under review [1995] has sought to highlight the need for values

to be located within 'African sources'. One superficial manifestation of this theme took the form of a series of references to the values of Ubuntu" (Cockrell 1996:25).

However, it is Wilson (2001:13) who penetrates to the heart of the matter when he argues that, "Ubuntu should be recognised for what it is: an ideological concept with multiple meanings which conjoins human rights, restorative justice reconciliation and nation-building within the populist language of pan-Africanism. In post-apartheid South Africa, it became the Africanist wrapping used to sell a reconciliatory version of human rights talk to black South Africans. Ubuntu belies the claim that human rights would have no culturalist or ethnic dimensions."

This perspective distils the essence of the post-apartheid narrative, namely the agglomeration of an array of ostensibly related, yet incompatible values and "goods" into a catch-all, and therefore superficial, civic nationalism. Whether the Rainbow Nation idea was ever more substantial than the highly publicised, yet ephemeral peaks it was associated with (Nelson Mandela's towering reconciliatory presence, the TRC, sporting events, etc.), is doubtful. Thus, after the publication of the TRC report, Jeremy Cronin (1999:20) cautioned that, "allowing ourselves to sink into a smug 'rainbowism' will prove to be a terrible betrayal of the possibilities for real transformation". Perhaps Valji's (2003:26) estimation of the Rainbow Nation as, "a simplified and somewhat candy-coated myth of peace" is an accurate appraisal of the still-born post-apartheid nationalism.

Therefore, in conclusion, the nature of post-apartheid civic nationalism is ambiguous at best, but, more likely, it is illusory. Despite the sea-change in international relations that precipitated the dominance of liberal-democratic values in the early-1990s, an authentic civic ethos was never entrenched in post-apartheid South Africa. Instead, a semi-official narrative of "rainbowism" was propagated that was neither durable nor, principally, in accordance with an authentic civil society premised on liberalism and human rights. There can surely be little surprise that the new South African civic nationalism, sandwiched as it was, briefly, between the trauma of apartheid and the determined transformative ambitions of the triumphant liberation movement was abortive. This fleeting episode should be seen as anomalous when cast against the backdrop of African and South African history, as well as the implacable ideological objectives of the ANC, considered below.

## 6.   POST-APARTHEID AND ANC HEGEMONY

With Mandela's passing in 2013, it was widely acknowledged that, "his vision of a rainbow nation failed, almost inevitably, to meet the heady expectations propelling the country two decades ago" (Torchia 2014). Indeed, this association of the rainbow nation with the person of Nelson Mandela betrays the fact that the notion of a post-apartheid civic nationalism was never part of the hard core of ANC ideology. In this regard, Mandela was contrasted with Chris Hani, who

in the late 1980s had soared to popularity in the ANC, based on his militant and radical charisma and his more retributory attitude during the transition. As the most likely successor to Mandela, Hani would almost certainly have disregarded the rainbow nationalist narrative and returned to the ANC's orthodox ideological creed. As one commentator noted recently in a piece entitled, *The End of the Rainbow Nation Myth*, "I believe that Mr. Hani would have eventually ruled South Africa as president if he had lived. I like to think that he would have defied his mentor, Mr. Mandela, by offering us a less conciliatory path to dignity" (Msimang 2015). Indeed, ANC doctrine suggests a party more ideologically attuned towards the dialectic between colonialism and the post-colonial and it is articulated in a strong Marxist idiom, rather than that of a liberal-democratic civic nationalism.

The ANC has always been at pains to amalgamate the constructs of apartheid and colonialism in order to align its struggle with the powerful anti-colonial sentiment of the 1960s onward, arguing, for example, that, "The South National Liberation Movement, the ANC and its allies, characterise the South African social formation as a system of 'internal colonialism' or 'colonialism of a special type'. What is special or different about the colonial system as it obtains in South Africa is that there is no spatial separation between the colonising power (the white minority state) and the colonised black people. But in every respect, the features of classic colonialism are the hallmark of the relations that obtain between the black majority and white minority" (ANC 1987).

The theory of "colonialism of a special type" was first articulated by the South African Communist Party (SACP 1962) and reveals the intimate ideological relationship between the ANC and the SACP in which a somewhat antiquated Marxism still holds sway. Another significant SACP contribution to ANC ideology comes in the form of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), of which the objective is, "The creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This, in essence, means the liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage. It means uplifting the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female" (ANC 1997a).

Whilst the NDR is ostensibly related to the Freedom Charter (which was also formulated by the SACP) in stressing non-racialism, it has become increasingly evident since 1994 that the ANC has a qualified understanding of this notion. In *Nation-Formation and Nation Building* (ANC 1997b) the party argues that in pursuance of the NDR, "what is required is a continuing battle to assert African hegemony in the context of a multi-cultural and non-racial society. It is debatable whether the popular imagery of a 'rainbow nation' is useful in this respect."

Clearly, the ANC was always more devoted to an Africanist, rather than a civic-nationalist interpretation of post-apartheid South Africa. Notwithstanding the important Charterist tradition in the party, the ascension to political power led to a swift abandonment of a civic nationalism in the ANC. This is

contemporaneously corroborated by Filatova (1997:54) when she notes that, "at this particular moment of South Africa's history a nationalist stance offers a better political potential to the ANC than non-racialism, whether based on class solidarity or on 'rainbow' all-inclusive nationhood". This ethnic Africanist impetus behind both the NDR and its telos in post-apartheid South Africa would reach new heights during Mbeki's succession as president, both as his personal obsession and as government policy. This was reflected in his "two nations" theorem and almost impulsive recourse to race on a variety of issues, including his stance, domestically, on HIV/Aids, whilst internationally he was preoccupied with Africanist initiatives such as NEPAD and the propagation of his "African renaissance" project.

In retrospect, 1997 proved to be a watershed of sorts for the ANC's vision of post-apartheid South Africa. It was the year of the party's 50th National Conference in Mafikeng, where Mbeki officially replaced Mandela as president of the party. It was also the year in which the most significant and enduring cornerstones of the Africanist interpretation of the NDR were laid down in the form of resolutions and policies that include:

• The adoption of "a cadre policy ensuring that the ANC plays a leading role in all centres of power" (ANC 1997a).

• *The Public Service Laws Amendment Act*, which established the principle of demographic representivity in the public service.

• *The White Paper on Transforming Higher Education*, which prompted the introduction of racial quotas for selected university programmes (notably medicine).

• *The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service*, which introduced racial employment targets.

• *The Employment Equity Act*, with the purpose of, "implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational levels in the workforce".

It is therefore reasonable to argue that 1997, with the departure of Mandela, the rise of Mbeki and the concomitant ascension of an Africanist interpretation of the NDR, whilst paying lip service to Charterist principles, signified the end of a putative post-apartheid rainbowism. Barely four years had passed since the euphoria of 1994. In retrospect, Filatova (2011:26) argues that this episode, "represented a dramatic departure from non-racialism […] From then on, the 'national' part of the NDR came to the fore, and the 'democratic' part of it started to lose ground to the ANC's racial transformation course". In the years that followed, the adverse consequences of this shift manifested not only in the party itself,

where it engendered patronage and factionalism, but inevitably spilled over into the domain of the state and precipitated political decay and mounting dysfunction (see Greffrath 2015). Thus, to the extent that an Africanist interpretation of the NDR encouraged black African and ANC hegemony, it also encouraged the centralisation and personalisation of authority and enabled the accumulation of immense wealth and political power by the party elite. South Africa, it would appear, had embarked on a familiar post-colonial trajectory.

The dominant political dynamics and themes that have characterised the South African state and society since the late 1990s have been well-documented, and will not be reconstructed for the purposes of this article (in this regard, see Lodge 2002; Johnson 2009; Jeffery 2010; Plaut and Holden 2012). However, it is worth noting that socio-political trends during this period were related, either directly or indirectly, to the dynamics within the ANC – such was the hegemony of the party in the political life of the country in the past two decades. Scandals, leadership struggles, political violence and socio-economic instability have all, to some extent, been influenced by, or were products of, either the ANC's internal power dynamics or its interface, as government, with South African society. These indicate a steady movement towards an orthodox postcolony. The most prominent and disconcerting theme amidst these trends, is a swelling tide of general intolerance which manifest in political and racial intolerance. Xenophobic violence has occurred consistently and with greater frequency since democratisation, reaching well-publicised climaxes in May 2008 and March 2015. Government has been criticised as being ineffectual in confronting xenophobia, with observers lamenting, "a continuing lack of political will to own the problem and act against one of the most destructive and anti-democratic forces in post-apartheid South Africa" (Crush and Ramchandran 2014:3). Indeed, official statements from government departments, the police and the ANC point towards a wilful denial of xenophobic realities in South Africa (see Crush and Ramchandran 2014:25-29). Within the ruling party and government too, it would appear that ethnic distinctions are still meaningful. As Gumede (2012) explains, "Jacob Zuma's election as ANC President at the party's 2007 Polokwane conference and his possible re-election at Mangaung signifies the triumph of the conservative wing of Zulu nationalism […] narrow Zulu nationalism is dangerous to both the ANC and South Africa, as it may unleash 'the demon of tribalism' […] and may undermine efforts to cobble together a common South Africanness."

Whilst Gumede (as with Johnson, 2015) might be somewhat premature in proclaiming the triumph of Zulu nationalism in the ANC, it is undeniable that a Zulu bloc within the ANC has reasserted itself in senior positions in the part and government. This is especially noticeable in Cabinet, where Zuma has appointed numerous Zulu members to key positions and ministries in the so-called Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster in particular. Given high levels of intolerance and the re-emergence of societal divisions, it is little wonder

that South Africa is marked by constant socio-political confrontations and stand-offs, from service delivery protests to labour strikes. Political institutions simply no longer have the ability to mediate between political actors and their demands. This institutional weakness is particularly prevalent at local government level, which represents the coalface of political participation for all South Africans. Both the deterioration of municipal service delivery (in infrastructural terms) and the lack of accountability (in political terms) reflect the incapacity of political institutions to mediate citizens' demands, leading to frustration and the pursuit of other, often violent, means of political participation. Of particular concern in this regard are the recent revelations concerning the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), effectively the cornerstone of South Africa's institutional participatory democracy, relating to the integrity of the voters' roll (Makhafola, 2016). Surely, there can be no symptom more distressing to a democracy than the impairment of the institution tasked with regulation elections?

It could be argued that South Africa now increasingly resembles Huntington's "praetorian society"' in which institutions are weak and social forces are strong and where, "the wealthy bribe; students riot; workers strike; mobs demonstrate; and the military coup" (Huntington 1968:196).

## 7.    POST-COLONIAL COLLABORATION: RADICALS AND TRADITIONALISTS

The abovementioned socio-political trends are examples of the, "socio-economic and cultural changes that lead the country more closely to resemble other post-colonial countries" (Piper 2009:105). However, the most compelling theme in this regard is South Africa's socio-political radicalisation that has occurred in recent times.

### 7.1   Radical momentum and a shift to the left

It has been argued elsewhere (see Greffrath and Duvenhage 2014:197-226) that the 2014 national election confirmed a "shift to the left" in South African politics, precipitated by: the widening gap between political-want and satisfaction; the emergence of new radical political and trade unionist actors and the support they have garnered and the ANC's attempts to compensate for the influence of these factors, notably in the form of a "second phase of the revolution".

Whereas the Tripartite Alliance has enjoyed total hegemony over the progressive and radical political left since 1994, this dominance is now being challenged by new radical actors who contend that the ANC has not done enough to transform South African society. Persistent service delivery protests over the last decade and the emergence of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) and the Marikana incident, the electoral gains of the

EFF, a schism in the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the advent of the United Front all represent forceful challenges to the dominance of the ANC as the hegemon of the progressive left. In reaction to this, the ANC has embarked upon a "second phase of the NDR", aimed at checking the rise of opposition radicals. With the "first phase of the NDR", signifying the attainment of political power in 1994, the second phase is being guided by, "a vision for a second transition that must focus on the social and economic transformation of South Africa over the next 30 to 50 years" and an emphasis on the, "character and values of the ANC as a revolutionary peoples' movement" (ANC 2012:4). Likewise, and in affirmation of the ideological relationship between the two parties, the SACP (2015) reasoned that, "Twenty one years ago our struggle finally defeated white minority rule in our country. That was the moment when we should have immediately embarked on a second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution. In 1994 we should have moved decisively to roll back the monopoly power of the white bourgeoisie."

The motivation behind the "second phase" is that the political kingdom (i.e. liberation from apartheid), as envisaged by Nkrumah during decolonisation, has failed to deliver an economic kingdom into the hands of the liberators. For South Africa, more pertinently, the subtext is that the plans of the post-apartheid government miscarried and it is time for a new dispensation which will assert radically different values in fulfilment of the NDR. To this end a spate of proposed legislation has already been tabled, including acts and bills relating to expropriation, indigenisation, land reform and the restriction of private and foreign ownership in the economy. These are aimed at, "redressing apartheid colonialism" (Gumede 2015). Land reform, in particular, has been a central focus of recent ANC policy and legislation, bolstered by government's co-optation of traditional leadership.

## 7.2  Strategic mobilisation of traditional leadership

A prominent component of the ANC's land reform project has been the restoration of land rights in the form of communal land tenure, which generally, "involve the conferral of rights on the basis of accepted group membership, and a degree of group control or supervision of land matters", contrary to a system of individual, private property (Cousins 2009:2). This is ironic, considering the fact that the authority of traditional leaders was largely derived from and legitimised by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, which created the traditional homeland reserve areas. However, the apartheid-era origins of institutionalised traditional leadership has not precluded its continued existence in post-apartheid South Africa where progressive ideological values have been much vaunted; quite the contrary. Claassens (2014:8) observes that, "Remarkably, flawed colonial constructs of customary law have continued to be supported by the post-1994 government through litigation, policy development and the enactment of law".

Thus, traditional leaders have maintained their paradoxical presence well after nominal democratisation through lobbie, such as the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), government legislation[3] and customary law. In this regards, Weinberg (2015:3) notes that, "The government has put in place land policies and laws that serve the interests of traditional leaders (in the belief [that] they can secure the rural vote). The problem is not that these laws recognise the institution of traditional leadership, but that they condone traditional leaders' abuses of power."

The magnitude of this "rural vote" is emphasised by Loate (2014), who estimates that some 17-20 million South Africans reside in communal land areas where traditional rule holds sway, and that the pursuance of current policies to reinforce communal land tenure amounts to, "a purposeful strategy to create sufficient discretionary power for traditional leaders to select beneficiaries and to side-line those that threaten the rural vote". Of course, this mirrors the colonial precedent of exercising indirect rule through tribal chiefs. Mamdani (1996:48) described this practice as "decentralised despotism" elaborating that, "From African tradition, colonial powers salvaged a widespread and time-honoured practice, one of a decentralized exercise of power, *but freed that power from restraint, peers or people*. Thus they laid the basis for a decentralized despotism" (own emphasis).

In this manner, the ANC has attempted to balance its role as authoritative interpreter of progressive values in society, whilst assimilating the traditional elite who preside over the rural electorate. Claassens (2014:10) concurs, arguing that, "[the ANC government] has rejected the post-1994 rights-based approach to land reform in favour of outsourcing power and control over 17 million South Africans to traditional leaders in a context where power relations are notoriously unequal".

With this strategy, the ANC balances the post-colonial identity of a liberation movement with the quasi-democratic wiles of apartheid governance. In this strategy, the importance accorded to fostering civic nationalism is slight.

The seemingly paradoxical relationship between radicals and traditionalists is typical of the postcolony, where ostensibly opposed actors may pragmatically collaborate in the common interest of maintaining power or accessing resources. It exemplifies Mbembe's (1992:4) description of divergent domains in the postcolony as, "each having its own separate logic yet nonetheless liable to be entangled with other logics when operating in certain specific contexts", as well as Omeje and Kwaja's (2015:97) contention that, "postcolonial African states have created governance regimes through the harmonization of traditional

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3    The most important examples in this regard are the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003 (TLGFA) and the Communal Land Rights Act of 2004 (CLRA). The latter accorded traditional councils the power to represent rural communities as the "owner of the land".The act was ruled to be unconstitutional in 2010. Currently, the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform is developing a Communal Land Tenure Policy, which would reintroduce the authority of tribal councils held under the CLRA (see Weinberg, 2014).

political institutions with modern political and democratic practices, under an institutional duality". Exploiting this "duality" is an essential part of post-colonial political strategy. In post-colonial societies where low levels of economic growth and high levels of urbanisation have created a radical political climate in the cities, the mobilisation of the countryside becomes a key countervailing force for political elites. Thus, the ruralisation of Zimbabwean politics in the early-2000s through land reform and the co-optation of traditional leaders enabled Mugabe to countervail the increasingly disgruntled urban (and unionised) population of the cities, where the MDC had garnered significant support (see Vincent and Chikerema 2014).

In South Africa, the advent of the "second phase", the renewed emphasis on land reform and, in this regard, the co-optation of traditional authority, the traditionalist approach of Zuma as leader, the loss of ANC support in urban areas, the relinquishment of Alliance hegemony over organised labour, and a deteriorating economic situation should all be viewed in terms of a more orthodox post-colonial, rather than post-apartheid, political dynamic.

## 8.    CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES

The recent actions of radical political actors must be interpreted against the background constructed in this article. It is likely that radical sentiment will escalate in South Africa as expectations grow. This, in turn, will serve as an important conduit for anti-colonialism and denotes the progression of an authentically post-colonial order in South Africa. It has furthermore demonstrated that:

- The unique nature of South Africa's majoritarian transition was influenced by the dominant global political and economic values at the time, which dictated a liberal-democratic and civic-nationalist post-apartheid order.

- This post-apartheid nationalism was characterised by "rainbowism" and an ethnically neutral Africanist character, exemplified by *Ubuntu*. This proto-civic nationalism did not prove to be durable.

- The aforementioned was at odds with ideological constructs of the ANC, in which apartheid was equated to colonialism and Africanism was emphasised above civic nationalism in the NDR. 1997 was identified as a watershed in the progression from nominal post-apartheid nationalism to authentic post-colonialism.

- Since the early-2000s, socio-economic and political instability has escalated and the ANC's hegemony over the political left is being challenged by new radical actors, especially in urban areas.

- In negotiating the emergent radical challenge, the ANC government has itself adopted a more radical political agenda, whilst simultaneously co-opting traditionalist elements to consolidate the rural vote.

The political trajectory outlined above clearly corroborates the assumption that a unique and differentiable post-apartheid order was never consolidated and, therefore, short-lived. It furthermore confirms that the most significant part of the last two decades (nominally referred to as the post-apartheid era) in fact closely charts the political and societal trajectory of the African postcolony. As South Africa continues on this path in the years to come, the reaction to its colonial heritage, through initiatives such as the Rhodes-Must-Fall and Fees-Must-Fall movements, will no-doubt become more radical and more frequent as society becomes increasingly retaliatory against an abhorrent past, its continuance in the present and the prospect of a failing future.

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